

It is important, my brethren, that we should understand the character of the war in which this nation is now engaged; and from the observations I have made, you need not be at a loss to determine this point. *The character of the war is offensive, it was not necessary; hence it is unjust.* The war is declared on our part, and is carried on by offensive acts upon the property and persons of individuals. Great Britain indeed was *first* in the transgression. She has trespassed upon our rights, and committed depredations upon our property, when going to and returning from the ports of her enemy. But can this justify a system of indiscriminate plunder against all her subjects?

Some of the Indian tribes charge the United States with unjustly taking from them their lands, and thus diminishing the source of their subsistence. And how do they seek redress? They fall down upon our thinly settled frontiers, and avenge themselves upon a few innocent families, by plunder and murder. Admitting their complaints are reasonable, who will justify them in such measures for redress? Who does not view such deeds with indignation and horror? But mark the similarity between our conduct and theirs. Great-Britain has taken our property, and excluded our vessels from the ports of her enemy; and how do we seek redress? Our privateers fall out from our ports, and seize upon the few British merchantmen that are on our coast, who are no more chargeable with the acts of the government, than the crimes of the pope. While sailing on the seas, the common highway of nations, in pursuit of a living for themselves and families, their property is forcibly taken from them; and if they attempt to defend it, their blood is spilt. Where is the difference between taking away the life of an unoffending man on board his vessel upon the seas, and destroying the life of a peaceable citizen in his dwelling on the land? Our mode of obtaining redress indeed is not marked with such inhumanity.