

## George Washington Papers, Series 3, Subseries 3D, Varick Transcripts, Letterbook 1

### To THE INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND OF BERMUDA

Camp at Cambridge 3 Miles from Boston, September 6, 1775.

Gentn: [In the great Conflict, which agitates this Continent, I cannot doubt but the Assertors of Freedom and the Rights of the Constitution, are possessed of your most favorable Regards and Wishes for Success. As Descendents of Freemen and Heirs with us of the same Glorious Inheritance, we flatter ourselves that tho' divided by our Situation, we are firmly united in Sentiment; the Cause of Virtue and Liberty is Confined to no Continent or Climate, it comprehends within its capacious Limits, the Wise and good, however dispersed and seperated in Space or distance.] You need not be informed, that Violence and Rapacity of a tyrannick Ministry, have forced the Citizens of America, your Brother Colonists, into Arms; We equally detest and lament the Prevalence of those Councils, which have led to the Effusion of so much human Blood and left us no Alternative but a Civil War or a base Submission. The wise disposer of all Events has hitherto smiled upon our virtuous Efforts; Those Mercenary Troops, a few of whom lately boasted of Subjugating this vast Continent, have been check'd in their earliest Ravages and are now actually encircled in a small Space; their Arms disgraced, and Suffering all the Calamities of a Siege. The Virtue, Spirit, and Union of the Provinces leave them nothing to fear, but the Want of Amunition, The applications of our Enemies to foreign States and their Vigilance upon our Coasts, are the only Efforts

they have made against us with Success. Under those Circumstances, and with these Sentiments we have turned our Eyes to you Gentlemen for Relief, We are informed there is a very large Magazine in your Island under a very feeble Guard; We would not wish to involve you in an Opposition, in which from your Situation, we should be unable to support you:—We knew not therefore to what Extent to solicit your Assistance in availing ourselves of this Supply;—but if your Favor and Friendship to North America and its Liberties have not been misrepresented, I persuade myself you may, consistent with your own Safety, pro mote and further this Scheme, so as to give it the fairest prospect of Success. Be assured, that in this Case, the whole Power and Execution of my Influence will be made with the Honble. Continental Congress, that your Island may not only be Supplied with Provisions, but experience every other Mark of Affection and Friendship, which the grateful Citizens of a free Country can bestow on its Brethren and Benefactors. I am &c.<sup>43</sup>

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43. There is no draft of this address to the Bermuda inhabitants in the *Washington Papers*. The copy of it there was made by George Taylor, jr., one of Varick's writers, in 1781. (See Washington's letter

to Gov. Nicholas Cooke, August 4, 1775, *ante.*) Capt. Abraham Whipple, of Rhode Island, sailed for Bermuda. He arrived too late, as Gage had already removed the powder.

## **To THE INHABITANTS OF CANADA**

Friends and Brethren: The unnatural Contest between the English Colonies, and Great Britain has now risen to such a Height, that Arms alone must decide it.

The Colonies, confiding in the Justice of their Cause and the purity of their intentions, have reluctantly appealed to that Being, in whose hands are all Human Events: He has hitherto smiled upon their virtuous Efforts: The Hand of Tyranny has been arrested in its Ravages, and the British Arms, which have shone with so much Splendor in every part of the Globe, are now tarnished with disgrace and disappointment. Generals of approved experience, who boasted of subduing this great Continent, find themselves circumscribed within the limits of a single City and its Suburbs, suffering all the shame and distress of a Siege. While the Freeborn Sons of America, animated by the genuine principles of Liberty and Love of their Country, with increasing Union, Firmness and discipline, repel every attack and despise every Danger.

Above all we rejoice that our Enemies have been deceived with Regard to you: They have persuaded themselves, they have even dared to say, that the Canadians were not capable of distinguishing between the Blessings of Liberty and the Wretchedness of Slavery; that gratifying the Vanity of a little Circle of Nobility would blind the Eyes of the people of Canada. By such Artifices they hoped to bend you to their Views; but they have been deceived: Instead of

finding in you that poverty of Soul, and baseness of Spirit, they see with a Chagrin equal to our Joy, that you are enlightened, generous, and Virtuous; that you will not renounce your own Rights, or serve as Instruments to deprive your Fellow subjects of theirs. Come then, my Brethern, Unite with us in an indissoluble Union. Let us run together to the same Goal. We have taken up Arms in Defence of our Liberty, our Property; our Wives and our Children: We are determined to preserve them or die. We look forward with pleasure to that day not far remote (we hope) when the Inhabitants of America shall have one Sentiment and the full Enjoyment of the blessings of a Free Government.

Incited by these Motives and encouraged by the advice of many Friends of Liberty among you, the Great American Congress have sent an Army into your Province, under the command of General Schuyler; not to plunder but to protect you; to animate and bring forth into Action those sentiments of Freedom you have declared, and which the Tools of dispoitism would extinguish through the

whole Creation. To co-operate with this design and to frustrate those cruel and perfidious Schemes, which would deluge our Frontier with the Blood of Women and Children, I have detached Colonel Arnold into your Country, with a part of the Army under my Command. I have enjoined upon him, and I am certain that he will consider himself, and act as in the Country of his Patrons and best Friends. Necessaries and Accommodations of every kind which you may furnish, he will thankfully receive,

and render the full Value. I invite you therefore as Friends and Brethren, to provide him with such supplies as your Country affords; and I pledge myself not only for your safety and security, but for ample Compensation. Let no Man desert his habitation. Let no Man flee as before an Enemy.

The cause of America and of liberty is the cause of every virtuous American Citizen Whatever may be his Religion or his descent, the United Colonies know no distinction, but such as Slavery, Corruption and Arbitrary Domination may create. Come then ye generous Citizens, range yourselves under the Standard of general Liberty, against which all the force and Artifice of Tyranny will never be able to prevail. I am, etc.<sup>45</sup>

### To **BARON DE CALBIAC**

New York, July 23, 1776.

Sir: I received your favour of Yesterday, and in answer thereto, I am to inform you, at the same time that I commend the good Intentions which you profess induced your Countrymen<sup>94</sup> to leave their Families and Homes, that I have done the only thing in my power to favour their views.

On their first arrival and introduction to me, I gave

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45. An interesting record of this address exists in the *Washington Papers* in broadside form, with French and English in parallel columns. It is apparently a printer's proof, and the French is corrected in the writing of Maj. Gen. Charles Lee. The date of its composition justifies its position in the Varick Transcripts at this point (September 7), but apparently the printed copies were not ready before Arnold left Cambridge, as he acknowledges their receipt at Fort Wesson September 25. Schuyler had before this drawn up and sent into Canada a declaration to the inhabitants. A copy of it, dated Sept. 5, 1775, is in the *Washington Papers*.

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94. Baron de Calbiac came from Guadeloupe.

them a letter to the Continental Congress, to whom it was necessary to make known their wishes and from whom any Appointments they expect, must come. This, I am persuaded, you are sensible of, and would wish you to communicate to them. Their pretensions will be duly considered, and if supported by proper Credentials, I make no doubt but suitable Regard will be had to their Merits.

Your and their good Sense will readily suggest the Propriety and Expediency of their furnishing some testimonial and recommendation previous to any appointment: These would have been proper at any time, but the late instance of treachery and ingratitude in Monsieur <sup>95</sup> in deserting and taking the Command of a party of the Enemy in Canada, after he had been promoted to Office in the service of the United Colonies, makes them indispensably necessary. Though I do not entertain the least suspicion of the Honour and Integrity of the Gentlemen of whom you write, or mean to insinuate that a conduct like Monsieur would frequently happen.

