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STATE PAPERS.

The following Correspondence is from the Boston Centinel, under the head of "Further Suppressed Documents. Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison.

PARIS, Dec. 27, 1807.

"I forwarded to Mr. McElhenny a copy of a second and very extraordinary decree, [Milan decree of Dec. 17,] of this government, with regard to neutral commerce. Whether it be meant to stimulate Great-Britain to the commission of new outrages, or to quicken us in repelling those she has already committed, the policy is equally unwise, and so decidedly so, that I know not a man of consideration who approves of it. It is however not less true, that it is as difficult to find one who will hazard an objection to it. T—d, who in this way is permitted to go further than any other person, dare not avow his opinion of it, nor (bad as he thinks it) do more than state that the present moment would appear to dictate some modifications. To this point he stands engaged to go, and I wait the result with much anxiety. The emperor is expected here on the last day of the month."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Madison to Mr. Armstrong.

FEBRUARY 8, 1808.

[To follow the paragraph ending with the words "pari passu with his enemy."] "Whether the intimations have any reference to the distinction between such parts of the French decree as operate municipally on shore, and such as operating on the high seas, violate the rights of neutrals, or to a distinction between the former restriction, and the last extension of the Decree with respect to the United States, Mr. Erskine did not seem authorised to say. The probability is, that neither of these distinctions entered into the views of the British cabinet. But it is certainly neither less the duty nor the true policy of the emperor of the French, so to vary his decree, as to make it consistent with the rights of neutrals and the freedom of the seas, and particularly with his positive stipulations with the United States. This may be the more reasonably expected, as nothing can be more clear, as has been already observed, than the effect of the decree, as far as it can be carried into effect, would not be sensibly diminished by abolishing its operation beyond the limits of territorial sovereignty."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison.

FEBRUARY 22, 1808.

"Mr. Patterson, offering so good a conveyance that I cannot but employ it. Nothing has occurred here, since the date of my public dispatches (the 17th) to give to our business an aspect more favourable than it then had, but on the other hand, I have come to the knowledge of two facts, which I think sufficiently show the decided character of the Emperor's policy with regard to us. These are first, that in a council of administration held a few days past, when it was proposed to modify the operation of the decrees of Nov. 1806, and Dec. 1807, (though the proposition was supported by the whole weight of the Council,) he became highly indignant, and declared that these decrees should suffer no change—and that the Americans should be compelled to take the positive character of either allies or enemies; 2d, that on the 27th of January last, twelve days after Mr. Champagny's written assurances, that the decrees should work no change in the property sequestered until our discussion with England were brought to a close, and seven days before he reported to me verbally these very assurances, the Emperor had by a special decision confiscated two of our ships and their cargoes (the Julius Henry, and Junata) for want merely of a document not required by any law or usage, of the commerce in which they had been engaged. This act was taken as I am informed on a general report of sequestered cases, amounting to one hundred and sixty, and which at present prices will yield upwards of one hundred millions of francs, a sum whose magnitude alone renders hopeless all attempts at saving it.—Danes, Portuguese, and Americans, will be the principal sufferers. If I am right in supposing that the Emperor has definitively taken his ground, I cannot be wrong in concluding that you will immediately take yours."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison.

MARCH 9.

"The conversation alluded to in the copy of the letter—did not take place till the 8th

inst. when the emperor declared that if means could be found to make an exception of the Nov. Decree, that such exception should have his consent."

Extract from the same to the same.

MARCH 15, 1808.

"I stated in my last letter the substance of a declaration made by the Emperor, viz. that if means could be found to except American property from the operation of the Decree of Nov. 1806, without infringing the principles of the decrees, he would immediately make the exception. No time was lost in communicating the declaration to me, and I was invited to point out the means it required, and assured, that they should be immediately submitted to his majesty. Little as I liked the proposition, and much as I doubted the sincerity of the declaration out of which it grew I could not refuse any agency of mine in rescuing so much of the American property sequestered in the ports of France as should come within this new rule. I accordingly wrote the note (a copy of which is subjoined to this letter) pointing out in a few words the property to which that rule would apply. This note was put into the Emperor's hand by the Prince of Benevento, who, though six days have now elapsed, has not yet received an answer."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Madison to Mr. Armstrong. [To follow the paragraph ending with the words "will be immediately taken."]

