Republican Star and General Advertiser.

VOL. XXXII. EASTON, (MD.) TUESDAY MORNING, MARCH 15, 1831. NO. 29...1548.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING
BY
Thomas Perrin Smith.

TERMS

Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum, payable half yearly in advance.—No paper can be discontinued until the same is paid for.

ADVERTISEMENTS are inserted three weeks for *One Dollar*, and continued weekly for *Twenty five Cents* per square.

CORRESPONDENCE

Between General Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun, President and Vice President of the United States, on the subject of the course of the latter in the deliberations of the Cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the occurences in the Seminole War.

[CONTINUED.]

No. 6.

Mr. Forsyth to Mr. Calhoun.

GEORGETOWN, District of Columbia, May 31, 1830.

SIR: Having, at the request of the President to be informed what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the subject of the Seminole campaign, laid before him a copy (except the omission of a name) of a letter from Mr. Crawford, which has since been communicated to you, the President has thought it just to permit me to read your answer of the 29th instant, to his letter enclosing it. Between you and the President, or between you and Mr. Crawford, or between you and the friends of Mr. Crawford, when spoken of *in general*, it is not my design to intervene. There are, however, circumstances in your letter of a personal character, that require to be placed in their true light, in justice to you and to myself. As to the first, you complain that the interposition of the name of the President deprives you of important rights; among these is enumerated 'the right of being placed (by me) in possession of all the facts and circumstances connected with this affair.' So far as I understand the point on which the President desired information, there is no circumstance or fact within my knowledge that can throw an additional light upon it.—There is certainly no fact or circumstance within my knowledge, directly or collaterally connected with it, that is not at your service.

If desirable to you, you shall be furnished with a copy of my letter (a copy of it is in the President's hands) referred to in Mr. C.'s letter to me, and with the name of the gentleman to whom it was written, known also to the President. I cannot promise a copy of the letter from Savannah, to which my first was an answer, as I am not sure that it is in being; if it is, and can be found on my return to Georgia, you can have a copy of it. Having thus offered justice according to your view of it, you will not be surprised that I should expect justice in return. Your answer to the President seems to be founded upon the presumption that there is some conspiracy secretly at work to do injury to your character, and to destroy your political consequence. With this presumption I have no concern; but the circumstances under which my name is introduced by you render it proper that I should be distinctly informed if this charge of conspiracy against you is intended to apply to me.

In justice to Mr. C., and for his use, I shall apply to the President for a copy of your letter of the 29th instant. If you have any objection, you will state it. I shall take it for granted that you acquiesce, unless otherwise informed.

I am, sir,
Your obedient servant,
JOHN FORSYTH.

Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN.

No. 7.

Mr. Calhoun to Mr. Forsyth.

STEAMBOAT POTOMAC, 1st June, 1830.

SIR: I have just received your letter of the 31st ultimo, which was handed me by Mr. Archer. It gives me the first intimation that I have had, that the President applied to you to obtain information of what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the subject of the Seminole campaign, and, of course, I suppose that you were acting for him, and not for yourself, in your correspondence with Mr. Crawford. Neither the copy of his letter to you, placed in my hands by the President, nor his note covering the copy, gave me the slightest intimation of this fact; but, on the contrary, I had a right to presume, from Mr. Crawford giving you authority to show me his letter, if you pleased, that the correspondence originated with yourself, and was under your entire control, and not, as I now infer, 'at the request of the President, and for his use.' The view in which I regarded the correspondence, and which I was justified to do, judging by the facts before me, fully explains my remarks in my letter to the President, as far as you were concerned with them.

In the direction which this affair has taken, it is not for me to determine whether you ought to furnish me any information, or what it ought to be. Had I supposed that, under the circumstances in which I was placed, such a right belonged to me, I would have claimed it previously to my answer to the President's letter, so as to have had the advantage, before I made my reply, of whatever light might be furnished from the sources I therein indicated. That there are those who intend that this affair shall operate against me politically, by causing a rupture between myself and the President, and thereby affect, if possible, my standing with the nation, I cannot doubt, for reasons which I have stated in my answer to the President; but I must be permitted to express my surprise that you should suppose that my remarks comprehended you, when they expressly referred to those whose names did not appear in the transaction, and consequently excluded you.