I might further add, that the unacquaintance of our Soldiers with any Language but their own, makes them rather unwilling and impatient under the Command of Foreigners, unless they axe Men of high reputation. Nor will they consent thereto but on that account and where they profess great Military knowledge. It therefore follows that any Appointments these Gentlemen may obtain, will not be attended with any good purposes or satisfaction to themselves, unless they are to [be in a] Corps of

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95. The name is left blank in the "Letter Book."

their own people, or those who understand their Language. I am, Sir, etc.

### **To THE COMTE D'EMERY<sup>89</sup>**

Head Quarters, Harlem Heights, 10 Miles from New York, October 7, 1776.

Sir: I yesterday had the honor of receiving your Letter of the 4th. Augt. and I take the earliest Opportunity of testifying the pleasure I have in complying with your request, by immediately ordering the Release of Monsr. Dechambault. He shall be accommodated with a Passage in the first Vessel that sails from Philadelphia to the French Colonies in the West Indies. Had it not been for your Interposition Monsr. Dechambault must have remained a prisoner till released by a Cartel, but I could not hesitate to comply with a Request made by a Nobleman who by his public Countenance of our Cause has rendered such essential Services to the thirteen united independent States of America, whose Armies I have the honor to command. I have the honor to be, etc.

89. Governor General of the French part of San Domingo.

**To CHEVALIER D'ANMOURS<sup>80</sup>**

Head Quarters, Camp at Middle Brook, June 19, 1777.

Sir: I have received your favour of the 6th. Instant, transmitting me your observations on the State of American Affairs, and the part that France is interested by the motives of good policy to act in consequence of it. Your reflections appear to me extremely judicious and well founded, and prove, that you have made a good use of your time, in collecting the information necessary to regulate your judgment, in a matter that so intimately concerns all Europe as well as America. It were to be wished that sentiments similar to yours were impressed upon the French Court; and that they could be induced not to delay an event so desirable both to them and to us, as the one you are anxious should take place.<sup>81</sup>

An immediate declaration of War against Britain, in all probability, could not fail to extricate us from all our difficulties, and to cement the Bond of Friendship so firmly between France and America, as to produce the most permanent advantages to both. Certainly nothing can be more the true Interest of France, than to have a Weight of such Magnitude as America taken out of the Scale of British power and opulence and thrown into that of her own; and, if so, it cannot be advisable to trust any thing to contingencies, when by a conduct decisively in our favour, the object in view, might be put upon a sure footing.

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80. Later, the French consul in Maryland.

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81. "The last news from Europe seems to announce that England and France are very near to throw off the veil of dissimulation Behind which both have Acted to this time. However I am too much Acquainted with the Political Genius of Both Courts to Expect any considerable hostility will pass Between them till next Spring at which Epocha, I intimately Believe it will be impossible for any of them not to come to an open war; therefore I think your Exelency will have nothing to depend upon this year But your military talents, the Zeal of Your Army and the Justice of your Cause."— *D'Anmours to Washington*, June 6, 1777. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

Permit me, Sir, to correct a mistake you have made, in narrating a fact, with respect to the Danbury expedition, in which some Magazines of ours were destroyed. You mention only an hundred Men, being lost to the Enemy; but from various accounts and circumstances, there is little reason to doubt

there must have been at least four hundred killed, wounded and taken. I have taken notice of this error, because it is of some little importance, the affair should be rightly stated, as it serves to show in a striking point of view, the spirit of opposition prevailing among the people, which animated them to Assemble on so sudden an occasion, and to attack a regular Body of two thousand Men, with so much Vigor, as to force them to a precipitate return, little differing from a rout.

General Howe has lately made a very extraordinary movement. He sallied out from Brunswick on the Night of the 13th. Instantly and marched towards Somerset about nine Miles distant, when he halted and began to fortify. By this operation he has drawn much nearer to us, and was in a tolerably commodious posture for attacking our Right, which led us to conjecture this might have been his design; But all of a sudden he last Night began to decamp, and with a good deal of expedition, if not precipitation, has returned to his former position, with his right at Amboy and his left at Brunswick. This was certainly a hasty resolution, but from what motive it is not easy to determine. He had began a Chain of Redoubts from Right to Left, which, together with other appearances, indicated a design of remaining there some little time at least. His abandoning the Ground

he had taken and leaving the Redoubts half finished, is an Argument that he had been disappointed in his views, and found it necessary to alter them. Perhaps he was discouraged by the spirit that appeared among the Inhabitants who flocked together to join our Army, even beyond my expectation. As he began to retire in the Night, had but little way to go, was protected on his flank next to us by the Rariton, and on his rear by the Millstone, I had little or no opportunity of annoying him in his return. His Soldiery plundered the people as usual and burnt many valuable Houses in their Route.

I am sorry it is not in my power to avail myself of your services in the way you propose. At the same time I assure you, I entertain as high an opinion of your Zeal and Abilities as the opportunities I have had of knowing you will permit. I am etc.<sup>82</sup>

### **To LOUIS A. J. B. CHEVALIER DE CAMBRAY DIGNY**

Head Quarters, April 4, 1778.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 26th. February, informing me of your having letters from Doctor Franklin, and that you are desirous of serving in the Continental Army. It will save you unnecessary travelling and expenses, to apprise you that Congress alone can place you there, and consequently that your personal

82. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton and Richard Kidder Meade.

application to them, is the first step to be taken by you in prosecuting this business. If they should determine in your favour, it will give me pleasure to render your situation in the Army as agreeable as possible. I am, etc.<sup>51</sup>

**To CAPTAIN DENIS NICOLAS COTTINEAU DE KLOGUENE<sup>52</sup>**

Head Quarters, April 4, 1778.

Sir: I have received your obliging letter of the 26th. February with the Inventory of your Cargo, and congratulate you on your safe arrival in America. The delay of your Sales incident to the compliment which you were so polite as to pay me, has probably been much greater than you were aware of, and I should not be surprised if in the mean time, from an idea of your letters having miscarried, you should have been induced to break Bulk and dispose of your Cargo. However, in case your good intentions should have led you to persevere in your first resolution 'till now, and that you may not be a loser by them, I have transmitted to Congress a Copy of your Invoice. The Committee of Foreign affairs will probably give Orders for the purchase of the principal part of your Cargo.

I shall be very happy to have it in my power to render you any services during your stay in America, and to prove to you how sensible I am of the consideration which you have been

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51. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

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52. Of the merchantman *Ferdinand*. He afterwards was captain in the Continental Navy and commanded the U. S. S. *Pallas*.

pleased to shew me; that your success may equal your expectation, is the wish of, Sir, etc.<sup>53</sup>

**To PIERRE PENET**

Valley Forge, in Pensylvania, April 30, 1778.

Sir: I received, not long since, your [polite and obliging] favour of the 12th. of November last, accompanied by your agreeable presents to Mrs. Washington and myself, for which we beg you

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will accept our acknowledgements.<sup>36</sup> It will [I am persuaded] enhance the pleasure you feel on the occasion to be informed, that the extra shoulder and sword knots are destined for Generals Arnold and Lincoln; Gentlemen, who were wounded, while rendering very distinguished services, in the last actions, between our Northern army and General Burgoyne's troops.

With my sincere thanks for polite expressions of regard to me, and wishes for the speedy and prosperous termination of the war, in which we are engaged, and with assurances of real esteem. I have the honour, etc.<sup>37</sup>

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53. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

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36. Penet was in Nantes, France, on the date of this letter.

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37. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets were inserted by Washington.

## **To COUNT D'ESTAING**

Camp at Pyramus, July 14, 1778.

Sir: I take the earliest opportunity to advise you, that I have been informed of your arrival on this coast, with a fleet of Ships under your command, belonging to his most Christian majesty, our Great Ally. I congratulate you, Sir, most sincerely upon this event, and beg leave to assure you of my warmest wishes for your success. The intelligence of your arrival was communicated to me last night, by a Letter from the Honble Mr. Laurens, president of the Congress, as you will perceive by the inclosed copy.

