

# THE PAPERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON



## To Andrew Sterett

SIR

Washington Dec. 1. 1801.

The Secretary of the Navy, the regular organ for the present communication, being absent from the seat of government for causes which may detain him for some time, I do myself the pleasure without further delay of expressing to you on behalf of your country, the high satisfaction inspired by your conduct in the late engagement with the Tripolitan cruiser captured by you. too long, for the honour of nations, have those barbarians been suffered to trample on the sacred faith of treaties, on the rights & laws of human nature. you have shewn to your countrymen that that enemy cannot meet bravery & skill united. in proving to them that our past condescensions were from a love of peace, not a dread of them, you have deserved well of your country; and have merited the high esteem & consideration of which I have now the pleasure of assuring you

TH: JEFFERSON

PrC (DLC); in ink at foot of text:  
"Lieutt. Sterrett."

A scion of a prominent family of Baltimore merchants and Federalists, Andrew Sterett (1778-1807) received a lieutenant's commission in the U.S. Navy in March 1798. After seeing extensive service on board the frigates *Constellation* and *President*, Sterett was given command of the schooner *Enterprise* in October 1800. On 1 Aug. 1801, Sterett's vessel defeated the corsair *Tripoli* after a three-hour battle near Malta in the Mediter-

ranean, the first American victory in the Barbary War. Sterett and the *Enterprise* returned to Baltimore in November 1801, then sailed for the Mediterranean again in early 1802. He remained in the navy until 1805, when he resigned after a dispute over rank. He died in Peru shortly thereafter while on a merchant voyage to Latin America (ANB; Vol. 35:588-9).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY Robert Smith was ABSENT from Washington to contend with illness afflicting his family in Baltimore, which had already claimed the life of his eldest son (Vol. 35:723).

## From Joseph Yznardi, Sr.

EXMO. SEÑOR

Philadelphia 1st Disbre. de 1801

Muy Señor mio, y de mi Respecto

Permitame V.E qe por la Ultima ves, le moleste lleno de Sentimientos; y represente mi desgracia pues no tan Solamente, he venido á este Pais, para Sufrir persecuciones de sus Naturales, sino es de mi paisanos

El Cavallero de Irujo á cuyo favor tengo dicho, y hecho lo qe V.E mismo save, y lo qe el tiempo declarará, despues de Aver sido Reelecto, me ha recondensado en perseguir mis pasos, en los terminos qe el General Smith Informará á V.E, y aunqe nada temo pues los Honbres de Providad sienpre Aclaran su Conducta

funda sus quexas en qe yo he procurado desvaler sus Autoridades, de lo qe Apelo á V.E qe save el Honor con qe he prosedido, en Uso de la Mission, puesta á mi Cuidado, guardando el decoro devido, como Oficial publico de este Govo, a sus Cavesas, sino es Mirando como Debo, el Interes de mi Patria, y digno Monarca Siendo el Organo por donde se Aclararon las dificultades qe pendian

Recuerdo á V.E estas Circunstancias, para qe en todo tienpo sea Constante qe jamas he propuesto ablado, ni representado Cosa Alguna con Caracter publico Español, sino es como un Mediador Honrrado, y Proconsul con Claridad, y buen deseo, sin qe jamas pueda resultar Cargo contra mi como Intruso en el Real encargo, pues si es me hiciere Algun Cargo en la Corte, me verá obligado á provar contra lo qe pueda Sospecharce de mi Confiado en la Rectitud de V.E conoserá mi Justicia, pues si el Ministro qe me autorisó no Existe, no es mi Culpa

Se Abla del Consulado de Cadiz V.E tubo la vondad de darmelo, y como Dueño puede quitarmelo, si lo tubiece á bien, quando no sea por defecto mio baxo el Supuesto qe me buelbo á España como ofresí por mi Ultima, y Repito qe liquidados los puntos pendientes daré Aviso puntual, pues pienso retirarme Cansado de las persecuciones de este Mundo, quiero trabajar para el otro, con los prinsipios filosoficos qe fundo en el Borrador qe Continuo Suplicando á V.E perdone el Arrojo de Manifestarcelos como basis de mi Corto talento

assy mismo con veneración, y Respecto no se Olvide libramme de Pleyto de Isrrael por ser Justo como el qe se finalisen los pagos de mis quantas, no dudando qe Sienpre Confesaré, y defenderé con fortaleza, lo Amable de su prudencia, y fondos de su Saviduria,

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y pediré á Dios le Conserve en ella para el bien de su Nacion  
Exmo. Señor BLM de V.E su mas Obte. Servr

JOSEF YZNARDY

## EDITORS' TRANSLATION

MOST EXCELLENT SIR

Philadelphia 1 Dec. 1801

My most illustrious sir, and with my respect.