"The repeal of her decrees is the more to be expected, above all, if Great Britain should repeal, or be likely to repeal her's, as the plan of the original decree at Berlin did not extend to a violation of the freedom of the seas, and was restricted to a municipal operation for nearly an entire year, notwithstanding the illegal British order of January, 1807, and as a return of France to that restricted scope of her plan would so immaterially diminish its operation against the British commerce; that operation being so completely in the power of France on land, and so little on the high seas. But although we cannot of right demand of France more than a repeal of so much of her decrees as violate the freedom of the seas, and a great point will be gained by a repeal of that part of them, yet as it may not have the effect of inducing a repeal of the whole illegal system of the British government, which may seek pretexts to plead a necessity for counteracting the unprecedented and formidable mode of warfare practised against her; it will be desirable that as little room as possible should be left for this remaining danger to the tranquil enjoyment of our commercial rights."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Pinckney.

PARIS, 26th June, 1808.

"The St. Michael arrived at L'Orient on the 1st inst. and the government messenger at Paris on the 8th; a passport for the vessel to Falmouth, thence to L'Orient again, was immediately requested, but one in the form could not be granted, but by order of the emperor, and this was not given till the 13th; these circumstances will account for the long detention of your dispatches. We have reason to regret that the views of our government, founded on the justice and wisdom of the belligerent powers, are so little likely to succeed. Attempts of this character made here (and they have not been unfrequent) have hitherto done no good. Nay the repetition of these may be fairly presumed to have done mischief, inasmuch as it has tended to establish a creed, that words in some form or other, are the only means we have to employ. The French council of prizes which is, I am told, as like the English Court of Admiralty as one egg is like another, has lately begun a career of condemnation. Between the first and fifteenth inst. five cases have been decided, and I am assured that orders have been received from Bayonne for condemning all American cases en-blot, [in mass.] What has suspended the axe since the fifteenth, we can but conjecture. It may be presumed that the reflections of the Spanish Junta on the political and other relations subsisting between Spain and the United States, through the medium of the colonies, may have produced the pause. That it is not owing to any conquest which good principles may have obtained over bad ones, is certain. Are things any better your side the channel?"

Extract of a letter from Mr. Armstrong to Mr. Madison.

AUGUST 30, 1808.

"We have somewhat overrated our means of coercion of the two great belligerents to a course of justice. The embargo is a measure calculated, above any other, to keep us whole, and keep us in peace, but beyond this you must not count upon it. Here it is not felt, and in England [in the midst of the more recent and interesting events of the day] it is forgotten. I hope that unless France shall do us justice we shall raise the embargo, and

make in its stead the experiment of an armed commerce. Should she adhere to her wicked and foolish measures, we ought not to content ourselves with doing this. There is much, very much besides that we can do, and we ought not to omit doing all we can, because it is believed here that we cannot do much, and even that we will not do what we have the power of doing."

Letter from Mr. Pinckney to Mr. Madison.

FEBRUARY 2, 1808.

"SIR—I had an interview this morning with Mr. Canning, at his own request. One object of the interview related to the message of the President of the 27th of October last, of which a newspaper copy had been received from Mr. Erskine. A call for a copy of this message was expected in Parliament, and Mr. C. wished to be in a situation to produce it. I could not assist him, and I suppose the newspaper copy will be considered sufficient."

"As soon as this subject was disposed of, Mr. C. observed that he had requested to see me principally for the purpose of conversing with me privately and extra-officially upon the duty proposed to be laid in consequence of their late blockading orders, upon cotton intended for re-exportation to enemy's ports upon the continent. The very few occasional remarks which I had made upon this subject at our last interview [already mentioned in my letter of the 15th] had led him to suppose that it was only to this mode of excluding our cotton from France that the United States would be likely to object. And if their object could be accomplished in another way, the measure would cease to be offensive. Having admitted [what, indeed, was sufficiently obvious before] that they looked to the intended duty upon cotton as a complete prohibition; he said that if it would be more acceptable to the United States that the form of the proceeding should be changed, so as to leave the exclusion of cotton from the continent to the mere effect of the blockade, their desire to consult their feelings and wishes, in whatever did not entirely counteract the great end of the measure, would dispose them to adopt such a modification of their plan. In the course of his explanations upon this point, he introduced professions of good will towards our country, of regret that France had imposed upon them the necessity of resorting to a step which might be supposed to press with severity upon our interests, and of an anxious desire that a return to a system of equity and moderation on the part of her enemies, would speedily enable Great Britain to abandon [as he would in that case certainly do] the whole of the recent orders in council. He stated that it was peculiarly important towards the first effect of the orders [of which it was the object to compel France to relieve the commerce of the world from the oppression of her late decrees] that considerable supplies of cotton should not be introduced into the continent—that it had been hoped and believed, that the United States would not receive harsh or unfriendly, a constrained attempt by Great Britain to prevent such supplies from being received by the parties to the war, especially as it was certain that Great Britain could herself consume the whole of the cotton which we were in the habit of sending abroad, and that they had preferred the imposition of a duty upon cotton to a direct prohibition of the operation of the blockade, because it was consistent with those various and extensive modifications of the blockade to which they had been led; not merely by views of advantage to themselves, but by respect for the convenience and feelings of other nations, and particularly of America. In fine, he wished to know my private opinion before the subject came before the Parliament, whether an alteration in this respect from a prohibitory duty to an absolute interdict, would be likely to be acceptable to us. I replied in as conciliatory a manner as I could, that as soon as I had understood that a duty was to be proposed on re-exported cotton, I had been disposed to take for granted that the object was not revenue, but prohibition."