With respect to the number or force of the British Ships of War, in the Port of New York, I am so unhappy as not to be able to inform you of either, with the precision I could wish as they are constantly shifting their Stations. It is probable, and I hope it is the case, that your advices on this subject, from some captures you may have made, are more certain than those of Congress, or any I can offer. The number of their transports is reported to be extremely great, and I am persuaded that it is. If possible, I will obtain an accurate state of their Ships of war, which I shall do myself the honor of transmitting to you.

Before I conclude, I think it proper to acquaint you, that I am now arrived with the main body of the Army, immediately under my command, within twenty miles of the North or Hudson's river,

which I mean to pass as soon as possible, about fifty miles above New York. I shall then move down before the Enemy's lines, with a view of giving them every jealousy in my power. And I further think it proper to assure you, that I shall upon every occasion feel the strongest inclination to facilitate such enterprizes as you may form and are pleased to communicate to me.

I would submit it to your consideration whether it will not be expedient to establish some conventional signals, for the purpose of promoting an easier correspondence between us and mutual intelligence. If you deem it expedient, you will be so obliging as to fix upon them with Lieut. Colo. Laurens, one of my Aids, who will have the honor of delivering you this, and of giving you satisfaction in many particulars respecting our affairs, and to whom you may safely confide any measures or information you may wish me to be acquainted with.

I have just received advice that the Enemy are in daily expectation of a provision fleet from Cork, and that they are under great apprehensions, lest it should fall into your hands. You will also permit me to notice, that there is a navigation to New York from the sea, besides the one between Sandy Hook and Long Island. This lies between the latter and the state of Connecticut, is commonly known by the name of the sound, and is

capable of receiving forty Gun Ships, tho' the passage within seven miles of the City at a particular place is extremely narrow and difficult. I have the Honor, etc.<sup>37</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

July 15, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty, in behalf of the United States, to present you with a small quantity of live stock, which I flatter myself, after a long sea voyage, will not be unacceptable. I have directed the Commissary who will deliver them, to execute any Orders you will be pleased to give him, for procuring such further supplies as the country may afford for the accommodation of the fleet under your command. I have the honor, etc.<sup>46</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Camp at Haverstraw Bay, July 17, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor of receiving, the night of the 14th.

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37. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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46. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

Inst. your very obliging and interesting letter of the 13th. dated off Sandy Hook, with a duplicate of another, dated the 8th. at Sea.

The arrival of a Fleet, belonging to his most Christian majesty on our coast, is an event that makes me truly happy; and permit me to observe, that the pleasure I feel on the occasion, is greatly increased by the command being placed in a Gentleman of such distinguished talents, experience and reputation as the Count D'Estaing. I am fully persuaded that every possible exertion will be made by you to accomplish the important purposes of your destination, and you may have the firmest reliance, that my most strenuous efforts shall accompany you in any measure which may be found eligible.

I esteem myself highly honored by tile desire you express, with a frankness which must always be pleasing, of possessing a place in my friendship: At the same time allow me to assure you. that I shall consider myself peculiarly happy, if I can but improve the prepossessions you are pleased to entertain in my favour. into a cordial and lasting amity.

On the first notice of your arrival. and previous to the receipt of your Letter, I wrote to you by Lt Colo Laurens one of my Aides De Camp,whom I charged to explain to you such further particulars, as were not contained in my letter, which might be necessary for your information: and to whom it was my wish you should confide your situation and views, so far as might be proper for my direction, in any measures of

concert or cooperation, which may be thought advancive of the common cause. Major De Chouin,<sup>48</sup> who arrived this day at my Quarters, has given me a very full and satisfactory explanation, on this head, and in return I have freely communicated to him my ideas of every matter interesting to our mutual operations. These, I doubt not, he will convey to you, with that perspicuity, and intelligence, which he possesses in a manner, that amply justifies the confidence you have reposed in him. You would have heard from me sooner in answer to your letter; but I have been waiting for Mr. Chouin's arrival to acquaint me with your circumstances and intentions, and, at the same time, have been employed in collecting information with respect to several particulars, the knowledge of which was essential to the information of our plans.

The difficulty of doing justice by letter to matters of such variety and importance as those, which now engage our deliberation, has induced me to send Lt Colo. Hamilton, another of my Aids to you, in whom I place entire confidence. He will be able to make you perfectly acquainted with my sentiments, and to satisfy any inquiries you may think proper to propose; and I would wish you to consider the information he delivers as coming from myself.

Colo Hamilton is accompanied by Lt Colo Fleury, a Gentleman man of your nation, who has distinguished himself by his zeal and gallantry in the present war with

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48. André Michel Victor, Marquis de Choin (spelled Chouin by Sparks) was a major of French infantry and a near relation of the French Minister of Marine, Antoine Raymond Jean Gualbert Gabriel de Sartine.

England. He has also with him four Captains of Vessels, whom, I hope, you will find very useful, from their knowledge of the Coast and harbours, and two persons, who have acted a considerable time in the capacity of pilots and in whose skill, expertness and fidelity from the recommendations I have had, I believe you may place great dependence. I am still endeavouring to provide others of this description, who shall be dispatched to you, as fast as they can be found.

With the most ardent desire for your success and with the greatest respect and esteem, I have the Honor etc.<sup>49</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Haverstraw, 8 OClock P.M., July 18, 1778.

Sir: Captain William Dobbs will have the honour of delivering you this. He has the character of an able, experienced seaman, and for a considerable time, has been esteemed among the first pilots, on account of his general knowledge of the Coast and Harbours and particularly with those of New York. Added to these considerations, he is firmly attached to the cause of America, and you may repose in him the strictest confidence. I should have prevailed on him before to wait upon you, but his indisposition

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49. The draft is it, the writing of Robert Hanson, on Harrison.

prevented. I have the honor, etc.<sup>52</sup>

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, July 22, 1778.

Sir: I this moment received the Letter which you did me the honor of writing by Lt. Colonel Hamilton. I cannot forbear regretting that the brilliant enterprise, which you at first meditated, was frustrated by physical impossibilities; but hope that something equally Worthy of the greatness of your Sentiments is still in reserve for you.

Upon the report made me by Lt. Col. Laurens, of the depth of Water at Sandy hook, and the Draught of your Ships of the Line,<sup>99</sup> I thought that no time was to be lost in Marching a reinforcement to Genl. Sullivan, that he might be in a situation for a vigorous co-operation. I am happy to find that we coincided so exactly in the importance of this expedition.

Mr. Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this, will inform you of my opinion relative to the stationing a Ship of the line in the Sound; as well as of other particulars which I have communicated to him. I shall not therefore employ your attention farther than to assure you that you have inspired

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52. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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99. In his letter to Congress (August 26) Comte d'Estaing stated that he had been deceived by the Delaware River pilot as to the depth of the water in the Sandy Hook Channel. D'Estaing himself examined the Shrewsbury River as a possibility, and a French officer, several sailors, and rowboats were lost in the effort. The pilots procured by Colonels Laurens and Hamilton destroyed all hope of getting into New York Bay. D'Estaing offered in vain a reward of 50,000 crowns to any one who could carry his ships in, and the soundings taken by the French officers themselves confirmed the American pilots' refusal to take the risk.— *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 164, folios 555–572.

me with the same sentiments for you which you are so good as to entertain for me; and that it will be my greatest happiness to contribute to the service of our great Ally in pursuing our common enemy, and to the glory of an officer who has, on every account, so just a claim to it, as the Count d'Estaing.

The amiable manners of Major Chouin, would of themselves entitle him to my esteem, if he had not the best of titles in your recommendation; and I beg you to be assured, that nothing on my part shall be wanting to render his stay in Camp agreeable.

At the same time permit me to add that your great civilities, and politeness to my aid's cannot but increase my regard, while they serve to give me additional ideas of your worth.

