

Matthew Lyon

8<sup>th</sup> United States Congress

Barbary War, Judicial Review, and purchase of the Louisiana Territory

I, Matthew Lyon, am a Democratic Republican who was born in Dublin. I moved to the colonies in 1765 and eventually helped found the state of Vermont. I served as a representative for Vermont in the House of Representatives in the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress and am currently serving again as a representative for Kentucky in this Congress. I am an adamant supporter of President Jefferson.

The war with the Barbary Pirates must be continued until Tripoli is willing to agree to cease raiding American ships without future payment. Their past demands have crippled our economy and prevented the allocation of our tax money to more constructive endeavors. By the end of the Adams presidency, our nation was spending 20% of its annual revenues on appeasing these barbarians. For a nation of pirates to have the audacity to continuously demand more and more money from a proud nation such as ours is insulting and humiliating. If anything, their declaration of war is beneficial to us, since we can finally set an example for the other nations that dare to ask for tribute. If we fail to fight this battle to its finish by tucking our tail between our legs like a kicked dog, these barbarians will only be encouraged to ask for more and more. On the other hand, if we prove our might in this war, the others will be shown how they cannot bully a nation such as ours. While it may be costly, think of the hundreds of thousands of dollars that will be saved by preventing larger future demands.

Our nation was conceived with the notion of creating a government with an effective checks and balances system that would prevent one branch from having too much power. Now, some of my fellow congressmen claim that judicial review is a fair part of that system. I believe, however, that the opposite is true. To give one branch the power to void legislation passed by a Congress representing the people or by a president who was voted in by the people would put them in a position similar to that of an oligarchy. Who gives those few judges the right to be the ultimate arbiter of the constitution? Certainly not the constitution, since nowhere within does it say that they should have such power. Congress is more than capable of ensuring the constitutionality of its own legislation, and for the judicial branch to try and claim otherwise is a power grab that could potentially weaken the power of the people.

Now, one of the most pressing issues of this meeting will be to discuss what needs to be done about the Louisiana Territory. Typically, I would only advocate for legislation that follows the enumerated powers laid out by the constitution, and since there is no place in the document that gives the federal government the power to buy land, it would be appropriate for me to reject the notion of buying these lands. That being said, the purpose of our government is to do what is best for the people, and in this case, the benefits for the people far outweigh the cons. The United States should buy as much land from the French as possible, the entirety of the territory if at all possible. This would allow for western expansion and cheap land for our farmers, along with a wealth of resources such as timber, coal, and gold. Plus, the more land we buy, the less of a threat the French become in future conflicts. That being said, while it is important to buy as much land as we can, we do not have the finances to go too far. While Jefferson proposes ten million for New

Orleans and some of the surrounding land, I suggest that we offer up to eighteen to twenty million for the entirety of the Louisiana territory. Although this is not cheap, I strongly believe that these lands will have paid themselves off in no time. Since the French have made no real attempts to establish a strong government in this wilderness, I am hoping that they will be willing to consider such a deal. As for the governing of this territory, I suggest that we follow our past model of the Northwest Ordinance. Congress would appoint governors and judges for the new districts until the population reaches 5,000 adult males, at which time it will become a territory and will be able to form its own representative legislature. This territory will be eligible for statehood upon reaching 60,000 inhabitants. Also like the Northwest Ordinance, we could outlaw slavery in the new territories with the exception of New Orleans, since slaves make up such a significant part of the income. Hopefully, though, slavery will eventually decline in the area to the point of nonexistence. Of course, in order to settle this land, the issue of the Native Americans inhabiting these regions would have to be settled first. I propose following Jefferson's advice by establishing more trading connections with them and allowing them to get in debt, so that way they will willingly give away their land to pay it off. By no means do we need to go to war with these people to get them out of the land; there are a multitude of creative solutions we can try so as to promote diplomacy over force. Plus, if we can form a strong bond between our nation and their confederacies, then perhaps we can teach them our civilized ways and open the path for their citizenship. While this has been proven to fail in the past in the Northwest Territories, more diplomatic strategies can be employed so as to avert disaster. The purchase of these lands would create a win-win situation for just about everyone. France would not have to waste valuable time and resources on establishing a strong colony that is an ocean away, the U.S. would see an increase in land, population, income, and prestige, farmers would be able to move west and buy very cheap land, and manufacturers would have more resources like timber and coal pouring in from the west.

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