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FROM THE SPIRIT OF '76.  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.  
NO. I.

Writer who now presumes to address you affect to conceal from you, that he is not the number of your political admirers. He has opposed your late election to the best ability, for reasons that have not been told from yourself, or from the world. He gains do it, if the case were again to occur, candour compels him to confess—[blessed candour expect nothing!]—that he has more than he had anticipated to approve in your presidential conduct—and he is incapable (in any circumstances) of treating the chief of his country with intentional disrespect. With this declaration, he, humbly, yet solicits your attention for a very few minutes. He is aware of the importance of your time, and will not consume any part of it apologizing for his intrusion.—Through you, he addresses to the considerate and reflecting portion of the good people of the United States. The great bulk of the people of any country can have in the administration of its affairs, they should be managed well. It is of no consequence to them (however important to us) for whose emolument they have been directed into two gangs and driven, like so many India negroes under the lash of a prostitute—that the sedition law, and the provision, and the eight per cent loans, and the war with France, were the work of federalism, that the non importation act; the denial of writ of *habeas corpus*, by military force, the proposed suspension by one branch of the legislature; the abrogation, by bill, of the common law; as respects treason; the embroiling of our affairs abroad; the embargo, that loathsome, and the rickety non-intercourse law, been the spurious offspring of (self called) federalism. The people may indeed acquire one lesson from the lesson before them. It is that, as well as in the unhappy country from which we are descended; with all the clamour and rancour of hate between whig and tory—in power become Tories; and Tories out of power become Whigs; and to watch them accordingly, for comfort to the people of England to be at the septennial act, which sapped their foundation at the base, was passed by the leaders of their day, whose attachment to the Hanover, and their places; whose zeal for protestant religion, and for pensions, drove them into rebellion, and shook the government's foundations. And if a politician proposes to repeal the constitutional definition of treason, substituting in its place the devices and devices of his own wicked heart and crude understanding; or to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* in his defiance by the military at the point of bayonet;—or to enforce an embargo (or any other) by prostrating every chartered, as well as the right of the citizen; or to screen Saml. J. Barr, or Wilkinson, or John Smith, or any other from well-earned punishment;—I care not which faction he belongs; he is no politician.

I am wandering from my purpose—which request your serious attention, and that of a sober mind in the state, not so much to any which I am able to offer to your consideration as to the "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury," made to Congress on the 8th of December 1809. This memorial and mournful state paper merits, and must attract the deepest attention. It is conclusive of the policy which has been pursued for the three years—[hitherto, the contest has been on by charges, mixed with some proof, on one side; and peremptory denials on the other; and the good people have not known which to believe, more especially, when all their evidence of the charges and proofs against administration has been derived from so impartial a source as the ministerial prints. There is now, a standard to which all may have access; which opposition will not, and administration not appeal. In this sinking political barometer we discern a revenue dwindling, in three years from sixteen millions to ten; from six and a half!—an enormous surplus in preceding years—[before folly had snatched the government] exhausted; a redundant treasury dried up; and, before any thing like preparation for defence is made, a loan of four millions, certainly [perhaps more] becomes necessary. This is not the gloomy picture of a factitious, or of a discontented minority man, (for accusation is ever ready) of principles; it is the fairest view, which one of our cabinet—[himself a man of transcendent abilities] can present of the state of the nation, and to this point by the measures and the results of his patron, his colleagues, and himself.

Great Britain and France tremble at powers of annoyance, when they see this result when they are told by the chancellor of the exchequer, the greatest financier now in the world, that the expenses of government (exclusive of the payments on account of the principal of the debt) have exceeded the actual receipts of the treasury, by a sum of near one million of pounds thousand dollars!—that three millions are necessary to make up the deficit; and in the event of war, loans, reimbursable by insurance after the return of peace, must constitute

