

Thomas Jefferson to Congress, December 2, 1806, Draft of Message to Congress, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

SIXTH ANNUAL MESSAGE¹

¹ On Nov. 14, 1806, Jefferson wrote to Gallatin:

“1. As to the 500 cavalry. If we have peace with Spain, we shall not want them; if war, all our plans must be new moulded. It is, therefore, only *during the present unsettled state*. This cannot exceed six months from October 1, about which time they probably went into service. This will cost 100,000 D. The proposing to Congress to establish them during the present unsettled state of things is merely to show Spain, that we seriously mean to take justice if she will not do it. The men are in service under a previous law. This is the only extra expense I contemplate to meet the present state. Mr. Smith proposes to ask only the ordinary annual appropriation.

“2. As to the salt tax. If that and the Mediterranean fund, continued to the end of 1808, will pay the Florida purchase, suppose the act of commutation lets the salt tax run to the end of 1807,—will not its amount for 1808 be made up by the increase of impost and land sales beyond calculation, and the sweepings of the Treasury? or if they still leave a deficit, would not the perpetuity of the Mediterranean fund enable us to anticipate enough for the deficit?

“3. The university. This proposition will pass all the States in the winter of 1807–8, and Congress will not meet, and consequently cannot act on it, till the winter of 1808–9. The Florida debt will therefore be paid off before the university can call for anything.

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“The only difficulty in the whole, then, seems to be the amount of the salt tax for 1808, which I am in hopes will not be insuperable.”

Other papers relating to this message are as follows:

Madison's Memoranda.

(Indorsed: “Received Nov. 16, 06, Message.”)

“Foreign Relations. Insert ‘since’ before ‘taken place’ at the beginning of line 11. The preceding delay did not altogether proceed from events independent of the will of one of the parties, and those who are chargeable with it, ought not to be acquitted of the consequences. Perhaps the following change of the whole sentence would answer. ‘The delays which have since taken place in our negotiations with the British govt appear to have proceeded from causes which leave me in expectation that &c.’

“Spain. Instead of Spain has ‘consented’ &c., it might be better to say Spain has taken steps preparatory to the negotiation at Paris in which our ministers are authorized to meet her. The term used may seem to imply a proposition from the U. S. wch was consented to.

“In the penult line of p. 1. For ‘hope of friendly settlement’ perhaps ‘course of friendly negotiation’ might be a more suitable expression. Such a change however cannot be material if proper.

“The last instructions to Wilkinson do not assume the Sabine as the essential line of separation for the troops. They authorize him to settle a provisional line, and in no event to pass himself beyond that river. It may be well therefore to vary the sentence on that point so as to run ‘in that quarter to maintain a temporary line, separating the troops of the two nations & to permit no new settlement or post to be taken eastward of the Sabine river.’

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“Would it not be well to allude to a continuance of our friendly standing with France, & the other belligerent nations, or generally with other nations of Europe?”

“New Orleans. Instead of ‘to secure that point by *all the means in our power*’—‘to provide for that point a more adequate security.’

“Insurrections. This paragraph suggests several legal questions; such as whether in strictness any *preventive* measures are consistent with our principles except security for the peace & good behavior. Whether this remedy is not already applicable to the case in question, where a preparation of force justifies a suspicion of criminal intention, and whether the existing provision for the case of an enterprise meditated vs. a foreign nation is not rather penal agst a crime actually committed by the preparation of means with such an intention, than *preventive* of the actual commission of a crime. To guard agst the criticisms which may be founded on these questions, some such change as the following is suggested for consideration:

“For those crimes when actually committed the laws make provision. Would it not moreover be salutary to provide for cases where the means of force are prepared only for a meditated enterprise agst the U. S. as has been done for cases where the enterprise is meditated by private individuals against a foreign nation? It merits consideration also whether the preventive process of binding to the observance of the peace and good behaviour ought not to be expressly extended to acts without the limits of the U. S. in cases where the acts are contrary to law and there is sufficient ground for suspecting the intention to commit them.’

“This change is suggested on the supposition that the occasion requires a paragraph should be addressed to Congress; manifestly alluding to the late information &c, Perhaps the question may be decided with the advantage of new lights from the westward in time for the message.

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“Barbary. ‘The late mission’ may be equivocal or obscure. ‘With Tunis alone some uncertainty remains’ would perhaps be sufficient.