I have now only to offer my sincere wishes for your success in this and every Enterprise, and the assurances of the perfect Respect and Esteem, with which I have the Honor etc.<sup>1</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, White Plains, July 26, 1778.

Sir: Major General Greene, who is now Quarter Master General of our Army, will have the honor of delivering you this. Besides the military abilities of this Gentleman, he is a Native of the State of Rhode Island, and having always resided there 'till

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1. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

the commencement of the war, he is intimately acquainted with every part of it, and with its navigation. From these circumstances, added to his weight and influence in that Country, I have thought that his services might be of material importance in the intended Enterprise against our Common Enemy. I recommend him to your notice and attention, as a brave, Intelligent, worthy Officer, and in whom you may place the utmost confidence. I have the honor, etc.<sup>37</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, White Plains, July 26, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor of writing you the inclosed Letter from Haverstraw Bay, which was intended to introduce Colonel Sears<sup>38</sup> to your Notice. This Gentleman set out with Captain Dobbs, a pilot, of the first established reputation, to offer their services to the Squadron under your command. Before they had an opportunity of reaching the Fleet, they sailed from the Road off Sandy Hook.

Colonel Sears is still desirous of manifesting his zeal in this our common cause, and will be happy, if he can contribute in the smallest degree to the success of the Enterprise which you have formed against Rhode Island. I have the honor, etc.<sup>37</sup>

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38. Col. Isaac Sears, a pilot.

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37. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 8, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor last night of receiving your favour of the 3rd. instant. I most sincerely sympathize with you in the regret you feel at the obstacles and difficulties you have heretofore encountered. Your case has certainly been a case of peculiar hardship, but you justly have the consolation which arises from a reflection that no exertions possible have been wanting in you to insure success, the most ample and adequate to your wishes and to the important expectations from your command. The disappointments you have experienced proceed from circumstances which no human foresight or activity can controul. None can desire more ardently than I do, that the future may compensate for the past and that your efforts may be crowned with the full success they deserve.

I have just received a letter from Brigadier General Maxwell who is stationed in the Jerseys near Staten Island dated yesterday at nine O'clock in the forenoon. Inclosed are extracts from it which contain very interesting information.<sup>31</sup> The terms made use of are so positive and express, that it is natural to conclude the intelligence is well founded. Its importance induces me to lose no time in communicating it. What may be the real design of this movement can only be the subject of conjecture. Unless the fleet may have received advice of a reinforcement on the coast, which it is

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31. The extracts are not with the letter, but the draft originally contained the information of Lord Howe's sailing from Sandy Hook, which was afterwards stricken out. Maxwell's letter, which was dated August 7, is not found in the *Washington Papers*, but the extracts themselves are quoted in Washington's letter to Laurens of August 8 and in his letter to Congress of August 9, *q. v.* This information did not reach either D'Estaing or Sullivan before Howe's ships arrived at Rhode Island. D'Estaing's letter to Congress, Aug. 26, 1778, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

gone to join, with intention to bend their United force against you, it can scarcely be supposed that Lord Howe will be hardy enough to make any serious attempt with his present inferiority of strength. If he should it can only be accounted for on the principle of desperation, stimulated by a hope of finding you divided in your operations against Rhode Island.

This however is a very probable supposition. It is more likely he may hope by making demonstrations towards you to divert your attention from Rhode Island and afford an opportunity to withdraw their troops and frustrate the expedition we are carrying on. I shall not trouble you with any further conjectures, as I am persuaded you will be able to form a better judgment than I can, of his intentions, and of the conduct it will be proper to pursue in consequence.

In order to aid in removing the inconveniences you sustain in the article of water,<sup>32</sup> and relieve the sufferings of the brave officers and men under your command, whose patience and perseverance cannot be too highly commended, I have written to Governor Trumbull of the state of Connecticut, requesting his endeavours to collect vessels and load them with water at New London for the use of your Fleet. I shall be happy if this application is productive of the desired effect.

I send you a New York paper of the 5th. which is not unworthy of attention. Allow me to assure you of the Warm respect and regard with which I have the honor, etc.<sup>33</sup>

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32. D'Estaing's letter of August 3 stated: "The extreme difficulty of procuring water at Shrewsbury, and the tardiness with which it is collected here from different places, have long since obliged me to retrench our allowance. The officers and men support this terrible privation with courage and patience."

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33. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

## **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 12, 1778.

Sir: I have just received a second letter dated the 10th. from General Maxwell, confirming the intelligence of the departure of the British Fleet from the Hook, with some further particulars, which it may not be useless or unsatisfactory to you to know, an extract from which I do myself the honor

to inclose.<sup>94</sup> The state of the winds for two or three days past makes me hope this communication may not arrive too late.

With the most ardent wishes for your success and the sincerest respect, I have the honor, etc.<sup>95</sup>

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, White Plains, September 2, 1778.

Sir: The importance of the fleet under your command to the common cause, and the interest I take in your personal concern, would not permit me, but to be deeply affected with the information of the disappointment and injuries you sustained in the late unfortunate storm. I flatter myself, and I most ardently hope, my countrymen will exert themselves to give you every aid in their power,

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94. The extract is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

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95. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. This letter was inclosed in a short notice to Lieut. Col. John Laurens, with instructions not to deliver it to the comte if the French and British Fleets had had an engagement. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

that you may as soon as possible recover from the damage you have suffered and be in a condition to renew your efforts against the common enemy.

Inclosed I do myself the honor to send you an extract from the journal, from an officer stationed in the vicinity of Blackpoint to watch the motions of the enemy's fleet; which I have just received. He is an officer of vigilance and discernment, but from his situation it is possible he may be mistaken in the size of the ships. Part of his intelligence too from the nature of it must have been received from others, and is so far fallible. I think it my duty to communicate to you as I receive it; and shall immediately give you notice of any thing that comes to my knowledge, which may either confirm or contradict.<sup>69</sup>

I am informed there is a considerable quantity of provisions on the way from Philadelphia for the use of your fleet; part crossed the North River several days since; so far as it shall depend upon me, you may be assured every method will be taken to forward them with dispatch. I have the honor etc.<sup>70</sup>

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69. This was information that four large British ships of war had arrived at Sandy Hook. The next day (September 3) Washington sent a brief note to D'Estaing that "Admiral" Hyde Parker had reached New York with six ships of the line. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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70. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, September 11, 1778.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your Letter of the 5th. inst: accompanied by a Copy of two Letters to Congress and Genl. Sullivan. The confidence which you have been pleased to shew in communicating these papers engage my sincere thanks. If the deepest regret that the best concerted enterprise and bravest exertions should have been rendered fruitless by a disaster which human prudence is incapable of foreseeing or preventing can alleviate disappointment, you may be assured that the whole Continent sympathizes with you; it will be a consolation to you to reflect that the thinking part of Mankind do not form their judgment from events; and that their equity will ever attach equal glory to those actions which deserve success, as to those which have been crowned with it. It is in the trying circumstances

to which your Excellency has been exposed, that the virtues of a great Mind are displayed in their brightest lustre; and that the General's Character is better known than in the moment of Victory; it was yours, by every title which can give it, and the adverse element which robbed you of your prize, can never deprive you of the Glory due to you. Tho your success has not been equal to your expectations yet you have the satisfaction of reflecting that you have rendered essential Services to the common cause.

I exceedingly lament that in addition to our misfortunes, there has been the least suspension of harmony and good understanding between the Generals of allied Nations, whose views, must like their interests be the same. On the first intimation of it I employed my influence in restoring what I regard as essential to the permanence of an Union founded on mutual inclination and the strongest ties of reciprocal advantage. Your Excellencys offer to the Council of Boston<sup>36</sup> had a powerful tendency to promote the same end, and was distinguished proof of your zeal and magnanimity.