My answer to the President is his property, and not mine; and consequently it belongs to him, and not to me, to determine to whom he shall, or shall not, give copies.

I am, very respectfully, &c. &c. &c.
J. C. CALHOUN.

Hon. JOHN FORSYTH.

No. 8.

Mr. Calhoun to General Jackson.

PENDLETON, June 22, 1830.

SIR: I embrace the first leisure moment since my return home to enclose to you a copy of a letter from Mr. Forsyth, the original of which was handed to me on my passage from Washington to Norfolk, on board the steamboat, and also a copy of my answer.

You will learn by a perusal of Mr. Forsyth's letter, that it refers to the correspondence between us, and that it places the subject of that correspondence in a light in some respects different from what I had previously regarded it. I had supposed, from the complexion of your letters to me, that the copy of Mr. Crawford's letter to Mr. Forsyth had been placed by the latter in your hands, without any previous act or agency on your part; but, by Mr. Forsyth's letter to me, I am informed that such is not the fact. It seems that he acted as your agent in the affair. He states that you applied to him to be informed of what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the subject of the Seminole campaign; and I infer, as the information could be obtained only from some one of the members of the cabinet, and as Mr. Forsyth was not one, and, as far as I am informed, not particularly intimate with any of its members, except Mr. Crawford, that the object of your request was to obtain the information through Mr. Forsyth, from Mr. Crawford, and that, consequently, in writing to him, and in placing the copy of this letter in your hands, he can be regarded in no other light but that of your agent.

Under this new aspect of this affair, I conceive that I have the right to claim of you to be put in possession of all the additional information, which I might fairly have demanded of Mr. Forsyth, had the correspondence been originally between him and myself, on the supposition on which I acted previously to the receipt of this letter. He avows himself ready, if desired by me, to furnish me with the additional information, but a sense of propriety would not permit me to make the request of him. Considered as your agent in this affair, it is not for me to make the request of information *of him*. What additional information I conceive myself to be entitled to, my letter to you of the 29th May will sufficiently indicate. A part of the information, it seems from Mr. Forsyth's letter, is already in your possession, and there can be no doubt but the whole would be furnished at your request.

I make this application solely from the desire of obtaining the means of enabling me to unravel this mysterious affair. Facts and circumstances, light of themselves, may, when viewed in connection, afford important light as to the origin and object of what I firmly believe to be a base political intrigue, got up by those who regard your reputation and the public interest much less than their own personal advancement.

I must remark in conclusion, that the letter of Mr. Forsyth affords to my mind conclusive proof that the intimations to my prejudice, to which you refer in your letter of the 30th ultimo, and which you seem to think made no impression on your mind, have not been without their intended effect. On no other supposition can I explain the fact, that, without giving me any intimation of the step, you should apply for information, as to my course in the cabinet, to one whom you knew to be hostile to me as Mr. Crawford is, and who could not, as you know, make the disclosure consistently with the principles of honor and fidelity, when my previous correspondence with you ought to have satisfied you, that I was prepared to give you, frankly and fully, any information which you might desire, in relation to my course on the occasion.

J. C. CALHOUN.

To President JACKSON.

No. 9.

Gen. Jackson to Mr. Forsyth.

WASHINGTON, June 7, 1830

SIR: I have received your letter of the 2d inst. enclosing a copy of your letter to Mr. Calhoun, of the 31st ult. and his reply thereto, all of which I have duly noted.

You have requested a copy of Mr. Calhoun's letter to me of the 29th of May last, for the purpose of its being shown to Mr. Crawford. Mr. Calhoun, in his reply to you, does not consent, nor yet object, to your being furnished with a copy, but refers the matter to my discretion.

A copy of the original letter of Mr. Crawford to you having been submitted to me, it occurred as being proper and correct that you should be apprised of Mr. Calhoun's answer, and therefore it was shown to you. I cannot on reflection, perceive any impropriety in now according to you the request you have made particularly, as on your referring this matter to Mr. Calhoun, he does not object. I accordingly send it with this injunction, that it be used for no other purpose but the one you have stated, to be shown to Mr. Crawford.