“Missouri. The tenor of this paragraph ought to be such as to give as little topic as possible for foreign jealousy or complaint; especially as we are not prepared to say that the expedition did not enter limits within which Spain has real or plausible claims. It is *certain* that it will be presented to Spain as a measure at which she has a right to take offence. The paragraph might better parry the inconvenience, by being made less particular & by avoiding any allusion to the uses to which the *Pacific country* may be applied.

“Red River. ‘Nearly as far as the French establishments &c’ has the advantage of suggesting a plausible reason for not going on: but may it not also imply that those establishments were the limit to our claim?

“Mississippi. The survey of the Mississippi furnished, certainly, a very apt occasion for bringing into view our legitimate boundaries in the latitude 49; but as the mere assertion by ourselves will not strengthen our title, and may excite British sensations unseasonably, it may be doubted whether that much of the paragraph had not as well be omitted.

“University &c. The denunciation of standing armies, navies, & fortifications cannot be better expressed, if there be no room to apprehend that so emphatic a one may not at the present juncture embolden the presumption in foreign nations that an insuperable aversion to those objects guarantees the infinity of their insults and aggressions.

“‘Arts, Manufactures & other objects of public improvement,’ seem to give latitude nearly equivalent to ‘general welfare’ afterwards suggested to be too dangerous to remain a part of the Constitution. ‘& other objects of public improvement which it may be thought proper to specify’ would avoid the inconsistency.

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“After ‘the present state of our country’ might be added ‘and with the aid of the sale of public lands would be adequate to Roads & Canals also.’

“Instead of ‘sweep away all restraints &c.’—‘demolish the essential barriers between the General & the State Govts.’

“Conclusion ‘as far as they are capable of defence’ suggests a disagreeable and impolitic idea. ‘Preparations for the defence &c.’ without that expression, will suffice. This member of the sentence ought to be separated from the succeeding ones, which do not &c., not being like these without expense till called into actual use.

“It does not seem correct to say that war is forced on us by vain appeals to the justice of other nations. In spite of appeals &c., or some such turn to the expression would obviate the criticism.”

The Secretary of War in answer to a letter from the President of Nov. 17, wrote:

“H. Dearborn has looked over & considered the inclosed, without observing anything that he can consider as a defect, or requiring alteration.”

Gallatin's Notes.

(Indorsed: “Received Nov. 16, 06, Message.”)

“1st page. Foreign Relations ‘could leave no imputation on either our moderation or forbearance.’ The plan determining the Spanish differences by the purchase of Florida, will, if successful, prove highly advantageous to the United States, but is ill relished by Spain and in case of failure will not *alone* afford proofs of moderation or forbearance. These must be found in the contingent instructions given to our ministers in case they should fail in the principal object. What have these been? And do they fully justify the assertion? I have not seen them & mention this merely for consideration. [The ultimatum

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of our instructions is, 1. satisfaction for spoliations, & 2. silence as to limits, leaving each party to pursue it's own course as to these. *Insert by T.J.]*

“England. ‘Whether this (*issue*) will be such as &c. must depend on that issue.’ There is some inaccuracy in the construction of that sentence, the meaning of which is that the necessity of the repeal or reinforcement &c. depends on the issue of the negotiations.

“Spain. ‘has consented to meet us &c.’ Is the fact positively asserted by Mr. Armstrong? Mr. Erring in his last letter denies it.

“2d page. ‘and to permit no new settlement or post to be taken within it.’ The last instructions permit as an ultimatum & under certain circumstances the maintenance of the *increased* force at Bayou pierre. But the whole of this paragraph will probably require some modification if the intelligence of an arrangement between Wilkinson and Herreda proves true.

“Army. Might not the words ‘in other respects our,’ or some to that effect be substituted to ‘our regular.’ For it seems to me that the continuance of a corps of cavalry by *voluntary enlistment* & for the term stated in the preceding paragraph is to all intents an increase of regular force as contradistinguished from militia or volunteers.

“New Orleans. I would omit the words ‘perhaps the present fort of Plaquemine.’ 1st. In order to avoid unnecessary commitment of opinion. 2dly. Because Plaquemine is not, I believe, below all the firm lands. Observe also that the approaches by Lake Ponchartrain must be defended as well as those by the Mississippi.

“3d page. Fortifications. Substitute *a* for *some*; as this last expression may be construed into an evidence of disregard for that mode of defence. And considering the lively interest felt in a certain quarter on that question and the use made of it, is it necessary to speak of that object in terms as decisive as those used at the end of page 78? Might not these last be omitted or modified?