The present superiority of the enemy in Naval force, must, for a time, suspend all plans of offensive cooperation between us; it is not easy to foresee what change may take place by the arrival of

Succours to you from Europe or what opening the enemy may give you to resume your activity; in this moment therefore, every consultation on this subject would be premature. But it is of infinite importance that we should take all the means that our

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36. To strengthen the batteries defending Nantasket road.

circumstances will allow for the defence of a Squadron, which is so precious to the common cause of France and America, and which may have become a capital object with the enemy. Whether this really is the case can be only matter of Conjecture; the original intention of the reinforcement sent to Rhode Island, was obviously the Relief of the Garrison at that post. I have to lament that, tho' seasonably advised of the movement, it was utterly out of my power to counteract it. A naval force alone could have defeated the attempt; how far their views may since have been enlarged by the arrival of Byron's fleet, Your Excellency will be best able to judge. Previous to this event, I believe Genl. Clinton was waiting orders from his court, for the conduct he was to pursue; in the mean time embarking his Stores and heavy baggage in order to be the better prepared for a prompt evacuation, if his instructions should require it.

But as the present posture of affairs may induce a change of operations, and tempt them to carry the war eastward for the ruin of your Squadron, it will be necessary for us to be prepared to oppose such an enterprise. I am unhappy that our situation will not admit of our contributing more effectually to this important end; but assure you at the same time, that what ever can be attempted without losing sight of objects equally essential to the interests of the two Nations, shall be put in execution.

A Candid view of our affairs which I am going to exhibit, will make you a judge of the difficulties, under which we

labour. Almost all our supplies of flour and no inconsiderable part of our meat, are drawn from the States westward of Hudson's River; this renders a secure communication across that River indispensably necessary both to the support of your Squadron and the Army. The enemy being masters of that navigation, would interrupt this essential intercourse between the States. They have been sensible of these advantages, and by the attempts which they have made, to bring about a separation of the Eastern from the Southern States, and the facility which their superiority by Sea had hitherto given him, have always obliged us besides garrisoning the Forts that immediately defend the passage, to keep a force at least, equal to that which they have had posted in New York and its dependencies.

It is incumbent upon us at this time to have a greater force in this quarter than usual, from the concentrated State of the enemy's strength and the uncertainty of their designs; in addition to this it is to be observed that they derive an inestimable advantage from the facility of transporting their troops from one point to another; these rapid movements enable them to give us uneasiness for remote unguarded parts, in attempting to succour which we should be exposed to ruinous marches, and after all perhaps be the dupes of a feint. if they could by any demonstration in another part draw our attention and strength from this important point, and by anticipating our return, possess themselves of it, the consequences would be fatal. Our dispositions must therefore have equal regard to cooperating with you in a defensive plan,

and securing the North River; which, the remoteness of the two objects from each other, renders peculiarly difficult. Immediately upon the change which happened in your naval affairs, my attention was directed to conciliating these two great ends.

The necessity of transporting magazines, collected relatively to our present position, and making new arrangements for ulterior operations, has hitherto been productive of delay. these points are now nearly accomplished and I hope in a day or two to begin a general movement of the Army eastward, as a commencement of this, one division marched this morning under Major General Gates towards Danbury, and the rest of the army will follow as speedily as possible.

The following is a general Idea of my disposition: The Army will be thrown into several divisions, one of which consisting of a force equal to the Enemy's in New York, will be posted about thirty miles in the rear of my present camp, and in the vicinity of the North River with a view to its defence; the other will be pushed on at different stages, as far towards Connecticut River, as can be done consistently with preserving a communication, and having them within supporting distance of each other; so as that when occasion may require, they may form a junction, either for their own immediate defence, or to oppose any attempts that may be made on the North River. The facility which the enemy have of collecting their whole force and turning it against any point they choose, will restrain us from extending ourselves so far as will either

expose us to be beaten by detachment or endanger the Security of the North River.

This disposition will place the American forces as much in measure for assisting in the defence of your Squadron and the Town of Boston, as is compatible with the other great objects of our care.

It does not appear to me probable that the Enemy would hazard the penetrating to Boston by land, with the force which they at present have to the eastward. I am rather inclined to believe that they will draw together their whole Land and Naval strength, to give the greater probability of Success.

in order to this, New York must be evacuated, an event which cannot take place without being announced by circumstances impossible to conceal and I have reason to hope that the time which must necessarily be exhausted in embarking and transporting their troops and Stores, would be sufficient for me to advance a considerable part of my army in measure for opposing them.

The observations which Your Excellency makes relative to the necessity of having intelligent Spies, are perfectly just; every measure that circumstances would admit has been to answer this valuable end, and our intelligence has in general been as good as could be expected from the situation of the Enemy.

The distance at which we are from our posts of observation in the first instance, and the long Journey which is afterwards to be performed before a letter can reach your Excellency hinder my communicating intelligence with such

celerity as I could wish.

The letter which I sent giving an account of Lord Howes movement, was dispatched as soon as the fact was ascertained; but it did not arrive 'till you had gone to Sea, in pursuit of the British Squadron.

As your Excellency does not mention the letters which I last had the honor of writing to you, I am apprehensive of some delay, or miscarriage; their dates were the 3rd. and 4th. inst.<sup>37</sup>

The sincere esteem and regard which I feel for Your Excellency, make me set the highest value upon every expression of friendship with which you are pleased to honor me; I entreat you to accept the most cordial returns on my part.

I shall count it a singular felicity if in the course of possible operations above alluded to, personal intercourse shd afford me the means of cultivating a closer intimacy with you, and of proving more particularly the respect and attachment with which I have the honor etc.

P.S. My dispatches were going to be closed when your Excellency's Letter of the 8th. was delivered to me.

The State of Byron's Fleet from the best intelligence I have been able to obtain, is as follows:

Six Ships, the names of which are mentioned in the paper I had the honor of transmitting the 3rd. have arrived

37. 3d and 5th Inst., *ante*.

at New York with their Crews in very bad health.

*Two* vizt. The Cornwall of 74 and Monmouth of 64, had joined Lord Howe; *two* One of which the Admirals Ship, were missing. One had put back to Portsmouth.<sup>38</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Fish Kill, September 19, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor writing to your Excellency on the 11th. instant.

I take the earliest opportunity of transmitting you the following intelligence which I have reason to think is authentic. That Lord Howe's Fleet has returned to New York and that the seamen which he had taken from the Transports to reinforce his crews are remanded to their respective Ships.

The day before Yesterday a considerable fleet of transports returned from the Eastward to N. York. It is presumed they have on board the reinforcement that was destined for the relief of Newport. Since the destruction of Bedford that force has been employed in collecting Cattle and sheep upon Martha's Vineyard and other places in the sound.

I have other information, upon which I cannot place so much dependance, that all the transports in the Harbour of New York are ordered to be got ready, 47000 Tons of which

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38. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

are to be hastened in an extraordinary manner. I have repeatedly recd. accounts that ten Regiments were held ready to embark. My Spies say that they are destined for the West Indies. But this they are obliged to take up from what is given out in New York, which may perhaps be contrary to their real design, purposely to amuse and deceive. One piece of intelligence, if true, strongly evinces an intention to send a Body of Troops to the West Indies; it is, that they are taking the heavy linings out of a number of the soldiers Coats and making up their waist coats and Breeches.

I shall by every mean endeavour to ascertain the truth of the above, and, if confirmed you may depend that I shall not fail to advise you.

It is my wish to give you no intelligence but that which may be perfectly relied on, but as that, from the nature of things is impossible, I shall always carefully distinguish between that which is certain, and that which admits of a doubt.

Deserters from the six ships of Admiral Byron's Fleet, which arrived at New York<sup>95</sup> some time since, mention the extreme sickness of the Crews of those ships. Some of them say that 2000 have been landed upon Staten Island, and are there in Hospital tents. Perhaps this may be an exaggerated account; But from a variety of information, I am inclined to think that an uncommon sickness has prevailed on board them.

