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Mr. HILLHOUSE'S SPEECH,  
IN THE SENATE,

DECEMBER 21, 1800



On the Bill making further provision for enforcing  
the Embargo.

Mr. PRESIDENT,

Before I proceed to remark on the merits of the bill under consideration, I shall take the liberty of noticing some general observations of the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Giles) which can have no bearing on the matter under consideration, and could have been thrown out for no other purpose, than to impress the idea, that the opposers of this bill and of the embargo are acting under some undue influence or bias, and are endeavoring to obstruct or paralyze the energies of the nation in their operations against foreign aggression. We are told of British capital, British agents, British gold; in too close connexion with the opposition to the embargo and the present bill. Sir, if it is meant to insinuate that the opposers of the embargo and of this bill are under such influence, I despise the insinuation. (Mr. Giles rose and declared he did not mean to throw out the smallest intimation that the opposers of the bill were under such or any other improper influence.) The character and conduct of the greater part of that description of our fellow-citizens, who have been and still are opposed to the embargo, furnish a sufficient answer to any such insinuations as to them. No, sir, our opposition to the embargo proceeds from far different motives; from a thorough conviction of its inefficacy as regards foreign nations, and its ruinous operation as to ourselves. We are not willing to inflict a wound on our own country, because foreign nations do us wrong.

The gentleman from Virginia has renewed his call for a substitute for the embargo. Sir, the embargo admits no substitute. It is a measure radically wrong, and stands in the way of every proper measure.... Remove the embargo, and then, and not till then, will the way be open to adopt measures for securing our commerce and defending our rights. I am not a little surprised that the gentleman from Virginia could make up his face to such an imposing call. Had that gentleman run through the journals, from which he has read some passages, he would have found, that during a long and uniform course of opposition to a former administration, which was conducted with acknowledged ability, he was not in the habit of proposing substitutes. He told us what *would not*, but not what *would do*. In the present case, were the embargo out of the way, and I found a disposition to listen, I should not hesitate to express my opinion of

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