

Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, July 10, 1807, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY J. MSS. (ALBERT GALLATIN.)

July 10, 1807.

Something now occurs almost every day on which it is desirable to have the opinions of the heads of departments, yet to have a formal meeting every day would consume so much of their time as to seriously obstruct their regular business. I have proposed to them, as most convenient for them, & wasting less of their time, to call on me at any moment of the day which suits their separate convenience, when, besides any other business they may have to do, I can learn their opinions separately on any matter which has occurred, & also communicate the information received daily. Perhaps you could find it more convenient, sometimes, to make your call at the hour of dinner, instead of going so much further to dine alone. You will always find a plate & a sincere welcome. In this way, that is, successively, I have to-day consulted the other gentlemen on the question whether letters of marque were to be considered as within our interdict. We are unanimously of opinion they are not. We consider them as essentially *merchant vessels*; that commerce is their main object, and arms merely incidental & defensive. Affectionate salutations.