A general Embargo has been laid upon all Vessels in the port of New York. Liberty has been within a few

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95. Admiral Byron had been appointed to the command of the West Indies squadron of the British Navy; his ships had sailed from Portsmouth, England.

days granted to those that would engage to carry coarse woolens and salt to Canada, to sail. I have not heard that any troops are ordered to Canada.

I am on my way to Fredericksburg at which place I purpose to establish my Head Quarters, and where I shall be happy to receive your favors. I have the honor, etc.<sup>96</sup>

## **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

September 20, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor of writing to Your Excellency yesterday from Fort Clinton, since which I have received intelligence by a New York paper that Admiral Byron in the Princess Royal of ninety Guns, accompanied by the Culloden, Captain Balfour of seventy four arrived at New York the 16th. inst: the same paper mentions that an armed Sloop from Hallifax, announces the arrival of the following Regiments there Viz. the seventieth, the Duke of Hamiltons,<sup>97</sup> said to consist of one thousand men, and the Duke of Argyles<sup>98</sup> highlanders said to amount to eleven hundred.

The arrival of Admiral Byron is confirmed by intelligence received thro another channel; that of the three Regiments may want confirmation; the common practice of exaggerating

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96. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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97. Lieut. Gen. Sir Robert Hamilton, colonel of the Fortieth Foot, British Army.

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98. Lieutenant General John, Duke of Argyll, colonel of the first battalion, First Foot, British Army.

numbers, at least leaves us room to doubt the strength of the Corps.

Your Excellency's Letter by Col Fleury was detained by the laudable motives which you foresaw; it did not reach me 'till a day or two ago. I have the honor, etc.<sup>99</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, September 22, 1778.

Sir: Mr. De Chouin has announced to me your desire, that he may pay you a visit to explain more fully than can be done by letter, the state of affairs both with respect to the enemy and to us, their movements and probable designs and our dispositions in consequence. The intelligence, I have received of the former has been imparted to him as it arrived, the latter he has in a great measure had an opportunity of seeing himself and I have given him every explanation, which might be necessary to perfect his idea of my situation and views. This he will communicate with his usual perspicuity, and, I dare say, in a manner that will be intirely satisfactory.

The amiableness of the Major's character has secured him my esteem as fully, as I am persuaded, his zeal and attention in executing his commission, must have gained him your approbation. One circumstance only could diminish the pleasure his

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99. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

On September 20 Washington wrote to Sullivan that Admiral Byron's whole fleet had now arrived at New York.

company afforded me; this is the sacrifice he has been obliged to make in accommodating himself to a manner of life, which the operations of the field and the nature of the Country, that is the present scene of them would not permit to be the most agreeable. The cheerfulness with which

he has submitted to every inconvenience is an additional proof of his zeal. With the most perfect consideration, etc.<sup>8</sup>

## To COUNT D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, September 29, 1778.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of the 17th; the Sentiments expressed in it flow from a great mind, and prove the wisdom of His most Christian Majestys choice in appointing you his military representative in America. I flatter myself with Your Excellency that what only in a moment of chagrin assumed the air of a misunderstanding, is buried in total oblivion; and that uninterrupted harmony will forbid its being brought to light again.

The untimely death of the Chevalier De St. Sauveur<sup>91</sup> is the more melancholy, as he possessed such an amiable character and fell a sacrifice to the zealous pursuit of his duty; the relation of this unfortunate event filled me with inexpressible grief; it affords me some consolation

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8. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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91. Chevalier Saint-Sauveur, lieutenant in the French Navy. He was killed in the riot at Boston, when the French sailors of D'Estaing's fleet were attacked.

to learn that the matter is so far traced, as to leave no doubt that the plot originated with the convention troops, and that british Sailors in our service were the immediate instruments of their Malice; these circumstances together with the wounds which two of the assassins are said to have received from the french Grenadiers, may enable us to revenge the death of an officer whose fate we sincerely lament; and to whose friends we are anxious to give the only satisfaction the unhappy case admits of.

The Council of Boston will, I am persuaded use their utmost exertions to discover, and bring to punishment, the instigators and perpetrators of this horrid Crime.

However the Authors of this mischief may triumph, that an individual dear to his Country and Connections has fallen a victim to their machinations, they will, I trust, ever be defeated in their principal aim of sowing discord and exciting animosities between nations so firmly united as ours.

The advantage peculiar to Your Excellency of uniting the Knowledge and Experience which constitute the Admiral and General, the excellent disposition of your Squadron, the land batteries raised under your direction, and the command given to Mr. de Bougainville<sup>92</sup> leave us nothing to apprehend from any naval operation on the part of the enemy. Brigadier General Duportail our chief Engineer is setting out for Boston,<sup>93</sup> and will afford all the succours of his art, that we may have as little to fear from any attempt by land.

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92. Louis Antoine, Comte de Bougainville, maréchal de camp, captain and chef d'escadre, French Navy.

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93. In a letter introducing Du Portail, Washington wrote: "His business at Boston is to examine the state of the works constructed for the immediate defence of the town ... The judicious disposition of Your Excellency's Squadron and the works which have been erected under your orders at the entrance of the harbour, supersedes the necessity of any further care on that side." This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

It is important as Your Excellency observes to guard against an Enterprise to which the enemy have powerful inducements and avoid determining them to it, by too great a reliance on their want of troops and Seamen in another quarter.

I am as yet unacquainted with the arrangement made between Congress and your Plenipotentiary for the exchange of those french Seamen who unfortunately fell into the enemy's hands previous to an open rupture. I have written to Congress on the subject; they will I am persuaded warmly interest themselves in a matter which equally concerns the cause of humanity and the service of their Ally. immediately on receiving their orders, I shall do every thing that depends on me to effect the exchange in the manner alluded to, and forward the seamen to your Excellency's Squadron with expedition and safety.

Give me leave to offer your Excellency my hearty congratulations on the Victory obtained by the Brest Squadron over the british under Admiral Keppel, in a pitched battle. the character of the french Captain arrived at Portsmouth, who brings the intelligence, and this circumstantial Relation of the matter give us every reason to hope that our Joy on this occasion will speedily be Legitimated by official accounts to Your Excellency. I have the honor, etc.<sup>94</sup>

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94. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, Fishkill, October 2, 1778.

Sir: Your Excellency's letter dated the 25th instant made me happy by communicating the intelligence of Mr. D'ovilliers victory. I entreat you to accept my repeated congratulations on an event pregnant with such important consequences to the common cause; as well as my warmest thanks for the interesting collection of advices you are so obliging as to make.

The British Admirals both at home and abroad, if we may judge from the present appearance of things will be reduced to play a very cautious game. The judicious disposition, Your Excellency has made will be a great discouragement to any enterprise your way, and every days approach of Winter lessens the probability. Our intelligence respecting Admiral Howe's departure is the same, except the name of the Ship. My advices announce the Eagle instead of the Maidstone.<sup>25</sup> Your Excellency's inference from this circumstance carries weight with it. My Idea still is that the British General is waiting positive instructions from his Court to determine his conduct; and that his preparations are adapted to either contingency of remaining or going away, as his orders shall prescribe.