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"4th page. Insurrection. If the information received is not sufficiently decisive to affix criminality to certain individuals, the word 'are' at the end of 4th line may be omitted; but if the proofs received, without being legal evidence, are sufficient to impress a conviction that the object was of an internal nature, the word should remain.

"'Where an enterprise is *meditated* &c.' The following paragraph shews that there are cases in which the powers of prevention given by the laws are not sufficient against enterprises meditated against foreign nations. On that account, & because it appears important, considering the *Miranda's* expedition, not to impress too forcibly the opinion that those powers are really sufficient, I would suggest not only to substitute another word to 'meditated,' but to place the defect of the existing laws in that respect in a more prominent point of view than is done by the following paragraph. This may perhaps be affected by making that subject a distinct head instead of mentioning it incidentally and by indicating it in more general terms. For pointing out a single particular defect seems to diminish its importance. *Quere* Whether some more direct allusion to *Miranda's* expedition would not be politick & practicable?

"Indians. 'We have nothing to fear from that quarter.' The assurance seems too positive as danger may arise from causes not under our controul, such as the intrigues of Spanish agents to the south & of British traders on the northwest.

"5th and 6th pages. Red River. Mississippi. The details seem comparatively too long, both in relation to the other parts of the message generally & to the Missouri expedition. But I would, at all events avoid a commitment respecting the northern boundary of either Louisiana or the U. States. The boundary fixed by the Treaty of Utrecht might be & probably was intended for Canada rather than for Louisiana; and Crozat's charter expressly limits the last province to the 45th degree of latitude. As to the U. States, we have conceded that a parallel westwdly from the Lake of the Woods was not our

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necessary boundary, and have agreed heretofore to a straight line from that lake to the source of the Mississippi.

“7th page. Salt tax. This has never amounted to 600,000 dollars & averages about 550,000. The Mediterranean fund at present & whilst the European war continues is worth almost a million. The words ‘not materially different in amount’ are not therefore correct. Observe also that # of the salt tax, 8 cents per bushel, expire on 3d March, 1811. We may dispense with the whole of it from the present time, or say from 1 July next, provided the Medit fund be continued only for 2 years longer or till 1 Jany. 1809. If circumstances should then render a further continuation necessary it may then be again extended. I would, on the whole, propose to suppress the words ‘not materially different in amount,’ and that the next line should read ‘by continuing for a limited time the Medit fund.’

“University. ‘They cannot then be applied to the extinguishment &c.’ I would wish that between the words *then* & *the* the following should be inserted ‘without a modification assented to by the public creditors.’ Or that the idea should be inserted in some other way in the paragraph. It will be consistent with the opinion expressed that the extinguishment &c. & liberation &c. are *the most desirable of all objects*, and Congress have now under consideration a plan for the purpose which I submitted last session & was postponed because reported too late by the Comee of Ways & Means.

“On Fortifications &c. This is the paragraph which I think might without injury to the sense be omitted.

“8th page. ‘To be partitioned among the States in a federal & just ratio.’ Would it not be best to omit these words, as neither improvements nor education can ever in practice be exactly partitioned in that manner? And the suggestion might embarrass or defeat the amendment when before the House.

““ *The surplusses indeed which will arise &c.*’ It may be observed on whatever relates to the connection between those surplusses & the proposed improvements & university, 1st

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that, war excepted, the surplusses will, certainly & under any circumstance, even while the debt will be in a course of payment, be after 1 January 180 sufficient for any possible improvement. I have no doubt that they will amount to at least 2 millions a year and if no modification in the debt takes place to nearly five. 2dly. That it will take at least the two intervening years to obtain an amendment, pass the laws designating improvements and make the arrangements preparatory to any large expense. 3rdly. That the existing surplusses are at this moment sufficient for any university or national institute. But the whole of this part of the message rests on the supposition that a longer time must elapse before we are ready for any considerable expenditure for improvements, and that we would not be able to meet even that for the University before the time which must elapse in obtaining an amendment. The general scope of this part of the message seems also to give a preference to the University over general improvements; and it must not be forgotten, apart from any consideration of their relative importance, that the last proposition may probably be popular & that the other, for university, will certainly be unpopular. I think indeed that the only chance of its adoption arises from the case with which funds in public lands may be granted. It appears to me therefore that the whole of that part from the words above quoted 'the surplusses indeed &c' to the words 'to which our funds may become equal' should undergo a revisal; introducing in the same place the substance of the last paragraph of the 9th page respecting a donation of lands, which seems to be misplaced where it now stands. If a total revision is not approved, the following alterations are suggested.