In the letter which you have addressed to Mr. Calhoun, you state as follows, to wit: 'Having, at the request of the President to be informed what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the subject of the Seminole campaign, laid before him a copy (except the omission of a name) of a letter from Mr. Crawford,' &c. &c. This is construed by Mr. Calhoun into a declaration that I requested you to furnish me with the information. I am satisfied it was not by you so intended, and I would be glad you would so explain it to him. I never conversed with you upon this subject previous to the time when you sent me Mr. Crawford's letter. The facts are these: I had been informed that Mr. Crawford had made a statement concerning this business, which had come to the knowledge of Col. James A. Hamilton, of New York. On meeting with Col. Hamilton I inquired of him, and received for answer that he had, but remarked that he did not think it proper to communicate without the consent of the writer. I answered, that being informed that the marshal of this District, had to a friend of mine, made a similar statement to that said to have been made by Mr. Crawford, I would be glad to see Mr. Crawford's statement, and desired he would write and obtain his consent. My reasons were that I had, from the uniformly friendly possessions of Mr. Calhoun, always believed him my friend in all this Seminole business; and I had a desire to know if in this I had been mistaken, and whether it was *possible* for Mr. Calhoun to have acted with such insincerity and duplicity towards me.

I have enclosed Mr. Calhoun a copy of this letter.

And am, sir, with respectful regard,
Your most obedient servant,
ANDREW JACKSON.

The Hon. JOHN FORSYTH,
Senator in Congress.

No. 9.—(continued.)

Mr. Forsyth to Gen. Jackson.

AUGUSTA, June 17th, 1830.

SIR: I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 7th instant, and the copy of papers enclosed with it. The papers will show to Mr. Crawford, and no other use made of them by me.

I did not intend to convey to Mr. Calhoun the idea that any personal communication ever took place between us prior to the date of Mr. Crawford's letter, relative to the occurrences in Mr. Monroe's cabinet on the question of the Seminole war. What I intended he should know, and I suppose will now understand, if I have inadvertently misled him, is that I did not volunteer to procure the information contained in Mr. Crawford's letter, but that it was obtained for your use in compliance with your request. Major Hamilton requested me, in your name, to give to you what I had previously given to him—Mr. Crawford's account of the transaction. With this request I complied, after having first obtained Mr. Crawford's consent, and received from him his correction of a mistake I had made in repeating his verbal statement.

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

Gen. ANDREW JACKSON,
President of the United States.

AUGUSTA, June 17th, 1830.

SIR: Gen. Jackson having sent to you a copy of his letter to me of the 7th instant, it is proper that you should see the answer to it: you will find a copy on the opposite page.

I am, sir, with respect,
JOHN FORSYTH.

Hon. JOHN C. CALHOUN.

No. 9.—(continued.)

General Jackson to Mr. Calhoun.

WASHINGTON, June 7, 1830.

SIR: On the 5th inst. I received a letter from Mr. Forsyth of the Senate, requesting a copy of your letter to me of the 29th of May last. I have not been able to perceive any objections to comply with his request. A copy of my letter to him on this subject, I have thought it proper, should be sent to you; it is therefore enclosed.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your most obedient servant,
ANDREW JACKSON.

The Hon. J. C. CALHOUN,
Vice President of the U. States.

No. 10.

General Jackson to Mr. Calhoun.

HERMITAGE, June 19,* 1830.

SIR: Your letter of the 22d June last, has just been received, via Washington city. I regret that mine to you of the 7th of May, covering a copy of one to Mr. Forsyth from me of the same date, had not reached you, as it would have prevented you from falling into the gross errors you have, from the unfounded inferences you have drawn from Mr. Forsyth's letter to me, and would have informed you that I had no conversation or communication with Mr. Forsyth on the subject alluded to, before the receipt of the copy of Mr. Crawford's letter which I so promptly laid before you. To correct the errors into which the inferences you have drawn from Mr. Forsyth's letter have led you, I herewith again enclose you a copy of my letter to Mr Forsyth, of the 7th of May, and his answer thereto of the 17th June last, which I received on the 8th instant, and I have to regret that any interruption of the mail prevented your receipt of mine of the 7th May, which was mailed the same time mine to Mr. Forsyth was.