Your observation on the inability of England to spare a sufficiency of Ships, men and money to continue hostilities in America at the same time that she is engaged in a war

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25. The ship on which Richard, Lord Howe was reported to have sailed for England on September 16. D'Estaing interpreted Lord Howe's departure in a single frigate as inconsistent with the withdrawal of the British forces from America. He concluded that some sort of an expedition would be undertaken and begged to be kept informed of Washington's opinion as well as of events.

with the United powers of France and Spain, appears to me conclusive; but you are best acquainted with the present State of European Politics, and the actual forces and dispositions of these two Kingdoms, and can best decide whether the necessity for Englands withdrawing her Troops be urgent and immediate, or whether this event may not be procrastinated with a view to facilitate Negotiations which may be intended in the course of the Winter. The concurring Sentiment of the citizens of New York is that an evacuation will take place, and repeated intelligence indicates a part of the enemy's force destined for the W. Indies. The preparing a number of Uniforms for a warm climate, was a circumstance the importance of which did not escape me; but I have not been able to obtain so full a confirmation of the fact as I could wish. The weak state of the British Garrisons in the Islands seems to make a considerable reinforcement necessary on defensive principles, upon an

open rupture with France, whose strength and magazines in that quarter are so respectable. And if all idea of future operations in this country be renounced, as is supposed, a part of the British force here will probably be disposed of in this way. But in this also a source of embarrassment occurs. If the enemy are not certain of a naval Superiority in those latitudes, they cannot risk sending a detachment of their troops hence, without materially dividing their fleet to afford a convoy sufficient for its protection, a step they will not be fond of taking while there is so formidable a Squadron under Your Excellency's command, to controul their motions. Whether besides

merely strengthening their own Garrisons, they may mean to employ their arm in any attempt upon your colonies, or whether all above what may be required for the first purpose will be recalled for the defence of Great Britain or other parts of her dominions, must in my opinion depend on the preponderance of naval power, and the farther demonstrations made by the great Broglie.<sup>26</sup>

The enemy some days since made an incursion into the Jerseys, and foraged in security on a neck of land, where both flanks were guarded by navigable Rivers; and a small front only remained to be covered by a little field fortification. This inconvenience we cheerfully suffered for the advantage of being in posture to co-operate with you at Boston. A considerable reinforcement however, gave room to suspect some further design and obliged me to make additional provision for the safety of the communication over the North River, by moving another division of troops that way.

I have myself changed quarters to this place, for a time to be nearer the posts which guard it. This object, from which I dare not withdraw my force or attention, while the enemy are so powerful at New York, and the casualties to which we are exposed, while they have the advantage of transporting their troops by water, make it impossible for me to diminish my numbers by a detachment to Boston; a circumstance which I infinitely regret as it seems to be in Your Excellency's wish.

The defence which may be drawn from the natural advantages of situation, improved by works and the numerous

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26. Charles François, Comte de Broglie. He had been head of the French secret diplomacy under Louis XV, but was unable to obtain any position of power under Louis XVI and the Maurepas-Vergennes ministry. Having suffered heavy financial reverses, he conceived, as a scheme to recoup both his political and financial fortune, the idea of making himself head of the American Revolution. He died in 1781.

militia, that may be suddenly assembled, will I hope give security to the Town and to Your Excellency's Squadron against a land operation and aided by the troops under General Sullivan, which

on an emergency would be employed for the same purpose, allow time for the arrival of this Army. The troops you ask for at Boston, will no doubt readily be granted, and inspired by Mr. de Bougainvilles<sup>27</sup> in conjunction with those he already has, maintain the important isthmus.

A continuance of the Marquis de la fayette's painful separation from Your Excellency, is unluckily involved in the impossibility above mentioned. His Cartel to Ld. Carlisle has not been communicated to me by him; it is a fresh instance of his sensibility for the honor of his Nation.<sup>28</sup>

The Town of Boston enjoys a privilege of which every town on the Continent must be ambitious, and the individuals charged with conveying the testimonies of its respect, must feel a pleasure which is envied them by, Your Excellency's, &c.

P.S. Since closing my Letter, I have received a fresh piece of information; which from the Channel through which it comes, deserves attention, though it is not absolutely to be relied on. That a fleet of Transports, was taking in Stock for a Voyage, on board of which ten Regiments said to be bound for the W. Indies were to embark, convoyed by Commodore Hotham with three Sail of the Line and

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27. Louis Antoine, Comte de Bougainville. He was captain in the French Navy; commander of the *Languedoc*; with the fleet of De Grasse; played an important part in the action off the Virginia Capes Sept. 5, 1781.

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28. The language to which Lafayette took exception is in the Declaration of the British Peace Commissioners to the Continental Congress, Aug. 26, 1778, where France is characterized as "a Power that has ever shewn itself an Enemy to all Civil and Religious Liberty" and accused of misrepresentation; of deliberately prolonging the war; of making the Colonies "the instruments of Her Ambition"; and of misdating treaties. As Earl Carlisle's name headed the signers of this declaration, Lafayette challenged him to a duel, which was declined on the ground of the earl's embassy as peace commissioner.

some frigates. This moment advice is brought me of the arrival of a packet boat from England, which will in all likelihood bring the affairs of the enemy to an issue.<sup>29</sup>

## **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, October 5, 1778.

Sir: Two American Seamen, who made their escape from a prison Ship at New York, report that the british fleet sailed ten days ago in quest of the french Squadron.

This is an event of such importance, and which from the nature of it, admits so little of concealment, that I could not have been uninformed of it 'till now, supposing that it really happened, without the most unpardonable neglect in the Officer whom I have stationed in a convenient post for the express purpose of discovering the Enemy's naval movements; neither do I think it could have escaped the vigilance of our spies, or have passed unnoticed in the daily accounts given us by Deserters; however as such a report exists, and a failure in all the regular sources of our intelligence, however unlikely, is still a possible misfortune, I have immediately dispatched an Express to the Officers of out posts, to have the matter speedily investigated, and will do myself the honor to transmit Your Excellency, the result of their inquiries without delay; In the mean time I have thought it my duty to acquaint you with report and its

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29. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton and John Laurens.

origin, that you may not have any doubts or anxieties raised in your mind by hearing it from any other quarters; but by being apprised of it, know what attention to pay to it, and how to distinguish the Original Story, from the same with such improvements and additions as reports generally acquire by travelling.

While I am writing a Letter of the 3rd. Inst from Genl. Sullivan informs me that Admiral Biron accompanied by the Culloden had left Newport the Sunday preceding that date; this has doubtless been communicated to Your Excellency. It is a circumstance that seemingly favors the intelligence above mentioned. I have the honor, etc.<sup>70</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, October 13, 1778.

Sir: Inclosed I have the honor to send your Excellency the British account of the late engagement between the two fleets<sup>44</sup> respectively under the command of Monsieur D'orvilliers and Admiral Keppel, contained in a letter from the latter; published by authority, which I have just received from New York. The insipid terms of this letter; the frivolous pretext assigned for not

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70. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

44. Off Ushant.

renewing the engagement, the damage confessed to have been received, the considerable number of the killed and wounded announced to the public in the shape of an official report, which from the customary practice cannot be suspected of exaggeration, and the acknowledged necessity of returning immediately into Port, are circumstances that prove at least the enemy have had no great cause of triumph in this affair.

The departure of the English fleet from New York mentioned in my last is positively contradicted. They were certainly at the Hook the 9th. instant. The current of intelligence still continues to indicate the intention of sending a detachment to the West Indies; tis said from ten to fifteen regiments. An apprehension of this event occasions numerous desertions among their troops; who have an extreme reluctance to a voyage into that climate. No alteration has taken place in the apparent preparations for an evacuation. With the warmest respect etc.<sup>45</sup>

**To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, October 16, 1778.

Sir: I have just received intelligence that on the nights of the 10th. and 11th. inst a considerable body of troops embarked

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45. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

at New York; the most accurate accounts that we have been able to obtain of their numbers make them consist of ten Regiments with their flank Companies, completed by drafts to the full establishment, which will make them amount to between five and six thousand men; some however pretend that five and other that seven brigades have embarked. Although I am clearly satisfied in my own mind that these troops are destined for the West Indies, and repeated intelligence corroborated by the reason of the thing, almost removes the suspicion of any enterprise being meditated at this late Season, against Your Excellency's Squadron it is an object too precious to the common cause, for me not to give Your Excellency immediate notice of a movement which might by the most remote possibility affect it; and take such measures for counteracting the success, as the other considerations by which Your Excellency knows my conduct must be regulated, will allow. I have therefore ordered a detachment of troops to proceed by gentle marches as far as the Connecticut River, that it may be so far on its way, should occasion require. the utmost vigilance will be used to

ascertain the time when the transports, with the troops in question shall put to Sea; their numbers; the convoy attending them and every other interesting particular. there are circumstances which induce a belief of the enemy's intention to maintain a Garrison in New York after sending a sufficient detachment to their islands; such are,

the superior advantages which this post and its dependencies possess for the security and support of a body of troops, the convenience of the port for distressing our Trade and the excellence of the general situation for carrying on that kind of predatory and desultory war, with which they seem to threaten us.

