

M E S S A G E
OF THE
President of the United States,
TO
Both Houses of Congress.
MAY 4th, 1798.

*Gentlemen of the Senate, and
Gentlemen of the House of Representatives.*
I NOW transmit to Congress copies of
all the communications, from our En-
voys Extraordinary, received since their
arrival in Paris, excepting those before
presented by me to both Houses.

J O H N A D A M S.
United States,
May 4th, 1798.
(No. 6.)
Paris, February 7th, 1798.

Dear Sir,
WE transmit to you in this inclosure
our last letter to the minister of foreign
relations, though dated the 17th ult. it
was not, on account of the time taken to
translate into a letter delivered till the
31st. In our communications here, al-
though we have, agreeable to your in-
structions, written in our own language,
we at the same time have taken the pre-
caution, lest our meaning should be mis-
represented or misunderstood, to accom-
pany them with an accurate translation.
We have not yet received any answer
to this communication, and should no
notice be taken of it in a few days, we shall
apply in a more explicit manner for our
passports.

The councils have passed the decree
mentioned in No. 5, as having been re-
commended by the Directory to capture
and condemn all neutral vessels laden
in part or in whole with the manufactures
or productions of England or its posses-
sions. We inclose you the official copy
of the report on that subject, and shall
represent to this government the injus-
tice and injury which it must inevitably
occasion.

We have the honor to be, with great
respect, your most obedient humble ser-
vants,

CHARLES C. PINCKNEY,
J. MARSHALL,
E. GERRY.
Col. Pickering,
Secretary of the United States.

TO THE
Minister of Foreign Affairs
OF THE
FRENCH REPUBLIC.
Citizen Minister,

THE undersigned Envoys Extraordi-
nary and Ministers Plenipotentiary from
the United States of America to the
French Republic, have been hitherto re-
strained by the expectation of entering
on the objects of their mission in the
forms usual among nations, from address-
ing to the Executive Directory, thro'
you, those explanations and reclamations
with which they are charged by the go-
vernment they represent. If this ex-
pectation is to be relinquished, yet the
unfeigned wish of the United States to
restore that harmony between the two
Republics, which they have so unremit-
tingly sought to preserve, renders it the
duty of the undersigned to lay before
the government of France, however in-
formal the communication may be deem-
ed, some considerations, in addition to
those already submitted, relative to the
existing differences between the two
nations.

Openly and repeatedly have France
and America interchanged unequivocal
testimonials of reciprocal regard. These
testimonials were given by the United
States, with all the ardor and sincerity
of youth. It is still believed that on the
part of France they were likewise the
offspring of real esteem. They were
considered on the other side of the Atlan-
tic as desirable as the Republics themselves.
Unhappily the scene is changed; and
America looks around in vain for the al-
ly of the friend. The contrast both of
language and of conduct which the pre-
sent so avowedly exhibits to a portion of
the past, has been repeatedly attributed

by France, to a disposition alleged to
exist in the government of the United
States, unfriendly to this Republic, and
partial towards its enemies.

That government, astonished at a re-
proach so unbounded in fact, to contra-
dicted by its declarations and its conduct,
could scarcely consider this charge as ter-
rifying, and has ever cherished the hope,
that a candid review of its conduct foun-
ded on the documents, and aided by the
arguments with which the Executive Di-
rectory has been furnished, would have
relieved it from the injurious suspicion.—
This hope seems not to have been reali-
zed. The undersigned, therefore, deem
it proper to precede their application for
that justice which they claim from France,
by an effort to remove the cause, which
is alleged to have produced injuries of
which they complain. With this view,
they pray the attention of the Executive
Directory to a serious and candid re-con-
sideration of the leading measures adop-
ted by the government of the United
States, and persuade themselves, that
however various and multiple the chan-
nels may be thro' which misinformation,
concerning the dispositions of that go-
vernment, may have been received, yet
this reconsideration will remove un-
founded prejudices and entirely exonerate
the American nation from an accusation it
knows to be unfounded, and believes to
be supported by no single fact.