Full of sorrow, allow me to bother Your Excellency for the last time, and to set before you my misfortune, for not only have I come to this country to endure persecutions from its inhabitants but from my fellow countrymen as well.

The Chevalier Irujo—on whose behalf I have said and done what Your Excellency himself knows, and what time will show—after having been reappointed, has paid me back by persecuting me in ways of which General Smith will inform Your Excellency, and though I fear nothing, men of honor always explain their conduct.

He bases his complaints on the notion that I have tried to undermine his authority, for which reason I appeal to Your Excellency who knows the honorable way in which I have proceeded in the mission that was entrusted to me, maintaining the respect I owe as a public official of this government to its leaders, as well as looking after, as I should, the interest of my country and its worthy monarch, which was the entity through which the difficulties that were pending were cleared up.

I remind Your Excellency of all these events so that it will always be evident that I have never propounded, advised, or represented anything as a Spanish public figure, but rather as an honorable mediator, and a proconsul with frankness and good will, and there could never be a charge against me as an interloper in the royal post. And if I am accused in the royal court, I will be obliged to give evidence against what might be imputed to me, confident in the rectitude of Your Excellency, who will recognize that I am in the right, for if the minister who confirmed me is no longer there, it is no fault of mine.

There is talk about the consulate of Cadiz that Your Excellency had the generosity to give me, and as its master can take it away from me should you see fit, so long as it is not because of any shortcomings, under the assumption that I will return to Spain as I promised in my last letter; and I repeat that once the pending matters are resolved, I will give a timely notice; for I am planning on retiring, as I am tired of the persecutions of this world, and I want to strive for the next, with the philosophical principles that I state in my rough notes; I continue to beg Your Excellency to pardon the boldness of my using them as a basis for my shortcomings.

Likewise with veneration and respect, do not forget to protect me from the lawsuit of Israel, for the sake of justice as the one who settles the payments to my debts, never doubting that I will always proclaim and defend with conviction the kindness of your prudence, and the profundity of your wisdom, and I will ask God that He give you long life for the good of your country.

Most excellent sir, your obedient servant kisses Your Excellency's hand.

JOSEF YZNARDY

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RC (DLC); at foot of text: "Exmo. Sor. Dn. Thomas Jefferson."

LA MISSION, PUESTA á MI CUIDADO: after the recall of Carlos Martínez Irujo as Spanish minister to the United States and before his reinstatement to that position, the Spanish government authorized Yznardi to act as a channel of communication between the United States and Spain (Vol. 32:396-7; Vol. 33:269n, 457, 483-6; Vol. 35:393n).

SI EL MINISTRO QE ME AUTORISÓ NO

EXISTE: late in 1800, Pedro Cevallos Guerra replaced Mariano Luis de Urquijo as minister of state of Spain (Vol. 33:293-5, 351, 483-6).

PLEYTO DE ISRAEL: Yznardi continued to hope that TJ and Levi Lincoln would reverse their decision that the United States should not defend him in a suit filed by shipmaster Joseph Israel over actions by Yznardi when he was acting consul at Cadiz (Vol. 32:397n; Vol. 33:557-8, 604; Vol. 34:165, 166, 167n).