the principal resource for defraying its expenses? May we not expect a special mission to make atonement for the offence done by the insolent Mr. Jackson upon the delicate nerves of the sensitive Mr. Smith? Will not the British ministry (for there is no degree of folly however undignified or pernicious that may not fairly be ascribed to them) look rather to the "paper shot" thundered in the senate, by one who resembles Sempronius in every thing but his address and abilities, against the tyrant nation that denies to the great emperor "the liberty of the seas" which he is so ambitious "to conquer" by the sword, and his ex-brother of America to obtain for him, by libation and prayer? The measures which have led to our present disastrous and disgraceful condition, were the measures of that man. Espouse them, and they become your own. You identify yourself with him, who with a full and perfect knowledge that he was about to surrender into your hands a beggar'd exchequer, and that the deception could not be kept up twelve months after his retreat to the mountain, gravely came forward in his last official address to congress and to the nation affecting to be embarrassed with "the surplusses of our revenue," and pretending to tax the ingenuity of the legislature, not with raising supplies, which he well knew to be then wanting, but in devising ways and means to rid the country of the burthen of a redundant treasury:—A man "who died (politically) with a \*\*\* in his mouth! It is on record—It is deposited in the archives of his country! It was a deception too, tending, with the ignorant multitude of his worshippers, to throw the odium of the present defaultation from his shoulders upon your own—to make you responsible for the sudden change effected by his absence from the helm of government—for the vanishing of the fairy treasures—the rich succession which he handed over to you, his friend.

On recurring to the journals of the house of representatives, I find "that so much of that measure as related to the disposition of the surplusses of our revenue in the improvement of roads, canals, rivers, and education, was referred to a select committee." Why a report has not been made on this subject is (I suppose) like every other failure of the last four years, chargeable to the misconduct of Mr. Randolph, its chairman. But wherefore that chief of political sinners should have been selected for this important task, or for the delicate inquiry at a preceding session, recommended by the president (along with a book, extracted from the *Enquirer*, and resting on the colossal basis of its editor's veracity) whether the defect on Burr's trial was in the evidence, the law, or the application of the law?—It might puzzle the ingenuity even of Mr. Specker Varnum fairly to account. But I must leave the ex-P. and the great delinquent, Randolph; one of whom already stands, and the other must soon stand displayed in his true character; to attend to weightier matters.

I must again ask your attention to the secretary of the treasury's report. By it, we perceive that the expenses of our formidable navy and redoubtable army (including the Indian department) have, for the past year, exceeded six millions of dollars; and that unless these branches of expenditure are immediately reduced to less than one half of that amount, the nation (even supposing no increase of our present expenses) must incur an annual deficit of more than three millions of dollars! or in other words, must enter on a career, leading to an unavoidable bankruptcy. I beseech you, sir, to compare for a moment the cost of these institutions with the public benefit derived from them; or with the protection which might have been afforded to the country (as one part of their expense) by placing arms in the hands of every able bodied man in the community.

Our gallant gun boats sail out of port, and then sail back again. Our warlike officers pocket their pay and emoluments, and peacefully devote themselves to wordy warfare—to the editing of ministerial journals—in the service of his Gallic and Italian majesty; or, after taking a trip to Paris, at the public expense, to fit themselves with regimentals of the most fashionable cut, employ their leisure in carrying messages, marshalling ladies on the parade of an assembly room, and gaining members of congress. The republican doctrine (out of power) was "No public money without an equivalent public service." The text is to be found in the political bible. Where shall we look for the commentary? Shall we find it in an army receiving full pay, rations and clothing with empty regiments?—in a navy where similar abuses have prevailed?—in the accounts of the commander in chief? or the bills so dexterously drawn by his friend general Smith on Degen, Purviance and Co. through the instrumentality of his brother, our late minister of marine, and present secretary of the foreign and home department of state? But let me not be guilty of injustice. These were not acts of your administration.

I have stated that we are unprepared even for defence. This may seem to imply a contradiction of what you have asserted in your message to congress—and will perhaps be deemed by the outrageous republicans of the new school (by far the most servile courtiers we have) a breach of the engagement with which I set out. It is,

By the partial report of the committee of investigation made at the last session of congress, it appears that since the administration of Mr. Jefferson commenced, the army has cost the nation dollars 2,276,176, and the navy dollars 15,221,522. The prolongation of the last three years, squandered about three-fourths of the sum. I write from memory and cannot pretend to be exact as to the proportions of this sum. Our losses?

however, surely not unpardonable in an American citizen to claim, in an address of this sort, speaking in reference to a presidential message, the same degree of freedom which was exercised on a memorable occasion, by a British subject, on the floor of the house of commons, in relation to a speech from the throne!

