and object of the enemy, in order to determine decisively and promptly upon the course which the public interest and sound policy, may render it expedient to pursue on our part.—

There is little doubt that the enemy is concentrating in your vicinity, not only all the disposable force in the Chesapeake, but has ordered reinforcements from the Coast of Portugal from Bermuda.—

Such a force will either accomplish his object, if the destruction of the flotilla be in reality the object, or will require a corresponding increase of force on our part for its protection.— This force must be drawn chiefly from this place and Baltimore, and thus abstract an essential part of the defensive means of those Cities, including a large portion of Artillery.—

In act with effect the greater part of this force must operate on the narrow peninsula formed by the Chesapeake, the Patuxent, and St Leonards Creek, the isthmus of which is not more than two miles wide, on the Bay side of which the enemy may land a body of men in the night and attack your rear, while another body, in co-operation with his Barges and light Craft may assail you in front; thus jeopardizing all the force in the Peninsula, and exposing the flotilla to his musketry and artillery from the banks of the Creeks.

Suppose however he does not choose to hazard an attack, but shall be content to blockade the flotilla, and thus employ its whole force, together with the military collected for its protection, in mere measures of defence, which the presence of ten of his Ships will accomplish, while all his Barges and light Craft may be employed depredating in every other quarter unmolested.—

But if his force should be very considerable, his apparent design upon the flotilla may serve to mask a rapid movement upon this City or Baltimore.—

He may ascend the Patuxent to Nottingham, and landing within twenty four miles of this City reach it by a forced march in a few hours, and in the absence of a principal part of its defence, accomplish its destruction and return to his fleet before a sufficient force could be collected, either to repel his approach or cut off his retreat. A few hours would also carry him to the vicinity of Baltimore, where in the absence of the flotilla, he would commence without molestation the siege of the Patapsco below the range of the Guns of Fort M'Henry, and land on either side his forces, where his Rockets could be thrown into the Fort and Town, secure from the range of the Guns of the Fort.—

He certainly appears to attach much more importance to the blockade of a few Barges, than the distinct and

and intrinsic object can justify.— Hence I believe he has other and greater designs.—

These are serious views of the subject, and demonstrate that our object in maintaining the defence of the flotilla, in order to justify our perseverence in that course, should be commensurate with the importance of the objects which are thus exposed to hazard.—

That some public sensation might be excited by the voluntary destruction of the flotilla, is very probably, but that could not sustain for a moment the force of just explanation. Let us examine the extent and nature of the object to be defended, and the consequences of its abandonment.— If all the armament & every moveable equipment of the flotilla was removed to a place of safety, the value would stand thus —

Hulls of the Cutter Scorpion	$3000.
Two Gun Boats, Hulls absolutely nothing being old and so sluggish as to endanger any force they may cut with, and are better burnt than preserved.	
Thirteen Hulls of Six Barges, large size, may be contracted for, to be built in a fortnight at $2000 each	12000.
Ditto of 7 Small size Barges do. at $1500.	10500.
Extent of the loss by voluntary destruction	$25,500.—

This is but the cost of a single Baltimore Schooner, which no body would think of depending even at the expense already incurred, and if we continue to defend the flotilla in its present position, more than its whole value will be expended every fortnight, besides being deprived of the invaluable services and perhaps of the lives of those employed in its defence. The possible chance loss of some of the Barges falling into the hands of the enemy, ought not to be lost sight of. Their loss would be nothing, compared with the consequences of such formidable weapons of annoyance in the hands of the enemy. Our loss then will be merely the pecuniary amount of the five Hulls of the Flotilla.—

The men can be immediately transferred to the other Barges which are ready to receive them.—

These considerations have induced the determination to destroy effectually the whole of the flotilla under your Command, after stripping them of every moveable article, which you will transport as soon and as conveniently as possible to Baltimore for the equipment of other Barges.—

The Agent at Baltimore will have orders to contract immediately for the building of five large Barges with all possible dispatch.—

As soon as you have accomplished the destruction of the flotilla, and taken the necessary measures for the safety of transportation

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