

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, August 25, 1807, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE J. MSS. (JAMES MADISON.)

Monticello, Aug. 25, 1807.

Dear Sir, —Colo. Newton's inquiries are easily solved, I think, by application of the principles we have assumed, I. The *interdicted* ships are *enemies*. Should they be forced, by stress of weather, to run up into safer harbors, we are to act towards them as we would towards enemies in regular war, in a like case. Permit no intercourse, no supplies; & if they land, kill or capture them as enemies. If they lie still, Decatur has orders not to attack them without stating the case to me, & awaiting instructions. But if they attempt to enter Elizabeth river, he is to attack them without waiting for instructions. 2. Other armed vessels, putting in from sea in distress, are *friends*. They must report themselves to the collector, he assigns them their station, & regulates their repairs, supplies, intercourse & stay. Not needing flags, they are under the direction of the collector alone, who should be reasonably liberal as to their repairs & supplies, furnishing them for a voyage to any of their American ports; but I think with him their crews should be kept on board, & that they should not enter Elizabeth river.

I remember Mr. Gallatin expressed an opinion that our negotiations with England should not be laid before Congress at their meeting, but reserved to be communicated all together with the answer they should send us, whenever received. I am not of this opinion. I think, on the meeting of Congress, we should lay before them everything that has passed to that day, & place them on the same ground of information we are on ourselves. They will then

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have time to bring their minds to the same state of things with ours, & when the answer arrives, we shall all view it from the same position. I think, therefore, you should order the whole of the negociation to be prepared in two copies. I salute you affectionately.