## ENCLOSURE

## Statement of Principles

La Magnificencia de las Obras, la Magnanimidad del Corason, adorno de las Costumbres, Lusimiento del Ingenio, puresa de Animo, y liveralidad Consertada, Son, fueron, y serán mis principios, como Dones de Naturalesa, para desearme un Hombre Amado, Estimado, y venerado de mis Parientes, y amigos, y si posible fuera, de los Enemigos pero teniendo la fragilidad de ser Ingenuo, y declarado, y Franco en Sentimientos, ni vensermé á Adular, distante de Conquistas la Amistad, la pierdo, Culpando mi enteresa pero no mi Consiencia, porque esta Clama por la Verdad Constante, Moral el mas Sierto

Se que con la Ingeniudad del Declarado, se Irritan los disimulados con fuego vengante ardiendo la Mina secreta que sienpre esconden, para una Oca-sion y no devo Olvidar, que de los Amigos enojados, resultan los peores Ene-migos porque Inpuestos de las Confiansas asen Uso de ellas, y cada uno abla como Siente, y Siente como desea

Mucho Inporta no llegar á ronpimiento, porque siempre resulta la Reputa-tion Lastimada, y me Consta que qualesquiera vale para Enemigo, y pocos para amigos; que pocos pueden Aser bien; y los mas aser mal

No deve Usarse del balor porque paresca bueno, ni por figurada Ipocrecía aserse Apagado, Corto y Miserable, en tolerar las Ofensas, y al Contrario deven repelerse, con Corage en lo Justo quando se defiende el Honor, pues como dise el Filosofo tacito; si á penas con buenos Artes se puede Conservar la Estimacion si la perdemos que Subsedería

No Ignoro que si la Virtud no fuese Emulada, ella Misma se Olvidaría, y Aunqe la envidia es Espina que punsa la Estimacion; creo que distante de Con-sumirla, la Conserva porque la Gloria de ser Emulado, la Insita á proseder Mejor porque á Ninguno sele Estima quando el se desestime, siendo Asertado no descaeser porque la Envidia persigue con Mayor fuerza á el que enpiensa á Caer, en Cuyo caso el Generoso deve Calebrar lo enbidien, porque se despierta, y tambien que le emulen, porque le Insitan á Velar sus prosedimientos

El titulo de Valeroso lo Merese, el que no deja benserce de Afectos de Pa-siones, libertandose de las enfermedades del Animo que persigue la Imagina-sion y si se quiere Conoser deve buscarce en si Mismo, y no en los demas, y con estos Sentimientos es Nesesario presencia de Espiritu, y Animo en los Negocios para no Caer en temor, pues del se Sigue la Irresolucion siendo for-

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soso Sobstaner grandesa en el Corason para Obedeser á la Nessecidad, como para Venserla Sierto qe el fin es el qe las Califica quando son buenas

El Animo generoso no deve desanimarce por Orrores de Peligros ni asperas dificultades, porqe Ninguna Cosa buena, y Magna acava sin valor, y perseverancia, pues el qe reconoce es vensido, es perdido, y assy el Sufrir con valor, esperar con pasiencia, y Constansia sin dejar de la Mano el Mejor Compañero qe es el tiempo (pues el Savio Felipe Segundo Comunmte desia, yo, y el tiempo contra dos) es lo Mejor

Enbuelto el Honbre, y Confundido con temores se Espone á Ruinar porqe cada uno es artifice de su Fortuna, ó su perdida, y esperarla del ofendido, u del Acaso es Error, y Creer qe está determinado ú prescripto, es Enigma, pues aunque el bulgo dice tanto es Uno quanto tiene, yo digo que tanto es uno quanto Save, porqe Hombre sin Conosimientos, es el Mundo a obscuro y por lo tanto qe Siencia, Consejo, fuersas, ojos y Manos, son las qe Conservan el Honor á tiempo

Las mas veses los Honbres se engañan de Modos tan disfrasados y desconosidos, qe tememos lo qe no devemos, por prudencia, acusando la Constansia por temeraria, y otras veses sin savernos resolver, en tanto llega el Peligro, y asi ni todo se deve temer, ni todo dejar de Conciderar, porqe entre la prudencia, y fortaleza acabó, grandes Cosas el valor, y por lo tanto diria lo qe el gran Capitan quando le Aconsejaron qe bolviese atras, y dijo; Yo estoy determinado á ganar Antes un paso para mi Sepultura qe bolver atras, Saviendo bivir cien Años, porqe el Valor no le Corona el Caso, sino es la fatiga con Virtud, y perseverancia en el Obrar

todo enpiesa por principios, y nada puede terminar sin ellos, Acontesan Casos qe por lo General no se esperan, y por lo tanto el Alma grande no deve Abatirse quando los Aldabones de sus Potencias no las tocan á Separarse.