Mr. Forsyth having promised, in his letter to me of the 17th June, that he would explain and by letter correct you in the unjust and unfounded inferences which you had drawn from his letter, and I must add here, for your information, that, if I understood your other allusions, they are as equally unfounded. I have never heard it even intimated, except in your letter, that the individual to whom I suppose you allude, had the slightest knowledge on the subject, or the most remote agency in the matter. In conclusion, I repeat, I have always met the intimations of your having made before the cabinet, in secret council, against me, injurious movements, with flat and positive denial, and brought into view, by way of rebutter, your uniform and full approval of my whole conduct on the Seminole campaign, so far as I, or any of my friends, had heard you on the subject, and the high character you sustained for fair, open, and honorable conduct in all things was entirely opposed to the secret, uncandid, and unmanly course ascribed to you by those intimations, and I banished from my mind what I conceived to be unjust imputations upon your honor by ascribing duplicity to you, and never, until after the intimations were communicated to me of the suggestions of the Marshal as stated in my letter to Mr. Forsyth, (a copy of which was enclosed to you.) It was then that I had a desire to see the statement said to have been made by Mr. Crawford, and when information (informed) by Col. Hamilton that such statements had been seen in writing, that I made the request to see it, with the object of laying it before you, which I then supposed would meet your prompt and positive negative. But I regret that instead of a negative, which I had a right to expect, I had the poignant mortification to see in your letter an admission of its truth. Understanding the matter now, I feel no interest in this altercation, and leave you and Mr. Crawford and all concerned to settle the affair in your own way, and now close this correspondence for ever.

I am, very respectfully,
Your most obedient servant,
ANDREW JACKSON.

Hon. J. C. CALHOUN,
Vice President of the U. States.

*Intended, probably, for the 19th of July.

No. 11.

Mr. Calhoun to Gen. Jackson.

FORT HILL, 25th Aug. 1830.

SIR: I received, on the 6th instant, your letter dated the 19th June, but which, I suppose, was intended for the 19th July, with its enclosures. On the 24th of June I received the note of Mr. Forsyth, covering a copy of his letter to you of the 17th same month; but owing to some delay in the conveyance, for which I am unable to account, I did not receive your letter of the 7th June, covering a copy of your letter to Mr. Forsyth, till the 14th July.

You regret that I did not receive your letter of the 7th June, before I wrote mine of the 28th of the same month, on the ground, to use your own language, that it would have prevented me 'from falling into the gross errors you have from the unfounded inferences you have drawn from Mr. Forsyth's letter to me.'—You cannot more sincerely regret than I do that any delay in the mail deprived me of the advantage of the statement in your letter to Mr. Forsyth, seeing that you deemed it material to a correct understanding of the facts; but I must say, after a careful perusal of your letter to him, as well as yours to myself, I am utterly at a loss to perceive the 'gross errors' of which you accuse me. As far as I can understand you, they seem to consist in the supposition that I inferred from Mr. Forsyth's letter that you applied to him personally to obtain the information from Mr. Crawford, of what took place in the cabinet on the Seminole question; whereas, in fact, you applied not to him, but to Mr. James Hamilton, of New York; and it was he, and not you, who applied to Mr. Forsyth to obtain the information. If there be a difference in principle between the two statements, I can only say that I am not responsible for it. The charge of 'error' ought to be made against Mr. Forsyth and not me. His words are, 'Having, at the request of the President to be informed of what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe on the subject of the Seminole campaign, laid before him a copy (except the omission of a name) of a letter from Mr. Crawford, which has been since communicated to you,' &c. &c. Now, sir, if I had inferred from these words, as you suppose I did, that you had personally applied to Mr. Forsyth to obtain the information for you, I would have done no more than what I fairly might, without the imputation of 'gross errors.' But I made no such inference; on the contrary, I have used almost the very words of Mr. Forsyth. My language is, 'I had supposed from the complexion of your letters to me, that the copy of Mr. Crawfords letter to Mr. Forsyth had been placed by the latter in your hands, without any previous act or agency on your part; but by Mr. Forsyth's letter to me, I am informed that such is not the fact. It seems that he acted as your agent in the affair. He states that you applied to him to be informed of what took place in the cabinet of Mr. Monroe, on the subject of the Seminole campaign.'

