

of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for your country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature."

On the 2d of August, Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby wrote a joint letter to Washington, informing him that they were acquainted, by authority, that negotiations for a general peace had already been commenced at Paris, and that the independence of the United States would be proposed in the first instance by the British commissioner, instead of being made a condition of a general treaty.

Even yet Washington was wary. "From the former infatuation, duplicity and perverse system of British policy," said he, "I confess I am induced to doubt everything; to suspect everything." . . . "Whatever the real intention of the enemy may be, I think the strictest attention and exertion, which have ever been exercised on our part, instead of being diminished, ought to be increased. Jealousy and precaution at least can do no harm. Too much confidence and supineness may be pernicious in the extreme."

What gave force to this policy was that as yet no offers had been made, on the part of Great Britain, for a general cessation of hostilities; and, although the British commanders were, in a manner, tied down by the resolves of the House of Commons to a defensive war only in the United States, they might be at liberty to transport part of their force to the West Indies to act against the French possessions in that quarter. With these considerations he wrote to the Count de Rochambeau, then at Baltimore, advising him, for the good of the common cause, to march his troops