## E D I T O R S ' T R A N S L A T I O N

Brilliance in works, nobility of the heart, adornment of morals, luminosity of talent, purity of spirit, and concerted generosity are, were, and will be my principles, as natural gifts, for I want to be a man loved, esteemed, and venerated by my family, friends, and if possible by my enemies. However, having the weakness of being naive, honest, and forthright in my feelings, immune to adulation and aloof to seduction, I lose friendship, blaming my integrity but not my conscience, because the latter clamors for unwavering truth and morality that is the most certain.

I know that those who dissemble are irritated with a vengeful fire by the sincerity of the honest, lighting the fuse of the secret explosive charge that they always conceal for an opportune moment; and I should not forget that from angry friends are born the worst enemies, because when they are confided in they take advantage of what they know, and each speaks as he feels, and feels as he wishes.

It very important not to break up a friendship, because one's reputation is always smeared, and I am absolutely certain that anyone can be an enemy, and a few can be friends; that a few can do good, and the majority does evil.

One should not act courageously because it looks good, nor should one pretend to be discouraged, fearful, and miserable when suffering wrongdoings. On the contrary, one should resist with the courage that is just when

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defending honor, because as the Silent Philosopher said, if it is scarcely possible to preserve respect with talent, imagine what would happen if we were to lose it.

I am aware that if virtue were not emulated, it would be forgotten, and though envy is a thorn that stabs at respect, I believe that far from getting rid of virtue, one should keep it because the glory of being emulated incites virtue to act better, as no one is respected when he does not respect himself; being right does not ruin anyone, because envy persecutes with more force he who begins to falter, in which case the generous man should rejoice that he is envied, because it inspires him, and also that he be emulated, because it incites him to watch over his actions.

The title of courageous is merited by him who does not allow himself be defeated by the affects of passion, freeing himself of the maladies of the spirit that persecute the imagination, and if one seeks to know himself he should search inside himself and not in others, and with these sentiments it is important to have presence of mind and courage in dealings in order not to become afraid, since indecision results from that, making it necessary to sustain greatness of the heart in order both to obey necessity and to overcome it, truly it is the outcome that distinguishes them when they are good.

A generous soul should not be discouraged by the fear of dangers nor by severe difficulties, because nothing good and great can be accomplished without courage and perseverance, for he who admits to fear is defeated, is lost, and thus suffering with valor, waiting in patience, and with determination without letting go of the best companion, of which time is the best (for as the wise Felipe II often said, "me and time against two").

When man is surrounded with and confused by fear, he exposes himself to ruin, because each one is the author of his own good fortune or its loss, and expecting it from the offended or leaving it to chance is a mistake, and to believe that it is fixed or predetermined is a mystery; for although common folks say that one is worth what one has, I say that one is worth what one knows, because a man without knowledge is like a darkened world, and it is science, good counsel, strength, eyes, and hands that preserve honor in good time.

Sometimes men fool themselves in concealed and unknown ways, fearing what ought not be feared out of prudence, accusing perseverance of being rash, and other times being incapable when in danger; and so not everything should be feared, and not everything should be left without being considered, because great things have been accomplished with prudence and strength; and therefore I would say what El Gran Capitán, when they advised him to retreat, said: "I am determined to win, and I would rather go to my grave than retreat thinking I could live a hundred years, for valor is not attained by chance, but rather by virtue of hard work and perseverance in actions."

Everything starts with principles and nothing can be accomplished without them, things that are generally not expected happen, and therefore a great soul should not be disheartened when its strength is not examined.

MS (DLC); in Yznardi's hand; endorsed by TJ as received 11 Dec. and so recorded in S.JL.

