

CONGRESS  
OF THE UNITED STATES.  
President's Message.

The following Message was delivered by Mr. Lewis, the President's Secretary to the Speaker of the House, and read by the clerk.

DECEMBER 8, 1801.

SIR,

The circumstances under which we find ourselves at this place rendering inconvenient the mode heretofore practised, of making by personal address the first communications between the Legislative and Executive branches, I have adopted that by Message, as used on all subsequent occasions through the session. In doing this, I have had principal regard to the convenience of the legislature, to the economy of their time, to their relief from the embarrassment of immediate answers, on subjects not yet fully before them; and to the benefits thence resulting to the public affairs. Trusting that a procedure found in these motives will meet their approbation, I beg leave through you, Sir, to communicate the inclosed Message with the documents accompanying it, to the honorable the House of Representatives, and pray you to accept, for yourself and them, the homage of my high respect, and consideration.

TH: JEFFERSON.

The honorable the Speaker  
of the House of Representatives.

Fellow Citizens of the Senate,  
And of the House of Representatives.

It is a circumstance of sincere gratification to me, that on meeting the great council of the nation, I am able to announce to them on grounds of reasonable certainty, that the wars & troubles which have for so many years afflicted our sister nations have at length come to an end; & that the communications of peace and commerce are once more opening among them. While we devoutly return thanks to the beneficent being who has been pleased to breathe into them the spirit of conciliation and forgiveness, we are bound with peculiar gratitude, to be thankful to him that our own peace has been preserved through so perilous a season; & ourselves permitted quietly to cultivate the earth, and to practice and improve those arts which tend to increase our comforts. The assurances indeed of friendly disposition received from all the powers with whom we have principal relations, had inspired a confidence that our peace with them would no have been disturbed. But a cessation of the irregularities which had afflicted the commerce of neutral nations, and of the irritations and injuries produced by them cannot but add to this confidence; and strengthens at the same time, the hope that wrongs committed on unoffending friends, under a pressure of circumstances, will now be reviewed with candor, and will be considered as founding just claims of retribution for the past, and new assurance for the future.

Among our Indian neighbours also a spirit of peace and friendship generally prevails, and I am happy to inform you that the continued efforts to introduce among them the implements and the practice of husbandry, & of the household arts, have not been without success; that they have become more and more sensible of the superiority of this dependence for clothing and subsistence, over the precarious resources of hunting and fishing: and already we are able to announce that, instead of that constant diminution of their numbers produced by their wars and their wants, some of them begin to experience an increase of population.

To this state of general peace with which we have been blessed, one only exception exists. Tripoli, the least considerable of the Barbary states, had come forward with demands unfounded either in right or in compact, and had permitted itself to denounce war on our failure to comply before a given day. The style of the demand admitted but one answer. I sent a small squadron of frigates into the Mediterranean, with assurances to that power of our sincere desire to remain in peace; but with orders to protect our commerce against the threatened attack. The Bey had already declared war in form. His cruizers were out. Two had arrived at Gibraltar. Our commerce in the Mediterranean was blocked; and that of the Atlantic in peril. The arrival of our squadron dispelled the danger. One of the

Tripolitan cruizers having fallen in with and engaged the small schooner Enterprize, commanded by lieut. Sturges, which had gone out as a tender to our larger vessels, was captured, after a heavy slaughter of her men, without the loss of a single one on our part. The bravery exhibited by our citizens on this element, will I trust, be a testimony to the world, that it is not a want of the virtue which makes us seek their peace; but a conscientious desire to direct the energies of our nation to the multiplication of the human race, and not to its destruction. Unauthorized by the constitution, without the sanction of Congress, to go beyond the line of defence, the vessel being disabled from committing further hostilities, was liberated with its crew. The legislature will doubtless consider whether by authorizing measures of offence, also they will place our force on an equal footing with that of its adversaries. I communicate all material information on this subject, that in the exercise of the important function, confided by the constitution to the legislature exclusively, their judgment may form itself on a knowledge and consideration of every circumstance of weight.