"Erase from 'the surplusses' in 15th line to 'first' inclusively in 18th line; and insert 'the surplusses are already at this moment adequate to' or words to that effect.

"Erase from 'to such' in 8th line from bottom to the end of the page and insert, 'But whether our views be restrained.'

"9th. page. To the word 'may' in 2d line substitute 'will soon,' and in 3d line between 'equal' & 'I' substitute a comma to a full stop.

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“Would it not be better to stop, when speaking of the amendment at the words ‘to be applied’ 7th line? It would avoid a discussion on the words ‘general welfare’: And it must be observed that if even those words had the greatest extent in the constittn of which they are susceptible vixt that Congress had power to raise taxes &c for every purpose, which they might consider productive of public welfare, yet that would not give them the power to open roads, canals through the several states. The first reason given that the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated &c. is conclusive and seems sufficient. At all events I would suppress the paragraph which suggests an amendment to erase from the constitution those words as questionable in its nature & because the proposition seems to acknowledge that the words are susceptible of a very dangerous meaning.”

Gallatin to Jefferson.

“November 23, 1806.

“The words ‘ere long’ and ‘systems of fortifications’ were omitted by oversight in correcting the copy I sent you yesterday. I had made both these amendments in the original. But I have struck out the passage about fortifications altogether, for the principle that where there is a difference of opinion it is better to say too little than too much. Affectionate salutations.”

Madison's Notes.

(Indorsed: “Received Nov. 29, 06. Message.”)

“that whilst the public force was acting strictly on the defensive, & merely to protect our citizens from aggression, the criminal attempts of private individuals to decide for their country the question of peace or war, by commencing active and unauthorized hostilities ought to be promptly and effectually suppressed.”

December 2, 1806.

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To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

It would have given me, fellow citizens, great satisfaction to announce in the moment of your meeting that the difficulties in our foreign relations, existing at the time of your last separation, had been amicably and justly terminated. I lost no time in taking those measures which were most likely to bring them to such a termination, by special missions charged with such powers and instructions as in the event of failure could leave no imputation on either our moderation or forbearance. The delays which have since taken place in our negotiations with the British government appear to have proceeded from causes which do not forbid the expectation that during the course of the session I may be enabled to lay before you their final issue. What will be that of the negotiations for settling our differences with Spain, nothing which had taken place at the date of the last despatches enables us to pronounce. On the western side of the Mississippi she advanced in considerable force, and took post at the settlement of Bayou Pierre, on the Red river. This village was originally settled by France, was held by her as long as she held Louisiana, and was delivered to Spain only as a part of Louisiana. Being small, insulated, and distant, it was not observed, at the moment of redelivery to France and the United States, that she continued a guard of half a dozen men which had been stationed there. A proposition, however, having been lately made by our commander-in-chief, to assume the Sabine river as a temporary line of separation between the troops of the two nations until the issue of our negotiations shall be known; this has been referred by the Spanish commandant to his superior, and in the meantime, he has withdrawn his force to the western side of the Sabine river. The correspondence on this subject, now communicated, will exhibit more particularly the present state of things in that quarter.

The nature of that country requires indispensably that an unusual proportion of the force employed there should be cavalry or mounted infantry. In order, therefore, that the commanding officer might be enabled to act with effect, I had authorized him to call on the governors of Orleans and Mississippi for a corps of five hundred volunteer cavalry.

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The temporary arrangement he has proposed may perhaps render this unnecessary. But I inform you with great pleasure of the promptitude with which the inhabitants of those territories have tendered their services in defence of their country. It has done honor to themselves, entitled them to the confidence of their fellow-citizens in every part of the Union, and must strengthen the general determination to protect them efficaciously under all circumstances which may occur.

Having received information that in another part of the United States a great number of private individuals were combining together, arming and organizing themselves contrary to law, to carry on military expeditions against the territories of Spain, I thought it necessary, by proclamations as well as by special orders, to take measures for preventing and suppressing this enterprise, for seizing the vessels, arms, and other means provided for it, and for arresting and bringing to justice its authors and abettors. It was due to that good faith which ought ever to be the rule of action in public as well as in private transactions; it was due to good order and regular government, that while the public force was acting strictly on the defensive and merely to protect our citizens from aggression, the criminal attempts of private individuals to decide for their country the question of peace or war, by commencing active and unauthorized hostilities, should be promptly and efficaciously suppressed.