In my letter to Mr. Forsyth, I use almost verbatim the same language. As far as I am capable of understanding the force of words, my language does not vary, in the smallest degree, in its sense, from that used by Mr. Forsyth in his letter to me, and most certainly does not more strongly imply than his does that you applied to him personally for the information. But, suppose I had fallen into the 'gross errors' of inferring from Mr. Forsyth's letter that you had personally applied to him when, in fact, it was not you, but your agent, James Hamilton, (of New York,) who applied for you, *in your name*, as Mr. Forsyth informed you in his letter of 17th June, it requires more penetration than I possess to discover how the difference can, in the slightest degree, affect the only material question, whether he acted as a mere volunteer, or as your agent. Mr. Forsyth himself decides this question. He tells you expressly, that he did not act as a volunteer; and it is on the ground that he acted for you, and not for himself, that I claimed of you to be put in possession of certain facts connected with the subject of our correspondence, which were in the possession of Mr. Forsyth, and which I deemed important to the full developement of this affair; but instead of complying with so reasonable a request, you reply not by denying the justice of the request, nor that he acted for you, and not for himself, but by accusing me of 'gross errors,' an assumption on your part at once gratuitous and immaterial, that I had inferred that you had applied to Mr. Forsyth personally, when, in fact, the application had been made for you, in your own name, by Mr. Hamilton. I must say, that I cannot see in your statement the least excuse for withholding from me the information requested; and I am constrained to add, that I have looked in vain in the course which you have pursued for the evidence of that frankness which you assured me, in submitting the copy of Mr. Crawford's letter to me, has ever characterised your conduct towards those with whom you had been in the habits of friendship. As connected with this point, let me call your attention to a fact which has not been explained, though in my opinion it ought to be. It now appears that when Mr. Forsyth placed the copy of Mr. Crawford's letter in your hands, he also placed with it a copy of his letter referred to by Mr. Crawford. Why was it that a copy of this letter of Mr. Forsyth did not accompany Mr. Crawford's when you placed a copy of the letter in my hands? Calling upon me in the spirit of frankness and friendship, as you informed me you did, I had a right to infer that every document connected with the charge, and in your possession, calculated to afford light, would be placed in my possession; and such, in fact, was my impression, but which I now find to be erroneous. It is with regret that I feel myself bound to state that Mr. Forsyth's letter, with the subsequent correspondence, has given an aspect to the affair very different from what I received from your first letter.

You have stated some suggestions of the Marshals of the District, which were communicated to you, as the reason why you have agitated this old affair at this time. You have not stated what they were, *to whom made* or by *whom communicated*, which, of course, leaves me in the dark as to their nature or character. But whatever they may be, the course you adopted, considering the friendly relation which I had reason to suppose existed between us, is well calculated to excite surprise. Instead of applying to the Marshal, in order to ascertain what he did say, and from whom he derived his information, and then submitting his statement to me, which cause friendship, and the high opinion which you say you entertained for my character 'for fair, open, and honorable conduct in all things,' manifestly dictated, you applied for information, as to my conduct to the man, who you knew felt towards me the strongest enmity. I wish not to be understood that you had mere general information of his ill will towards me. Your information was of the most specific character, and was of such a nature as ought to have made you distrust any statement of his, calculated to affect my reputation.

Knowing the political machinations that were carrying on against me, and wishing to place me on my guard, a friend of mine placed in my hands, some times since, a copy of a letter written by Mr. Crawford to a Nashville correspondent of his in 1827. It constitutes one of the many means resorted to in order to excite your suspicion against me. In it Mr. Crawford makes an abusive attack upon me; but, not content with thus assailing my character in the dark, he offers to bring into the market the influence which Georgia might have on the presidential election, as a means whereby to depress my political prospects. To avoid the possibility of mistakes, I will give extracts from the letter itself, in full confirmation of what I have stated.

Speaking of the presidential election, Mr. Crawford says, that 'the only difficulty that this State (Georgia) has upon the subject, (your election,) is, that, if Jackson should be elected, Calhoun will come into power.'

Again:

'If you can ascertain that Calhoun will not be benefitted by Jackson's election, you will do me a benefit by communicating the information to me. Make what use you please, and show it to whom you please.'

That the letter was clearly intended for your inspection, cannot be doubted. The authority to this correspondent to make what use he plessed, and to show it to whom he pleased, with the nature of the information sought, whether I was to be benefitted by your election, which could only be derived from yourself, leaves no doubt on that point, and I am accordingly informed that you saw the letter.