I wish I could say that our situation with all the other Barbary states was entirely satisfactory. Discovering that some delays had taken place in the performance of certain articles stipulated by us, I thought it my duty, by immediate measures for fulfilling them to vindicate to ourselves the right of considering the effect of departure from stipulation on their side. From the papers which will be laid before you, you will be enabled to judge whether our treaties are regarded by them as fixing at all the measure of their demands, or as guarding against the exercise of force, our vessels within their power; and to consider how far it will be safe and expedient to leave our affairs with them in their present posture.

I lay before you the result of the census lately taken of our inhabitants, to a conformity with which we are to reduce the ensuing rates of representation and taxation. You will perceive that the increase of numbers, during the last ten years, proceeding in geometrical ratio, promises a duplication in little more than twenty-two years. We contemplate the rapid growth, and the prospect it holds up to us, not with a view to the injuries it may enable us to do to others in some future day, but to the settlement of the extensive country still remaining vacant within our limits, to the multiplication of men, susceptible of happiness, educated in the love of order, habituated to self-government, and valuing its blessings above all price.

Other circumstances combined with the increase of numbers, have produced an augmentation of revenue arising from consumption, a ratio far beyond that of population alone; and though the changes in the foreign relations, now taking place so desirably for the whole world, may for a season affect this branch of revenue, yet weighing all probabilities of expense, as well as of income, there is reasonable ground of confidence that we may now safely dispense with all the internal taxes, comprehending excises, stamps, auctions, licences, carriages and refined luxuries: to which the postage on newspapers may be added, to facilitate the progress of information: & that the remaining sources of revenue will be sufficient to provide for the support of government, to pay the interest of the public debts, & to discharge the principal in shorter periods than the laws, or the general expectation had contemplated. War, indeed, and untoward events may change this prospect of things, and call for the expenses which the impost could not meet. But sound principles will not justify our taxing the industry of our fellow citizens to accumulate treasure for wars to happen, we know not when and which might not perhaps, happen, but from the temptations offered by that treasure.

These views however in reducing our burthens, are formed on the expectation, that a sensible, and at the same time, a salutary reduction may take place in our habitual expenditures. For this purpose, those of the civil government, the army and navy, will need revision. When we consider that this government is charged with the external and mutual relations only of these states; that the states themselves have principal care of our persons, our property, and our reputation; constituting the great field of

human concerns, we may well doubt whether our organization is not too complicated, too expensive; whether offices & officers have not been multiplied unnecessarily, & sometimes injuriously to the service they were meant to promote. I will cause to be laid before you an essay towards a statement, of those who, under public employment of various kinds, draw money from the treasury, or from our citizens. Time has not permitted a perfect enumeration; the ramifications of office being too multiplied and remote to be completely traced in a first trial—Among those who are dependent on executive discretion, I have begun the reduction of what was deemed unnecessary. The expenses of diplomatic agency have been considerably diminished. The inspectors of internal revenue, who were found to obstruct the accountability of the institution, have been discontinued—Several agencies, created by Executive authority, on salaries fixed by that also, have been suppressed, and should suggest the expediency of regulating that power by law, so as to subject its exercises to legislative inspection & sanction. Other reformations of the same kind will be pursued with that caution which is requisite, in removing useless things, not to injure what is retained. But the great mass of public offices is established by law, and therefore by law alone can be abolished. Should the legislature think it expedient to pass this roll in review, and to try all its parts by public utility, they may be assured of every aid and light which executive information can yield.

Considering the general tendency to multiply offices & dependencies, & to increase expense to the ultimate term of burthen which the citizen can bear, it behoves us to avail ourselves of every occasion which presents itself for taking off the burthen; that it never may be less here than, after leaving to labour the smallest portion of its earnings on which it can subsist, government shall in itself consume the residue of what it was instituted to guard.

In our care too of the public contributions entrusted to our direction, it would be prudent to multiply barriers against their dissipation, by appropriating specific sums to every specific purpose susceptible of definition: by disallowing all applications of money varying from the appropriation in object or transcending it in amount, by reducing the undefined field of contingencies, and thereby circumscribing discretionary powers over money; and by bringing back to single department all accountabilities for money, where the examination may be prompt efficacious and uniform.