Sir John Barnard, as able and upright a patriot as ever sat in a legislative body, declared in his place, in the year 1727, "that the assertions hazarded in royal speeches or messages, were not to be implicitly relied upon; for that the crown might assert, and in fact had asserted, in consequence of hasty or treacherous information, what afterwards proved not to be true." Parliament had (he said) been assured by a solemn speech from the throne that an alliance had been entered into between the Emperor and Spain, in conformity to the secret articles of which, Gibraltar was to have been wrested from us, and the pretender placed by force on the throne of Great Britain. Considering the situation and circumstances of the contracting powers at that period, this intelligence appeared to many, at the time, romantic and incredible; and it was now known to be false, though it was then represented as highly disrespectful to the crown, so much as to doubt it."

It is remarkable enough, that this declaration of Sir John Barnard, refers to that speech of the king of England, made in the preceding reign, which gave such just umbrage to the court of Vienna, that M. de Palm the imperial minister at London was ordered by the emperor to present a remonstrance to the British court, charging the king with "colossal misrepresentations and with holding assertions void of all foundation;" and stating "that his imperial majesty was struck with the utmost astonishment, that the king of Great Britain could suffer himself to be prevailed upon to declare from the royal throne, to that most renowned nation, as certain and undoubted facts, things absolutely void of all foundation."—With this memorial was transmitted, from Vienna, a letter from chancellor Zinzendorf (the imperial prime minister) to count Palm, expressly commanding him in the name of his imperial majesty, after presenting the memorial of the king of Great Britain to publish it together with the letter, for the information of the British nation. The chancellor Zinzendorf affirms in his letter, "that it is easy to see, that the speech was made for no other purpose but to excite the nation to an open war with the emperor and Spain, and to make the parliament approve the precipitate and burdensome measures, which the government has taken for private ends too well known."

The allegations (continues the historian) contained in this letter and memorial seem but too well founded; but the intemperate language of these papers gave high and just offence; and Mr. Shippen, Mr. Hungerford, Sir William Wyndham, and all the leaders of opposition in parliament, warmly concurred in the address, presented to the throne on this occasion. (See Belsham's George I. p. 190, et seq.) Are you not astonished, sir, at the audacity of those who have dared to identify the case of M. Palm, with that of Mr. Jackson?—whose stupid temerity has rested your defence on a ground so untenable;—and one which at the same time subjects you to imputations not less disgraceful than those which will for ever attach to the Hanoverian politics of the house of Brunswick? Be not alarmed, sir—I shall not exercise my privilege of speech even to the extent in which it was enjoyed by the worthy alderman of London, although were I on the floor of congress. I should lay my thoughts before you in a constitutional manner certainly not with less freedom than I do at present. Be assured, sir, that (whatever you may have been told by your ministers, and which they have got at second and third hand from the creatures of Wilkinson, backed by the testimony of the contractors) there is not a single important post in the U. States [except perhaps Philadelphia and New Orleans, which owe their safety chiefly to local situation] that has any efficient protection from an enemy's fleet, other than what may be afforded by its own population; and those arms which the resources of the several states may have furnished. Immovable batteries [whatever our Hyde Park generals and colonels may tell you] are unable to cope [even with the aid of gun boats] with the Leviathan agility of a ship of the line. As well may the trees of our swamps, backed by the mosquitoes that nestle & hide in their branches, defy the axe of the vigorous and hardy backwoodsman. Our understandings are not yet so benumbed by the torpedos of Mr. Fulton as to rely for our defence on this miserable system, or even on the ingenuity of this [soi disant] Archimedes. Are these the resources for carrying on a war against a nation, one branch of whose revenue alone, has, during the past year, under the management of a daveling ministry, increased by a sum of near five millions of dollars?

But I must again return to the secretary's report. From this state paper it appears, that "that stupid thing," the non-intercourse law (whose vigour and wisdom have been complimented with achieving the masterly arrangements with Mr. Erskine) is, as every man of common sense foresaw from the beginning, utterly incompetent to any beneficial, or even rational purpose. And yet (strange as it may appear) men of sense and virtue, as well as fools and knaves, are to be found among its supporters. I speak of their votes; for really I have never heard (although the bill passed unanimously in the senate, and by a majority of two to one in the other house) of any person's having said one word in its favor, previ-

