[H.R. Journal, 5th Cong. 2d Sess. 228 (1798).]

*Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:*

The despatches from the Envoys Extraordinary of the United States to the French Republic, which were mentioned in my message to both Houses of Congress of the fifth instant, have been examined and maturely considered.

While I feel a satisfaction in informing you that their exertions for the adjustment of the differences between the two nations have been sincere and unremitted, it is incumbent on me to declare that I perceive no ground of expectation that the objects of their mission can be accomplished on terms compatible with the safety, honor, or the essential interests of the nation.

This result cannot, with justice, be attributed to any want of moderation on the part of this Government, or to any indisposition to forego secondary interests for the preservation of peace. Knowing it to be my duty, and believing it to be your wish, as well as that of the great boy of the People, to avoid, by all reasonable concessions, any participation in the contentions of Europe, the powers vested in our Envoys were commensurate with a liberal and pacific policy, and that high confidence which might justly be reposed in the abilities, patriotism, and integrity, of the characters to when the negotiation was committed. After a careful review of the whole subject, with the aid of all the information I have received, I can discern nothing which could have insured, or contributed to success, that has been omitted on my part, and nothing further which can be attempted, consistently with maxims for which our country has contended, at every hazard, and which constitute the basis of our national sovereignty.

Under these circumstances, I cannot forbear to reiterate the recommendations which have been formerly made, and to exhort you to adopt, with promptitude, decision, and unanimity, such measures as the ample resources of the country afford, for the protection of our sea-faring and commercial citizens; for the defence of any exposed portions of our territory; for the replenishing our arsenals, establishing foundries and military manufactories; and to provide such efficient revenue, as will be necessary to defray extraordinary expenses, and supply the deficiencies which may be occasioned by depredations on our commerce.

The present state of things is so essentially different from that in which instructions were given to Collectors to restrain vessels of the United States from sailing in an armed condition, that the principle on which those orders were issued has ceased to exist: I therefore deem it proper to inform Congress that I no longer feel myself justifiable in containing them, unless in particular cases, where there may be a reasonable ground of suspicion that such vessels are intended to be employed contrary to law.

In all your proceedings, it will be important to manifest a zeal, vigor, and concert, in defence of the national rights, proportioned to the danger with which they are threatened.

JOHN ADAMS.

United States, *19th March, 1798*.