

[1 The Writings of Thomas Jefferson 303-303 (Lipscomb ed. 1903) (notes on Mar. 31, 1792 cabinet meeting).]

March the 31st. A meeting at the President's; present, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Knox and Edmond Randolph. The subject was the resolution of the House of Representatives, of March the 27th, to appoint a committee to inquire into the causes of the failure of the late expedition under Major General St. Clair, with the power to call for such persons, papers and records, as may be necessary to assist their inquiries. The committee had written to Knox for the original letters, instructions, &c. The President had called us to consult, merely because it was the first example, and he wished that so far as it should become a precedent, it should be rightly conducted. He neither acknowledged nor denied, nor even doubted the propriety of what the House were doing, for he had not thought upon it, nor was acquainted with subjects of this kind: he could readily conceive there might be papers of so secret a nature, as that they ought not to be given up. We were not prepared, and wished time to think and inquire.