A proposition of the kind, at that particular period, when the presidential election was most doubtful, and most warmly contested, needs no comment as to its object. To say nothing of its moral and political character, stronger proof could not be offered of the deepest enmity towards me on the part of the writer, which at least ought to have placed you on your guard against all attacks on me from that quarter.—The letter will not be denied; but if, contrary to expectation, it should, I stand ready, by highly respectable authority, to maintain its authenticity.

You well knew the disinterested, open, and fearless course which myself and my friends pursuing at this very period, and the weight of enmity which it drew down upon us from our opponents. Little did I then suspect that these secret machinations were carrying on against me at Nashville, or that such propositions could be ventured to be made to you, or, if ventured, without being instantly disclosed to me. Of this, however, I complain not, nor do I intend to recriminate; but I must repeat the expression of my surprise, that you should apply to an individual who you knew, from such decisive proof, to be actuated by the most inveterate hostility towards me, for information of my course in Mr. Monroe's cabinet. It affords to my mind conclusive proof that you had permitted your feelings to be alienated by the artful movements of those who had made you the victim of their intrigue, long before the commencement of this correspondence.

Instead of furnishing me with the information which I claimed, in order to a full understanding of this extraordinary affair, and which you could not justly withhold, you kindly undertake to excuse the individual to whom you suppose some allusion to mine to be made. I know not to whom you refer. I made no allusion to any one particular individual. But, be that as it may, you must excuse me if, on subjects which concern me, I should prefer my judgment to yours, and, of course, if I should not be satisfied with your opinion, as a substitute for the facts by which I might be able to form my own.

After I had so fully demonstrated the candor and sincerity with which I have acted throughout this, I did not suppose that you would reiterate your former charges; but having done so, it only remains for me to repeat, in the most possitive manner, the contradiction. I never for a moment disguised my sentiments on this or any other political subject. Why should I in this instance? I had violated no duty—no rule of honor, nor obligation of friendship. I did your motives full justice in every stage of the cabinet deliberation, and, after a full investigation, I entirely approved and heartily supported the final decision. In this course I was guided, it is true, not by feelings of friendship, but solely by a sense of duty.—When our country is concerned, there ought to be room neither for friendship nor enmity.

You conclude your letter by saying that you understand the matter now, tha you feel no interest in this altercation, and that you would leave me and Mr. Crawford, and all concerned, to settle this affair in our own way, and that you now close the correspondence for ever.

It is not for me to object to the manner you may choose to close the correspondence on your part. On my part, I have no desire to prolong it. The spectacle of the first and second officers of this great Republic ingaged in a correspondence of this nature, has no attraction for me at any time; and is very far from being agreeable at this critical juncture of our affairs.—My consolation is, that it was not of my seeking; and, as I am not responsible for its commencement, I feel no disposition to incur any responsibility for its continuance. Forced into it, to repel unjust and base imputations upon my character, I could not retire in honor while they continued to be reiterated.

Having now fully vindicated my conduct, I will conclude the correspondence also, with a single remark that I too well know what is due to my rights and self respect, in this unpleasant affair to permit myself to be diverted into an altercation with Mr. Crawford, or any other individual, who it you may choose to be considered as concerned in the affair.*

J. C. CALHOUN.

President Jackson.

*Mr. Crawford attempted to open a correspondence with me on this subject. I returned his letter, declining all correspondence with him, except through Gen. Jackson. See appendix Q.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from the Private Correspondence between Mr. Monroe and General Jackson, on the Seminole affair referred to in the letter of the 29th May.

A

Mr. Monroe to General Jackson.

WASHINGTON, July 19, 1818.

Dear Sir: I received, lately, your letter of June 24, by Mr. Hambly, at my farm in Loudoun, to which I had retired to wait your report, and the return of your Commissioners from Buenos Ayres. In reply to your letter, I shall express myself with the freedom and candor which I have invariably used in my communications with you. I shall withhold nothing in regard to your attack of the Spanish posts, and occupancy of them, particularly Pensacola, which you ought to know, it being an occurrence of the most delicate and interesting nature, and which, without a circumspect and cautious policy, looking to all the objects which claim attention, may produce the most serious and unfavorable consequences. It is by a knowledge of all the circumstances, and a comprehensive view of the whole subject, that the danger to which this measure is exposed may be avoided, and all the good which you have

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