An account of the receipts & expenditures, of the last year, as prepared by the secretary of the Treasury, will, as usual, be laid before you. The success which has attended the late sales of the public lands shews that, with attention they may be made an important source of receipt. Among the payments, those made in discharge of the principal and interest of the national debt, will shew that the public faith has been exactly maintained. To these will be added an estimate of appropriations necessary for the ensuing year. This last will of course be effected by such modifications of the system of expense as you shall think proper to adopt.

A statement has been formed by the secretary at war, on mature consideration, of all the posts and stations where garrisons will be expedient, and of the number of men requisite for each garrison. The whole amount is considerably short of the present military establishment. For the surplus no particular use can be pointed out. For defence against invasion, their number is as nothing; nor is it considered needful or safe that a standing army should be kept up, in time of peace, for that purpose. Uncertain as we must ever be of the particular point in our circumference where an enemy may chuse to invade us, the only force which can be ready at every point, and competent to oppose them, is the the body of neighboring citizens, as formed into a militia. On these collected from the parts most convenient, in numbers proportioned to the invading force, it is best to rely not only to meet the first attack, but if it threatens to be permanent, to maintain the defence until regulars may be engaged to relieve them. These considerations render it important that we should, at every session, continue to amend the defects, which from time to time shew themselves, in the laws for

regulating the militia, until they are sufficiently perfect: not should we now, or at any time, separate, until we can say we have done every thing for the militia, which we could do, were an enemy at our door.

The provision of military stores on hand will be laid before you, that you may judge of the additions still requisite.

With respect to the extent to which our naval preparations should be carried,

some difference of opinion may be expected to appear: but just attention to the circumstances of every part of the union will doubtless reconcile all. A small force will probably continue to be wanted, for actual service in the Mediterranean. Whatever annual sum beyond that you may think proper to appropriate to naval preparations, would perhaps be better employed in providing those articles which may be kept without waste or consumption, and be in readiness when any exigence calls them into use. Progress has been made, as will appear by papers now communicated, in providing materials for twenty-four gun ships as directed by law.

How far the authority given by the legislature for procuring and establishing sites for naval purposes, has been perfectly understood and pursued in the execution, admits of some doubt. A determination of the expenses already incurred on that subject shall be laid before you. I have in certain cases, suspended or slackened these expenditures, that the legislature might determine whether many yards are necessary as have been contemplated.—The works at these places are among those permitted to go on, and 5 of the 7 frigates directed to be laid up, have been brought and laid on here, where, besides the safety of their position, they are under the eye of the executive administration, as well as of its agents, and where yourselves also will be guided by your own view, in the legislative provisions respecting them, which may from time to time be necessary. They are preserved in such condition, as well the vessels as whatever belongs to them, as to be at all times ready for sea on a short warning. Two others are yet to be laid up, so soon as they shall have received the repairs requisite to put them also in a sound condition. As a superintending officer will be necessary at each yard, his duties and emoluments; hitherto fixed by the executive, will be a more proper subject for legislation. A communication will also be made of our progress in the execution of the law respecting the vessels directed to be sold.

The fortifications of our harbours, more or less advanced, present considerations of great difficulty. While some of them are on a scale sufficiently proportioned to the advantages of their position, to the efficacy of their protection, and the importance of the points within it, others are so extensive, will cost so much in the first erection, so much in their maintenance, and require such a force to garrison them, as to make it questionable what is best now to be done. A statement of those commenced or projected, of the expenses already incurred, and estimates of their future cost, as far as can be foreseen, shall be laid before you, that you may be enabled to judge whether any alteration is necessary in the laws respecting this subject.

Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are then most thriving, when left most free to individual enterprise. Protection from casual embarrassments, however, may sometimes be seasonably interposed. If in the course of your observations or inquiries, they should appear to need any aid, within the limits of our constitutional powers, your sense of their importance is a sufficient assurance they will occupy your attention. We cannot, indeed, but all feel an anxious solicitude for the difficulties under which our carrying trade will soon be placed. How far it can be relieved, otherwise than by them, is a subject of important consideration.

The judiciary system of the United States and especially that portion of it recently erected, will of course present itself to the contemplation of Congress; and that they may be able to judge of the proportion which the institution bears to the business it has to perform, I have caused to be procured from the several states, and now lay before Congress, an exact statement of all the causes decided since the first establishment of the courts, and of those