

deration; and after mature consultation and deliberation, was of opinion, that the arming and equipping vessels in the ports of the United States, to cruise against nations with whom they are at peace, was incompatible with the territorial sovereignty of the United States; that it made them instrumental to the annoyance of those nations, and thereby tended to compromise their peace, and that he thought it necessary as an evidence of good faith to them, as well as a proper reparation to the sovereignty of the country, that the armed vessels of this description, should depart from the ports of the United States.

The letter of the 27th instant, with which you have honored me, has been laid before the President, and that part of it, which contains your observations on this subject has been particularly attended to. The respect due to whatever comes from you, friendship for the French nation, and justice to all, have induced him to re-examine the subject, and particularly to give to your representations thereon, the consideration they deservedly claim. After fully weighing again, however, all the principles and circumstances of the case, the result appears still to be, that it is the *right* of every nation to prohibit acts of sovereignty from being exercised by any other within its limits; and the *duty* of a neutral nation to prohibit such as would injure one of the warring powers; that the granting military commissions, within the United States by any other authority than their own, is an infringement on their sovereignty, and particularly so, when granted to their own citizens, to lead them to commit acts contrary to the duties they owe their own country: that the departure of vessels, thus illegally equipped, from the ports of the United States, will be but an acknowledgment of respect, analogous to the breach of it, while it is necessary on their part, as an evidence of their faithful neutrality. On these considerations, sir, the President thinks that the United States owe it to themselves, and to the nations in their friendship, to expect this act of reparation on the part of vessels, marked in their very equipment with offence to the laws of the land, of which the law of nations makes an integral part.

The expressions of very friendly sentiment, which we have already had the satisfaction of receiving from you, leave no room to doubt that the conclusion of the President, being thus made known to you, these vessels will be permitted to give no further umbrage, by their presence in the ports of the United States.

I have the honor to be,

With sentiments of perfect esteem and respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient, and  
most humble servant,

TH: JEFFERSON.

#### TRANSLATION.

PHILADELPHIA, 3 June, 1793.

2d year of the French Republic.

*The Minister of the Republic of France, to the Secretary of State of the United States.*

SIR,

I HAVE seen with pain, by your letter of the 5th of this month, that the President of the United States persists in thinking that a nation at war had not the right of giving commissions of war, to those of its vessels which may be in the ports of a neutral nation; this being, in his opinion, an act of sovereignty.

I confess to you, Sir, that this opinion appears to me contrary to the principles of natural right; to the usages of nations; to the connexions which unite us; and even to the President's proclamation.

The right of arming, Sir, for the purpose of its defence, and repelling unjust aggressions, in my opinion, may be exercised by a nation at war, in a neutral state; unless by treaty, or particular laws of this state, that right be confined to a single nation, friend or ally, and expressly interdicted to others. This is exactly the case in which we are. The United States, friends of the French, their allies and guaranties of their possessions in America, have permitted them to enter armed, and