ous to its becoming a law. One description of men voted for it, because they were resolved to shake off the incubus of the embargo on any terms: the other, in point of fact, from a similar motive, and as the best device (bad as it was) which they could fall upon to cover their retreat from that absurd and ruinous measure; and by way "of splitting the difference," according to the vulgar saying—they spoke against the bill and voted for it. But however frivolous and contemptible this measure is, in every other point of view, it has not proved harmless as it respects ourselves. It has levied an enormous tax upon every planter and farmer in the country to the emolument of the carrier. There never was a year in which the shippers of produce (of tobacco especially) made larger profits than during the past; and it may be safely said, that whatever be the object of the French decrees and the British orders in council, we have suffered more from our own orders without counsel, than from both put together. Cause, I beseech you sir, this ridiculous and pernicious regulation to be expunged from our statute-book. Let the whole Hibernian system of coercing the belligerents through the persons and purses of our own people, be forever abandoned. It is (to put the best construction on it) a bull, in politics. We are not children, and we cannot give credit to the political pedagogue, when he flourishes his birch and exclaims, "Castigo te non quod odio habeam, sed quod amem." I chastise thee not out of hatred, but through love. If government cannot, or will not protect commerce, let them not fetter it: let it be (for them at least) like the breeze that waits it, a chartered libertine. The losses which the agricultural interest have sustained from your last proclamation [reviving an act which was *functus officio*, and for which, vague and confused as the law itself is, as well as those to which it refers, a power is in vain sought in its text] not even Gallatin himself could calculate. It was the pretext for knocking down the price of our produce, which the merchant had no sooner bought on his own terms, than he shipped it directly to England, to an enormous profit; which at length, but slowly and gradually, and after vast losses to the grower, caused our markets to rise even under the pressure of the non-intercourse act, until they were again depressed, to the great joy of all in the secret, by the rupture between Mr. Smith and Mr. Jackson. Whether brother Sam made any shipments to Degen, Purviance, & Co. or sold out his purchases in the country previous to the fall, and bought in, afterwards, I have not yet learnt; but this power in men of great commercial connections, to raise and depress at pleasure, the price of the whole product of the land and labour of a country, is a tremendous engine which the veriest bungler may manage to the impoverishment of the community, and the enriching to any extent, himself and his associates.

But all this sir, you may say, and perhaps not unjustly, is mere surmise. Let us come then to facts, to damning facts, which unmask the justice by whom you are surrounded; whose victim you will assuredly be if you consent to become their instrument, or their dupe. Deceive yourself not sir, with the belief that you owe the support which you have received from these men to any regard for your public services, any respect for your abilities, or attachment to your person. Considerations of a nature quite foreign to all these led to their selection of yourself as president of the United States; and when these purposes shall be answered, they will lay you aside with as little ceremony, or scruple, as they put aside your venerable lieutenant on a recent occasion. They have every quality of Iago, but his abilities—Their objects are purely selfish. They wanted a capital of character, and they cast about for some one who could furnish it: they pitched upon you [as they had before done upon Mr. Clinton] as one who would answer their purposes, and not be in the way after they should be answered.—But to our facts. *Paulo majora canamus.*

The brother of the emperor of France (and I might say of continental Europe) marries a beautiful American woman: the feelings of manhood have not, as yet, been extinguished in him by the infection of royalty. He carries his pregnant wife to his brother's dominions. She is sternly denied the rites of hospitality. The blood of an honest American woman is deemed unworthy to mingle with the pure stream of a military adventurer.—Injury is followed by insult. By the mandate of despotism the feelings of the lover; the husband and the man are ordered to be suppressed, and they are suppressed accordingly. The unhappy mother is driven like another Hagar to a strange and to her partaking of the character of her husband hostile land—there to drop her burthen. By the strong hand of power the marriage is dissolved. Those whom God had joined, man impious, upstart man, dares to put asunder. The marriage is declared void—the issue is bastardized. The father having taken to himself by command another wife of royal blood, the disconsolate mother returns with her infant charge to the bo-

\* "If acts of parliament were after the old fashion peered by such only as perfectly knew what the common law was before the making of any act of parliament concerning that matter, as also how far former statutes had provided remedy for former mischiefs and defects discovered by experience; then should very few questions in-law arise, and the law itself should not so often and so much perplex the heads to make attempt and peace, by construction of law to wear *marriage* and *divorce* greeting words, sentences and provisions as they now do."—(Would not one almost think that the new law *Cebs* has reference to the bills reported by our sagacious and most distinguished and select committees of Congress; particularly "the laws of *marriage* and *divorce*?"