Whether it will be necessary to enlarge our regular force will depend on the result of our negotiation with Spain; but as it is uncertain when that result will be known, the provisional measures requisite for that, and to meet any pressure intervening in that quarter, will be a subject for your early consideration.

The possession of both banks of the Mississippi reducing to a single point the defence of that river, its waters, and the country adjacent, it becomes highly necessary to provide for that point a more adequate security. Some position above its mouth, commanding the passage of the river, should be rendered sufficiently strong to cover the armed vessels which may be

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stationed there for defence, and in conjunction with them to present an insuperable obstacle to any force attempting to pass. The approaches to the city of New Orleans, from the eastern quarter also, will require to be examined, and more effectually guarded. For the internal support of the country, the encouragement of a strong settlement on the western side of the Mississippi, within reach of New Orleans, will be worthy the consideration of the legislature.

The gun-boats authorized by an act of the last session are so advanced that they will be ready for service in the ensuing spring. Circumstances permitted us to allow the time necessary for their more solid construction. As a much larger number will still be wanting to place our seaport towns and waters in that state of defence to which we are competent and they entitled, a similar appropriation for a further provision for them is recommended for the ensuing year.

A further appropriation will also be necessary for repairing fortifications already established, and the erection of such works as may have real effect in obstructing the approach of an enemy to our seaport towns, or their remaining before them.

In a country whose constitution is derived from the will of the people, directly expressed by their free suffrages; where the principal executive functionaries, and those of the legislature, are renewed by them at short periods; where under the characters of jurors, they exercise in person the greatest portion of the judiciary powers; where the laws are consequently so formed and administered as to bear with equal weight and favor on all, restraining no man in the pursuits of honest industry, and securing to every one the property which that acquires, it would not be supposed that any safeguards could be needed against insurrection or enterprise on the public peace or authority.

The laws, however, aware that these should not be trusted to moral restraints only, have wisely provided punishments for these crimes when committed. But would it not be salutary to give also the means of preventing their commission? Where an enterprise is

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meditated by private individuals against a foreign nation in amity with the United States, powers of prevention to a certain extent are given by the laws; would they not be as reasonable and useful were the enterprise preparing against the United States? While adverting to this branch of the law, it is proper to observe, that in enterprises meditated against foreign nations, the ordinary process of binding to the observance of the peace and good behavior, could it be extended to acts to be done out of the jurisdiction of the United States, would be effectual in some cases where the offender is able to keep out of sight every indication of his purpose which could draw on him the exercise of the powers now given by law.

The states on the coast of Barbary seem generally disposed at present to respect our peace and friendship; with Tunis alone some uncertainty remains. Persuaded that it is our interest to maintain our peace with them on equal terms, or not at all, I propose to send in due time a reinforcement into the Mediterranean, unless previous information shall show it to be unnecessary.

We continue to receive proofs of the growing attachment of our Indian neighbors, and of their disposition to place all their interests under the patronage of the United States. These dispositions are inspired by their confidence in our justice, and in the sincere concern we feel for their welfare; and as long as we discharge these high and honorable functions with the integrity and good faith which alone can entitle us to their continuance, we may expect to reap the just reward in their peace and friendship.

The expedition of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, for exploring the river Missouri, and the best communication from that to the Pacific ocean, has had all the success which could have been expected. They have traced the Missouri nearly to its source, descended the Columbia to the Pacific ocean, ascertained with accuracy the geography of that interesting communication across our continent, learned the character of the country, of its commerce, and inhabitants; and it is but justice to say that Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, and their brave companions, have by this arduous service deserved well of their country.

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The attempt to explore the Red river, under the direction of Mr. Freeman, though conducted with a zeal and prudence meriting entire approbation, has not been equally successful. After proceeding up it about six hundred miles, nearly as far as the French settlements had extended while the country was in their possession, our geographers were obliged to return without completing their work.

Very useful additions have also been made to our knowledge of the Mississippi by Lieutenant Pike, who has ascended to its source, and whose journal and map, giving the details of the journey, will shortly be ready for communication to both houses of Congress. Those of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, and Freeman, will require further time to be digested and prepared. These important surveys, in addition to those before possessed, furnish materials for commencing an accurate map of the Mississippi, and its western waters. Some principal rivers, however, remain still to be explored, toward which the authorization of Congress, by moderate appropriations, will be requisite.