EL FILOSOFO TACITO: Secundus, an Athenian of the second century, took a vow of silence after a ruse that he concoct-

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ed to demonstrate that no woman was virtuous drove his mother to commit suicide. After he gave written answers to a set of interrogatories from the Roman Emperor Hadrian—including such queries as “What is the Universe?”—he became known as the Silent Philosopher. Naming kings and heroes who had all possessed very special talents and gifts, Secundus warned Hadrian: “If Fortune took away from these men the distinctions that were peculiarly their own, how much more likely is she to take them away from you?” (Ben Edwin Perry, *Secundus the Silent Philosopher* [Ithaca, N.Y., 1964], 1-10, 69,

71, 77, 79; Anthony K. Cassell, “*Il Corbaccio* and the Secundus Tradition,” *Comparative Literature*, 25 [1973], 355-60).

From 1556 until his death in 1598, FELIPE (Philip) II was king of Spain (German Bleiberg, ed., *Diccionario de Historia de España*, 2d ed., 3 vols. [1968-69], 2:16-24).

EL GRAN CAPITAN: Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, a famed Spanish general of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He is credited with the development of a new model of warfare that replaced Medieval tactics (same, 2:51-2).

## To James Currie

DEAR SIR

Washington Dec. 2. 1801.

In my last notes in the case between mr Ross & myself, I mentioned that I would apply to messrs. Lewis & Eppes for information of the credit given at a sale in Elk island, on which the rate of converting money into tobacco in a particular instance depended. I have received their answers, neither of them recollecting what credit was given on particular bonds: they suppose also that mr Ross, or perhaps mr Wickam may be in possession of the particular bonds in question which would shew for themselves. having no additional evidence therefore on this point, I would wish the final decision of the arbitration not to be delayed longer in expectation of it      Accept assurances of my friendly esteem & respect      TH: JEFFERSON

PrC (MHi); at foot of text: “Doctr Currie”; endorsed by TJ in ink on verso.

See TJ to Nicholas LEWIS, 16 Oct., Lewis to TJ, 30 Oct., and TJ to Currie, 19 Oct.

## To Thomas Leiper

DEAR SIR

Washington Dec. 2. 1801.

Your favor of Nov. is recieved. my crop of tobacco of the last year's growth was sold in April. that lately severed will be small; the crop of tobacco this year being generally short. mine will not be half a one. I fear too the quality will be indifferent; at least that was the expectation when I was at home in September. in that case I always sell in Richmond where they are less<sup>1</sup> anxious about quality. should it

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turn out better than was expected, you shall have the offer of it. I congratulate you on the return of peace. it removes out of our way the only rock of which I had any apprehension. I hope we have now a prospect of leisure & opportunity to pay our debts & reduce our taxes. accept assurances of my esteem & respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

PrC (MHi); foot of text: "Mr Lieper";  
endorsed by TJ in ink on verso.

YOUR FAVOR: Leiper to TJ, [before 21]  
Nov.

<sup>1</sup> Canceled: "attentive to."

## To George Jefferson

DEAR SIR

Washington Dec. 3. 1801.

In the month of August,<sup>1</sup> mr Barnes shipped from hence by the Schooner William, James Collett master, of Alexandria three cases, small, containing some composition ornaments. I believe the three cases were put into one outer one. they were marked TI. No. 1. 2. 3. and I am not quite certain they were put into one. they were addressed to you. they have never got to Monticello, nor do I recollect that you have ever noted the receipt of them. under these circumstances I take the liberty of asking you to make enquiry for them, if you have the means. possibly the Captain may have dropped them at Norfolk. we know that they were actually put on board his vessel at Alexandria. I note & approve what you did as to Stewart. he is the best workman in America, but the most eccentric one: quite manageable were I at home, but doubtful as I am not. accept assurances of my constant & affectionate esteem.

TH: JEFFERSON

PrC (MHi); at foot of text: "Mr. George Jefferson"; endorsed by TJ in ink on verso.

TJ to John Barnes, 7 Aug., and Barnes to TJ, 24 Aug. 1801.

WHAT YOU DID AS TO STEWART: see George Jefferson to TJ, 16 Nov.

For the shipment of the COMPOSITION ORNAMENTS to Gibson & Jefferson, see

<sup>1</sup> Interlined in place of "September."

## To James Madison

[ca. 3 Dec. 1801]

This claim is totally without foundation. M. de Rayneval wrote to me on the subject last spring and I wrote him an answer which I can communicate to mr Madison.