When that war which has been waged
with such unparalleled fury, which in its
vast vicissitudes of fortune, has alternately
threatened the very existence of the con-
flicting parties, but which, in its progress
has surrounded France with such splen-
dor, and added still more to her glory
than her territory, when that war first
involved those nations with whom the
United States were in habits of friendly
intercourse, it became incumbent on their
government to examine their situation,
their connexions and their duties. Ame-
rica found herself at peace with all of
the belligerent powers. She was con-
nected with some of them by treaties of
amity and commerce, and with France
by a treaty of alliance also. These se-
veral treaties were considered with the
most serious attention and with a sincere
wish to determine by fair construction
the obligation which they really im-
posed.—The result of this enquiry, was a
full conviction, that her engagements by
no means bound her to take part in the war,
but left her so far the mistress of her
own conduct as to be at perfect liberty to
observe a system of real neutrality. It
is deemed unnecessary to analyze those
treaties in order to support the propriety
of this decision, because it is not recol-
lected ever to have been questioned and
is believed not to admit of doubt.

Being bound by no duty to enter into
the war, the government of the United
States conceived itself bound by duties the
most sacred to abstain from it. Contem-
plating man, even in a different society,
as the friend of man, a state of peace,
though untrampled by treaty, was con-
sidered as imposing obligations not to be
wantonly violated.

These obligations created by the laws
of nature, were in some instances streng-
thened by solemn existing engagements, of
which good faith required a religious
observance.

To a sense of moral right, other con-
siderations of the greatest magnitude
were added, which forbade the govern-
ment of the U. States to plunge them un-
necessarily into the miseries of the bloody
conflict then commencing. The great
nations of Europe either impelled by am-
bition, or by existing or supposed po-
litical interests, peculiar to themselves,
have consumed more than a third of the
present century in wars. Whatever
causes may have produced so afflicting an
evil, they cannot be supposed to have
been entirely extinguished, and humani-
ty can scarcely indulge the hope, that the
temper or constitution of man is so altered
as to exempt the next century from the
ills of the past. Strong for its arms,
powerful armies, immense armies, the

accumulated wealth of ages and a full
population, enable the nations of Europe
to support these wars in which they are
induced to engage by motives which
they deem adequate, and by interests
exclusively their own. In all resp. dif-
ferent is the situation of the United
States; possessed of an extensive un-
settled territory, on which bountiful nature
has bestowed with a lavish hand all the
capacities for future legitimate greatness.
They indulge no thirst for conquest, no
ambition for the extension of their limits.
Exercised by no dangerous powers they
neither fear, nor are jealous of their
neighbours, and are not on that account
obliged to arm for their own safety.—
Separated from Europe by a vast and
friendly ocean, they are but remotely, if
at all, affected by those interests, which
agitate and influence this portion of the
globe. Thus circumstanced, they have
no motive for a voluntary war. On the
contrary, the most powerful considerations
urge them to avoid it. An extensive and
undefended commerce, peculiarly nec-
essary to a nation which does not manufac-
ture for itself, which is and for a long
time to come, will be almost exclusively
agricultural, would have been its im-
mediate and certain victim. The surplus
produce of their labour must have per-
ished on their hands, and that increase of
population so essential to a young coun-
try, must, with their prosperity, have
sustained a serious check. Their exer-
tions too would not have been conside-
rable, unless the war had been transfer-
red to their own bosoms.

Great as are the means, and resources
of the United States, for self-defence,
it is only in self-defence that those re-
sources can be completely displayed. Nei-
ther the genius of the nation, nor the
state of its finances, admits of calling its
troops from the plough, but to defend
her own liberty and their own fire-
brands. How criminal must have been
that government which could have plun-
ged its constituents in a war, to which
they were neither impelled by duty or
solicited by interest; in which they com-
mitted so much to hazard; in which
they must suffer, in order to act efficiently,
and could only display their energy, too
repelling invasion! But motives still
more powerful than the calamities of the
moment, have influenced the government
of the United States.

