

Thomas Jefferson to Gouverneur Morris, November 7, 1792, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE U. S. MINISTER TO FRANCE J. MSS. (GOUVERNEUR MORRIS)

Philadelphia, Nov. 7, 1792.

Dear Sir, —My last to you was of the 15th of Oct since which I have received your Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. Tho' mine went by a conveyance directly to Bordeaux, & may therefore probably get safe to you, yet I think it proper, lest it should miscarry, to repeat to you the following paragraph from it. * * *

I am perfectly sensible that your situation must, ere this reaches you, have been delicate & difficult: and tho' the occasion is probably over, and your part taken of necessity, so that instructions now would be too late, yet I think it just to express our sentiments on the subject as a sanction of what you have probably done. Whenever the scene became personally dangerous to you, it was proper you should leave it, as well from personal as public motives. But what degree of danger should be awaited, to what distance or place you should retire, are circumstances which must rest with your own discretion, it being impossible to prescribe them from hence.—With what kind of government you may do business, is another question. It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful which is formed by the will of the nation substantially declared. The late government was of this kind, & was accordingly acknowledged by all the branches of ours. So any alteration of it which shall be made by the will of the nation substantially declared, will doubtless be acknowledged in like manner. With such a government every *kind* of business may be done. But there are *some matters* which I conceive might be

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transacted with a government *de facto*: such for instance as the reforming the unfriendly restrictions on our commerce & navigation. Such cases you will readily distinguish as they occur. With respect to this particular reformation

of their regulations we cannot be too pressing for it's attainment, as every days continuance gives it additional firmness & endangers it's taking root in their habits & constitution: and indeed I think they should be told, as soon as they are in a condition to act, that if they do not revoke the late innovations, we must lay additional & equivalent burthens on *French ships*, by name.—Your conduct in the case of M. de Bonne-Carrere is approved intirely. We think it of great consequence to the friendship of the two nations to have a minister here in whose dispositions we have confidence.—Congress assembled the day before yesterday. I inclose you a paper containing the President's speech whereby you will see the chief objects of the present session. Your difficulties as to the settlements of our accounts with France, & as to the payment of the foreign officers will have been removed by the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury, of which, for fear it should have miscarried, I now inclose you a duplicate. Should a conveyance for the present letter offer to any port of France directly, your newspapers will accompany it. Otherwise I shall send it through Mr. Pinckney, & retain the newspapers as usual for a direct conveyance.