"That whether the object were the one or the other, it was, as he knew, my opinion, that the U. S. would hold that object as well as the means and the whole system connected with them, to be utterly inadmissible, and that I did not feel myself authorised to say, to which of the causes he had suggested, my government would give the preference, or that it would feel a preference for either. Mr. C. at length asked me, if I should think it worth while to consult my government on this subject, observing at the same time, that he would not wish it to be done, if there was the least danger of giving offence; and assuring me, that what he had said, proceeded from motives the most amicable and respectful towards us. He added, that upon reflection, this would be the most convenient mode, as it would now give

them a good deal of trouble to accommodate their plan, as prepared for parliament, to a change of so much importance in season, to be acted upon."

"I answered, in substance, as I saw it was his wish, that I should mention whatever had passed to you. And that I did not doubt, that the motives of his proposal, whatever might be thought of the proposal itself would be acceptable to the President. He requested me to say to you, that although the necessary bills would be proposed, and would pass in Parliament, according to their first project of a duty, yet that the alteration above suggested, would be adopted whenever it should be known, that it would be agreeable to us."

"I must not trouble you with any reflections upon this conversation, but it is my duty to say, that although Mr. C's manner was extremely conciliatory, not a word escaped him to encourage a hope, that the orders in council would be in any degree abandoned, or that I should gain any thing by urging a re-consideration of them. I threw out some intimations with that tendency, but soon perceived that it could not be useful to follow them up. I have the honour to be, &c."

A letter from Mr. Pinckney to Mr. Madison.

LONDON, January 26th, 1808.

"SIR—I had the honour to receive this morning your letter of the 23rd of last month inclosing a copy of a message from the President to Congress, and of their act in pursuance of it, laying an embargo on our vessels and exports. It appeared to be my duty to lose no time in giving such explanations of the British government, of this wise and salutary measure, as your letter suggests. And accordingly I went to Downing-street immediately, and had a short conference with Mr. Canning, who received my explanation with great apparent satisfaction, and took occasion to express the most friendly disposition towards our country. I avail myself of this opportunity to mention a subject of some importance, connected with the late orders in council."

"I had been told, that American vessels coming into British ports under warning, could not obtain any document to enable them to return to the United States, in the event of its being their original voyage, although they are not prohibited from returning, yet as the warning is enforced on their papers, the return may be hazardous, without some British documents to prove compliance with it, and give security to the voyage. Mr. C. took a note of what I said, and assured me that whatever was necessary to give the facility in question, would be done without delay; and added that it was their sincere wish to shew in every thing connected with the orders in council, which only necessity had compelled them to adopt, their anxiety to accommodate them, as far as was consistent with their object, to the feelings and interest of the American government and people. I was induced by these observations to mention and to make several strong remarks upon the duty intended to be imposed on our cotton, when re-exported to the continent, and the adherence to the determination not to allow to our vessels warned into British ports, any change of destination. He told me that these subjects (with which however, it was evident, he was very little acquainted) should be taken into immediate consideration, and that he would let me know the result. I am to have another interview with him in the course of a few days."

Extract of a letter from Mr. Pinckney to Mr. Madison.

LONDON, Sept. 21, 1808.

"The Hope arrived at Cowes from France, the 13th."

"Not having heard from Mr. Canning, although he returned to London the 16th, I called again yesterday at Downing-street, and was assured that the answer to my note would be sent to night or early to-morrow morning. Mr. Atwater will of course be able to leave town on Friday, and embark on Saturday with a copy of it."

"I have been told since the arrival of the last British packet, (but do not believe it) that there is more probability than I had anticipated, that the late events in Spain and Portugal, (which ought not to be considered as deciding any thing,) will have an effect on public opinion in America against the continuance of the embargo, and favourable to all the purposes of Great Britain. If this were true, I should think it was deeply to be lamented. I may misunderstand the subject, but I cannot persuade myself that any thing that has happened on this side the Atlantic, ought to induce us in any degree to retreat from our present system. If we should resolve to trade with Spain and Portugal, (G. Britain and France persisting in their orders and decrees) in any way to which Great Britain would not object, we must suspend the embargo as to those countries only, or as to those countries and G. Britain or we must repeal it altogether. The temptation