TH:J

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MS (DNA: RG 59, NL); in TJ's hand; undated; written on a slip of paper attached to Louis André Pichon to James Madison, 3 Dec. 1801 (Madison, *Papers, Sec. of State Ser.*, 2:293).

Joseph Mathias Gérard de RAYNEVAL had written to TJ from France in August 1799 and followed up in January 1801 to press a claim for land granted to his deceased brother, Conrad Alexandre Gérard, by the Wabash Company. In conversation with Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, who in 1799 had acted

as Rayneval's intermediary, and in a letter to Rayneval in March 1801, TJ explained that Virginia had voided the claims of the Wabash Company before the land came under Congress's control. Pichon's letter of 3 Dec. to Madison from Georgetown stated that Talleyrand, the French minister of foreign affairs, had instructed him to inquire if Rayneval's claim could be presented to Congress with the president's recommendation (same, 2:293-4; Vol. 31:175-6; Vol. 32:384-5; Vol. 33:373-4).

## To Craven Peyton

DEAR SIR

Washington Dec. 3. 1801.

Your favor of Nov. 6. was recieved in due time. a press of business has prevented my answering sooner. I am willing to recieve William Davenport as the assignee of your lease of Shadwell. on considering the parts of the lands of the Hendersons which fall to me, I observe that it would be desireable for me to have all their shares in the three parcels on the river, but most especially in the middle one to have John's, Bennet's & Nancy's. the two latter I suppose are under age. perhaps you could get this little piece of John's for a trifle, or all his shares in those three parcels, which would all be acceptable to me. his part of the back tract would be of the least value to me because the farthest from me. however if he will sell the whole reasonably, I would wish you to engage it, but still in your own name. could you send me a list of the ages of the children under 21. so that I may see when chances will arise of getting their parts? accept my best wishes & respects

TH: JEFFERSON

PrC (ViU); at foot of text: "Mr. Craven Peyton"; endorsed by TJ in ink on verso.

For the CHILDREN of Elizabeth Lewis and Bennett Henderson, see Declaration of Trust with Craven Peyton, [25 Sep.

1801]. Henderson's widow and their five youngest children moved to Shelby County, Kentucky, in November 1801 (Boyn-ton Merrill, Jr., *Jefferson's Nephews: A Frontier Tragedy* [Princeton, 1976], 64-5).

## From Andrew Sterett

SIR,

Baltimore, December 3, 1801.

I do myself the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's letter of the first instant.

It has been my greatest ambition to discharge my duty as an officer of the American navy, at all times, with promptness and fidelity; and to have received my country's and your excellency's approbation of the late conquest over a faithless and barbarian enemy, achieved<sup>1</sup> by the valour and good conduct of the officers and crew I had the honor to command, is a reward which I estimate beyond my merits; but of which I shall ever cherish a grateful recollection, particularly for the very flattering manner in which your excellency has been pleased to convey it.

I have the honor to be with profound respect your excellency's obliged humble servant,

ANDREW STERETT,  
Lieut. and commander of the United States  
Schooner Enterprize.

Printed in the *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, 12 Dec. 1801.  
Recorded in SJL as received 4 Dec.

The Baltimore newspaper printed both this letter and TJ's communication of the 1st and introduced them with the following comment: "The editors were politely favored with the following letters several

days since; but they overcame their impatience to lay before the public the meed of merit to a brave officer, until it should be published by the proper department. It has not yet appeared, and they can repress their feelings no longer, to withhold it."

<sup>1</sup> *Federal Gazette*: "achived."

## From Abishai Thomas

Navy office Decr. 3rd 1801

Agreeably to the instruction of the President A Thomas had the honor to Submit the enclosed \*Statement to the Secretary of State, who approved of the information it contains being communicated to Mr. Pichon.

[*In TJ's hand:*]

\*of French prizes carried into Mass. New Hamp. Connecticut & Rhode island.

RC (DLC); with TJ's note written in margin; address on verso partially torn away: "[Pr]esident"; endorsed by TJ as received from the Navy Department on 3 Dec. and "French captures" and so recorded in SJL. Enclosure not found.