I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe. Although no law you may pass can take prohibitory effect till the first day of the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day.

The receipts at the treasury during the year ending on the 30th of September last, have amounted to near fifteen millions of dollars, which have enabled us, after meeting the current demands, to pay two millions seven hundred thousand dollars of the American claims, in part of the price of Louisiana; to pay of the funded debt upward of three millions of principal, and nearly four of interest; and in addition, to reimburse, in the course of the present month, near two millions of five and a half per cent. stock. These payments and

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reimbursements of the funded debt, with those which have been made in the four years and a half preceding, will, at the close of the present year, have extinguished upwards of twenty-three millions of principal.

The duties composing the Mediterranean fund will cease by law at the end of the present season. Considering, however, that they are levied chiefly on luxuries, and that we have an impost on salt, a necessary of life, the free use of which otherwise is so important, I recommend to your consideration the suppression of the duties on salt, and the continuation of the Mediterranean fund, instead thereof, for a short time, after which that also will become unnecessary for any purpose now within contemplation.

When both of these branches of revenue shall in this way be relinquished, there will still ere long be an accumulation of moneys in the treasury beyond the instalments of public debt which we are permitted by contract to pay. They cannot, then, without a modification assented to by the public creditors, be applied to the extinguishment of this debt, and the complete liberation of our revenues—the most desirable of all objects; nor, if our peace continues, will they be wanting for any other existing purpose. The question, therefore, now comes forward,—to what other objects shall these surpluses be appropriated, and the whole surplus of impost, after the entire discharge of the public debt, and during those intervals when the purposes of war shall not call for them?

Shall we suppress the impost and give that advantage to foreign over domestic manufactures? On a few articles of more general and necessary use, the suppression in due season will doubtless be right, but the great mass of the articles on which impost is paid is foreign luxuries, purchased by those only who are rich enough to afford themselves the use of them. Their patriotism would certainly prefer its continuance and application to the great purposes of the public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of federal powers. By these operations new channels of communication will be opened between the States; the lines of separation will disappear, their interests will be identified,

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and their union cemented by new and indissoluble ties. Education is here placed among the articles of public care, not that it would be proposed to take its ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal; but a public institution can alone supply those sciences which, though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country, and some of them to its preservation. The subject is now proposed for the consideration of Congress, because, if approved by the time the State legislatures shall have deliberated on this extension of the federal trusts, and the laws shall be passed, and other arrangements made for their execution, the necessary funds will be on hand and without employment.

I suppose an amendment to the constitution, by consent of the States, necessary, because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the constitution, and to which it permits the public moneys to be applied.

The present consideration of a national establishment for education, particularly, is rendered proper by this circumstance also, that if Congress, approving the proposition, shall yet think it more eligible to found it on a donation of lands, they have it now in their power to endow it with those which will be among the earliest to produce the necessary income. This foundation would have the advantage of being independent on war, which may suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes the resources destined for them.

This, fellow citizens, is the state of the public interest at the present moment, and according to the information now possessed. But such is the situation of the nations of Europe, and such too the predicament in which we stand with some of them, that we cannot rely with certainty on the present aspect of our affairs that may change from moment to moment, during the course of your session or after you shall have separated. Our duty is, therefore, to act upon

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things as they are, and to make a reasonable provision for whatever they may be. Were armies to be raised whenever a speck of war is visible in our horizon, we never should have been without them. Our resources would have been exhausted on dangers which have never happened, instead of being reserved for what is really to take place. A steady, perhaps a quickened pace in preparations for the defence of our seaport towns and waters; an early settlement of the most exposed and vulnerable parts of our country; a militia so organized that its effective portions can be called to any point in the Union, or volunteers instead of them to serve a sufficient time, are means which may always be ready yet never preying on our resources until actually called into use. They will maintain the public interests while a more permanent force shall be in course of preparation. But much will depend on the promptitude with which these means can be brought into activity. If war be forced upon us in spite of our long and vain appeals to the justice of nations, rapid and vigorous movements in its outset will go far toward securing us in its course and issue, and toward throwing its burdens on those who render necessary the resort from reason to force.

The result of our negotiations, or such incidents in their course as may enable us to infer their probable issue; such further movements also on our western frontiers as may show whether war is to be pressed there while negotiation is protracted elsewhere, shall be communicated to you from time to time as they become known to me, with whatever other information I possess or may receive, which may aid your deliberations on the great national interests committed to your charge.