It was perhaps impossible to have en-
gaged voluntarily in the existing con-
flict, without launching into the almost
boundless ocean of European politics,
without contracting habits of national
conduct, and forming close political con-
nexions which must have compromised
the future peace of the nation, and have
involved it in all the future quarrels of
Europe. A long train of armies, debts
& taxes, checking the growth, diminishing
the happiness, and perhaps endangering
the liberty of the United States, must
have followed the adoption of such a sys-
tem. And for what purpose should it
have been adopted? For what purpose
should America thus burthen herself
with the conflicts of Europe? Not to
comply with any engagements she has
formed, not to promote her own views,
her own objects, her own happiness, or
her own safety, but to move as a Satel-
lite around some greater Planet, whose
laws the must of necessity obey. In ad-
dition to these weighty considerations, it
was believed that France would derive
more benefit from the neutrality of Ame-
rica, than from her becoming a party in
the war.

The determination then of the go-
vernment of the United States to pre-
serve that neutral station in which the
war found them, far from manifesting a
partiality for the enemies of France, was
only a measure of justice to itself and to
others, and did not even derogate from
that predilection for this Republic, which
it has so repeatedly expressed and display-
ed. Having avowed this determination,
encreased motives of honor and of duty
commanded its faithful observance. It
is not a principle which remains now to

be settled; that a fraudulent neutrality is
no neutrality at all; and that the nation
which would be admitted to its privileges
must also perform the duties it enjoys.
Had the government of the United States,
declaring itself neutral, indulged its par-
tialities by granting favours untrampled
by treaty, to one of the belligerent pow-
ers, which it refused to another, it could
no longer have claimed the immunities
of a situation of which the obligations
were forgotten, it would have become a
party in the war, as certainly as it war
had been openly and formally declared,
and it would have added to the mischiefs
of wantonly engaging in such a hazard-
ous contest, the dishonor of a sincere and
fraudulent conduct: it would have ac-
quired circuitously an object which it
could not plainly avow, or directly pur-
sue, and would have tricked the people of
the United States into a war, which it
could not venture openly to declare.

It was matter of real delight to the
government and people of America, to
be informed that France did not wish to
interrupt the peace they enjoyed.

The undersigned have been induced to
rest upon this last necessity, and a decisive
step taken by their government, altho'
its propriety may not be controverted,
from a conviction, that if the right of the
United States, to observe a fair and hon-
est neutrality be established, the gene-
ral charges of an unfriendly disposition,
made against them by France must be
relinquished, because the facts, by which
those charges are supported, will be
found to have grown inevitably out of
that situation.

This measure was accompanied by an-
other, which in repelling so astonishing a
charge as partiality for the enemies of
France, deserves to be noticed. Soon
after the government of the U. States
had notified to its citizens the duties
which its neutrality enjoined, Mr. Gen-
et, the first minister from this Republic,
arrived at Philadelphia; altho' his con-
duct had been such as to give cause for
serious alarm, altho' before he was even
acknowledged as a minister, or had
reached the authority which could inspect
his credentials, he had assumed the func-
tions of the government to which he was
deputed. Yet the government resolved
to see in him only the representative of a
Republic, to which it was sincerely at-
tached, gave him the same warm and cor-
dial reception which he had experienced
from its citizens, without a single excep-
tion, from Charleston to Philadelphia.
The then situation of France deserves
to be remembered.

While the recollection adds, citizen
minister, to the glory with which our na-
tion is encircled, it establishes the sincer-
ity of the United States.

The most formidable combination the
world had ever seen, threatened the ex-
termination of this Republic, Austria,
Germany, Prussia, Britain, Spain, Hol-
land and Sardinia, were in arms against
France, and Russia was leagued in the con-
solation. Nor was this all. The Repub-
lic distracted by internal divisions, con-
tained numerous enemies within its own
bosom, and a considerable portion of its
proper force was arrayed against itself.
In such a state of things, the most san-
guine might fear, and the most ardent
hesitate. Confident in their strength
and relying on success, the collected
powers sought to arm in their cause the
residue of the world, and deemed it cri-
minal to acknowledge the sovereignty
of the Republic. The nations of Euro-
pe, even those who had not entered
into the contest, were either of themselves
unwilling to acknowledge this sovereignty,
or were deterred by fear from doing
so. Had the partialities of America been
against France, this example would have
been followed. According to the rules
of ordinary calculation, the measure
would have been safe, and consequently
a government feeling the attachment now
so unjustly attributed to that of the U.
States, would have indicated those at-
tachments by its adoption. Far from
pursuing such a system, the U. States,