

MESSAGE
FROM THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMUNICATING
FURTHER INFORMATION
RELATIVE
TO THE PACIFIC ADVANCES MADE
ON
THE PART OF THIS GOVERNMENT
TO
THAT OF GREAT BRITAIN.

NOVEMBER 13th, 1812.
ORDERED TO LIE ON THE TABLE.

WASHINGTON CITY:
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1812.

MESSAGE.

*To the Senate and House of
Representatives of the United States.*

FOR the further information of Congress relative to the pacific advances made on the part of this government, to that of Great Britain, and the manner in which they have been met by the latter, I transmit the sequel of the communications on that subject, received from the late charge d'affaires at London.

JAMES MADISON.

November 12th, 1812.

DOCUMENTS.

Mr. Russell to Mr. Monroe.

London, 19th Sept. 1812.

SIR,

ON the 12th instant I received your letter of July last, and the copies of my note to Lord Castlereagh and of his Lordship's reply, enclosed herein, will inform you that the propositions made in consequence of it have been rejected.

As I have but this moment heard of the immediate departure of the Friends, I have time only to add that I have received the communications of Mr. Graham of the 9th and 10th of August, by the Gleaner, and that I leave London this evening to embark on board the Lark, at Plymouth, for New York.

I am, with great respect and consideration,

Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

(Signed)

JONA. RUSSELL.

An interesting interview took place between Lord Castlereagh and myself on the 16th instant; the account of which I must, for want of time, reserve until I have the honor to see you.

Mr. Russell to Lord Castlereagh.

[Private.]

18 Bentinck Street, 12th Sept. 1812.

MY LORD,

IN consequence of additional instructions which I received from my government this morning, I called about noon at the Foreign Office and found with regret that your Lordship was out of town. My object was to communicate to your Lordship the powers under which I act, that you might perceive their validity and extent. I have, however, sought to state them substantially, in the official letter which I have herewith the honor to transmit to your Lordship; but should you find any thing that stands in need of explanation, previous to being submitted to his Royal Highness, I shall remain at 18, Bentinck street, to receive the commands of your Lordship. If your Lordship could, in courtesy, find any motive in my personal convenience to hasten a decision upon the propositions which I have submitted, the season of the year, my anxiety to depart (all my arrangements being made, all my luggage having left town) and the detention of the Lark at much expense, will plead powerfully in my favor

I have the honor, &c.

(Signed)

JONA. RUSSELL.

Mr. Russell to Lord Castlereagh.

18 Bentinck Street, 12th Sept. 1812.

MY LORD,

I HASTEN, authorised by instruction, recently received from the government of the

United States, and urged by an unfeigned anxiety to arrest the calamities of war, to propose to your Lordship a convention for the suspension of hostilities, to take effect at such time as may be mutually agreed upon; and stipulating that each party shall forthwith appoint commissioners with full power to form a treaty, which shall provide, by reciprocal arrangements, for the security of their seamen from being taken or employed in the service of the other power, for the regulation of their commerce and all other interesting questions now depending between them, and that the armistice shall not cease without such previous notice by one to the other party, as may be agreed upon, and shall not be understood as having any other effect than merely to suspend military operations by land and by sea.

In proposing to your Lordship these terms for a suspension of hostilities, I am instructed to come to a clear and distinct understanding with his Britannic Majesty's government, without requiring it to be formal, concerning impressment, comprising in it the discharge of the citizens of the United States already impressed; and concerning future blockades, the revocation of the orders in council being confirmed.

Your Lordship is aware that the power of the government of the United States to prohibit the employment of British seamen must be exercised in the sense and spirit of the constitution; but there is no reason to doubt but that it will be so exercised effectually; and with good faith.

Such a measure as it, might, by suitable regulations and penalties be made completely effectual and satisfactory, would operate almost exclusively in favor of Great Britain, for as few American seamen ever enter voluntarily into the British service,

the reciprocity would be nominal, and it is sincerely believed that it would be more than an equivalent for any advantage she may derive from impressment

By the proposition which I have now the honor to make in behalf of my government, your Lordship will perceive the earnest desire of the President to remove every obstacle to an accommodation, which consists merely of form; and to secure the rights and interests of the United States in a manner the most satisfactory and honorable to Great Britain as well as to America.

The importance of the overture now made, will, I trust, obtain for it the early consideration of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and I shall detain the vessel in which I have taken my passage to the United States until I have the honor to learn his decision

I have the honor to be, &c. &c. &c.

(Signed) JONA. RUSSELL.

Mr. Hamilton to Mr. Russell.

Foreign Office, September 16, 1812.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE not seen Lord Castlereagh, since his receipt of your two letters of the but have received his directions to say to you, that he is concerned that he cannot have it in his power to reply to them for a few days; or would have had much pleasure in attending immediately to your request in that respect. You may be assured that no delay will take place, which can be avoided.

I am dear sir, faithfully yours,

(Signed) WM. HAMILTON.

Jona. Russell, Esq. &c. &c.

Mr. Russell to Mr. Hamilton.

No. 18 Bentinck Street, September 16, 1812

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE learnt with much regret and disappointment, that Lord Castlereagh has directed you to inform me, that it is not in his power to give an immediate answer to the last letters, which I have had the honor to address to him. The object of those letters was of a nature to require an early decision. Reluctant, however, by any precipitancy on my part to protract the present unhappy relations between the two countries, I beg you to acquaint his Lordship, that I shall remain in town until Sunday, (the 20th instant), when, unless some special and satisfactory reason be assigned for a longer delay, I shall consider it to be my duty to proceed to Plymouth to embark for the United States.

I am dear sir, &c.

(Signed)

JONA. RUSSELL.

William Hamilton, Esq. &c. &c.

N. B. Sent at 3 o'clock.

(Copy.)

LORD CASTLEREAGH presents his compliments to Mr Russell, and requests to have the honor of seeing him at his house in St. James' square, at nine o'clock this evening.

Foreign Office, September 16, 1812.

N. B. Received a little before 5 o'clock.

Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Russell.

Foreign Office, September 18, 1814.

SIR,

UNDER the explanations you have afforded me, of the nature of the instructions which you have received from your government, I have, as on the preceding occasion, been induced to lay your letter of the 12th instant, before his Royal Highness the Prince Regent

His Royal Highness commands me to express to you his regret, that he cannot perceive any substantial difference between the proposition for a suspension of hostilities, which you are now directed to make, and that which was contained in your letter of the 24th of August last. The form of the proposed arrangement, it is true is different; but it only appears to aim at executing the same purpose, in a more covert, and therefore, in a more objectionable manner.

You are now directed to require, as preliminary to a suspension of hostilities, a clear and distinct understanding, without, however, requiring it to be formal on all the points referred to in your former proposition; it is obvious, that were this proposal acceded to, the discussion on the several points must substantially precede the understanding required.

This course of proceeding, as bearing on the face of it a character of disguise, is not only felt to be in principle inadmissible, but as unlikely to lead in practice to any advantageous result, as it does not appear on the important subject of impressment, that you are either authorised to propose any specific plan, with reference to which the suspension of that practice could be made a subject of deliberation, or that you have received

any instructions for the guidance of your conduct on some of the leading principles, which such a discussion must in the first instance involve.

Under these circumstances the Prince Regent sincerely laments, that he does not feel himself enabled to depart from the decision, which I was directed to convey to you in my letter of the 2d instant.

I have the honor, &c.

(Signed) CASTLEREAGH.

Jonathan Russell, Esq. &c. &c.

Mr. Russell to Mr. Monroe.

London, 19th September, 1812.

SIR,

SINCE writing you this morning, fearing that this government should infer from my silence, an acquiescence in the strange and unwarrantable view which Lord Castlereagh has in his last note thought fit to take of the overtures which I have submitted, and of the powers under which I acted, I have considered it my duty to return an answer of which the enclosed is a copy.

With great consideration and respect,

I am Sir, &c

(Signed) JONA. RUSSELL.

The Honorable James Monroe, &c. &c.

Mr. Russell to Lord Castlereagh.

(Copy.)

London, 19th September, 1812.

MY LORD,

I HAD the honor to receive last evening your Lordship's note of yesterday, and have learnt with great regret and disappointment, that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent has again rejected the just and moderate propositions for a suspension of hostilities, which I have been instructed to present on the part of my government.

After the verbal explanations which I had the honor to afford your Lordship on the 16th instant, both as to the object and sufficiency of my instructions, I did not expect to hear repeated any objections on these points. For itself, the American government has nothing to disguise, and by varying the proposition as to the manner of coming to a preliminary understanding, it merely intended to leave to the British government, that which might be most congenial to its feelings. The propositions presented by me, however, on the 24th August, and 12th instant, are distinguishable by a diversity in the substance, as well as in the mode of the object which they embraced; as by the former, the discontinuance of the practice of impressment was to be immediate, and to precede the prohibitory law of the United States, relative to the employment of British seamen; when by the latter both these measures are deferred to take effect simultaneously hereafter. Having made a precise tender of such law, and exhibited the instructions which warranted it to your Lordship, I have learnt with surprise, that it does not appear to your Lordship, that I am authorised to propose any specific plan

on the subject of impressment. I still hope that the overtures made by me, may again be taken into consideration by his Britannic Majesty's Government, and as I leave town this afternoon for the United States, that it will authorise some agent to proceed thither, and adopt them as a basis for reconciliation between the two countries, an event so devoutly to be wished.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed)

JONA. RUSSELL.

Mr. Russell to Mr. Monroe.

[Private.]

On board the Lark, 7th November, 1812.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I am now passing the Narrows, and expect to land at New York this day. I conceive it to be my duty to repair to the seat of government, and shall set off as soon as I can obtain my baggage. In the mean time I am sorry to inform you that the second proposition for an armistice was rejected like the first, and a vigorous prosecution of the war appears to be the only honorable alternative left to us.

I have the honor to be, with great

Consideration and respect, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

(Signed)

JONA. RUSSELL.

Honorable James Monroe, &c. &c. &c.