The judicious reflexions which Your Excellency has done me the honor to communicate in your letter of the 29th. Ulto. and the conjectures founded on them, favor in part the idea of an offensive operation by the English in the West Indies; their Success must depend upon a naval superiority in those Seas.

Your Excellency's reasoning on Admiral Gambier's being appointed to the chief command on the American Station is conclusive and gives room to surmise that Admiral Biron is destined for the W. Indies. The ill health of the latters crews is a circumstance that may be depended upon; the report of their laboring under a contagious disorder is without foundation: Many of the Sailors have deserted to our outposts, and among them some convalescents who report that the rest are recovering very fast.

I am happy to be informed that Your Excellency has found a satisfactory method for exchanging the bulk of your prisoners; every thing in my power shall be done for the expeditious forwarding of the rest to New York and negotiating their exchange agreeably to the terms of the convention, which you are to communicate.

The Marquis de la fayette is gone to pay a visit to Congress; the relation in which he stands to Your Excellency, made me happy during his Stay in camp by furnishing me with more particular occasions for expressing the Sentiments of respect with which Your Excellency has inspired me.

Mr. de Choin whose flattering remembrance of me you are so obliging as to mention in your letter of the 2d. inst. if he had obtained Your Excellency's permission to return would likewise have furnished me with such desirable opportunities; but the regret for my own loss is much diminished, when I consider the enviable happiness the Major enjoys near your Excellency and the satisfaction you derive from the company of this worthy officer.

I have already had the honor of transmitting to Your Excellency Admiral Keppel's own Account of the Naval Combat, which has all the complexion of a defeat on his part, tho his affairs were not so desperate as those of your antagonist Lord Howe who is said to have kept himself for security, on board a Swift Sailing Frigate, when you gave him chase.

If the report that Channel pilots are engaged for the use of the Spanish Fleet be well grounded, the natural inference as Your Excellency observes is very favorable.

I congratulate with Your Excellency on the prospect of Mr. Du Chaffau's<sup>81</sup> Recovery. The present I think promises fair to be the æra when the valor of the French Marine will be rewarded. The English can boast but few Ships that have not been chased by the French, their European Fleet and American Squadron have undergone the same disgrace. I have the honor etc.

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81. Louis Charles, Comte du Chaffault de Besné, lieutenant-general in command of the rear guard off Ushant, in which action he was wounded.

P.S. I have the honor to inclose your Excellency the last effort of the British Commissioners in proclamation. It will share the same fate of the rest. I likewise inclose you the petition<sup>82</sup> of the Tories in New York.<sup>83</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, October 20, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor of transmitting to Your Excellency on the 18th. inst. some advices which appeared to me very

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82. The petition was from the refugees to the Peace Commissioners, and had been sent to Washington by Brig. Gen. Charles Scott.

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83. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

On October 16 Washington wrote brief notes: To Brig. Gen. Charles Scott, stressing the great need of obtaining intelligence of the enemy as often as possible, and that Captain Leavenworth's slowness in this made him of little value; to Marquis de Vienne, informing him that Congress had granted him leave to return to France; to Maj. Henry Lee, that Capt. William Lindsay's resignation from

Lee's Dragoons would be accepted; to Capt. Pierre Capitaine, an aide to Lafayette, thanking him for two plans, presumably of the operations on Rhode Island in 1778. All of these notes are in the *Washington Papers*.

interesting.

An intelligent officer stationed at a proper place for observing the enemy's naval movements, in his last report, says...<sup>51</sup>

An orderly book of the enemy's which has fallen into our hands, confirms the account already communicated to Your Excellency of the drafting of three Regiments vizt. the 10th. 45. and 52. to complete others to their full establishment; it differs only in making the latter amount to nine instead of ten, and is more particular in informing us that in completing the Corps no account is to be made of Prisoners of War.

The care taken to fill them, is a convincing proof to me that these Regiments are destined for some separate service. A part of the objections which I have already taken the liberty to suggest to Your Excellency, it does not appear to me probable that the enemy wd hazard an expedition against your Squadron with such a force, and they have no other object of enterprise in America; thus reasoning upon the Subject corroborated by a variety of concurring intelligence induces a belief that this detachment is intended for the W. Indies. It is very probable

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51. The omitted portion is the information, in practically the same words, as that in Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. William Heath, the same date as this letter, *q. v.*

however that the enemy will leave a naval force superior to that under Your Excellency with a view of keeping it in check, while the Transports convoyed by the remainder of their Ships and Frigates proceed to their destination.

How far they may be restrained from acting offensively by a reinforcement from France or active measures taken by the other branch of the House of Bourbon,<sup>52</sup> Your Excellency is best able to judge. My solicitude for the interest of our allies will plead my excuse for entreating you to give me some light in this subject.

No opportunity shall be missed on my part of communicating to Your Excellency every interesting intelligence and proving the attachment and respect with which I have the honor, etc.

P.S. Three brigades are moving eastward to guard against the remotest possibility of Your Excellency's Squadron being the object of the enemy's manoeuvre.<sup>53</sup>

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52. Spain.

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53. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

### To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, October 22, 1778.

Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to Your Excellency yesterday, I have received some further accounts, which you will be pleased to find inclosed.<sup>72</sup> They confirm the sailing of the British fleet which lay at the Hook. I confide most in the account from Lord Stirling with respect to the number. You will observe it is said they sailed towards the eastward; but Your Excellency

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72. The inclosures were extracts of Maj. Richard Howell's letter of October 19 and Lord Stirling's of October 20, both of which are in the *Washington Papers*.

will be sensible that nothing particular can be infered from this circumstance, as the wind with which they went out naturally gave them that course, 'till they had cleared the land, whatever might be their ultimate destination. Though I am still of opinion, it is most probable this detachment is designed for the West Indies; yet my unwillingness to leave any thing to chance, that depends on me, in which the interest of the common cause is essentially concerned, has determined me to order three additional brigades to begin their march tomorrow Morning towards Connecticut River.<sup>73</sup> I take pleasure in every occasion of assuring Your Excellency of the Respect and attachment etc.<sup>74</sup>

### To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, October 24, 1778.

Sir: The coincidence between Your Excellency's sentiments, respecting the Marquis de la fayette's Cartel<sup>93</sup> communicated in the letter with which you honored me the 20th. and those which I

expressed to him on the same subject, are peculiarly flattering to me. I am happy to find that my disapprobation of this

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73. "You are immediately to proceed with the brigade of Nixon, Parsons, and Huntington, by the route which will be delivered to you by the Quarter Master General, as far as Hartford, where you will wait for farther orders."— *Washington to McDougall*, Oct. 23, 1778. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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74. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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93. Challenge to Earl Carlisle, which was dated October 5 and sent to the British lines by Lieutenant Colonel de Gimat, an aide to Lafayette. The text of the challenge is printed in the fifteenth report, appendix, part VI, of the British *Historical Manuscripts Commission: The Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle*, p. 374. The copy of the challenge forwarded by Estaing is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

measure was founded on the same arguments which in Your Excellency's hands acquire new force and persuasion.

I omitted neither serious reasoning nor pleasantry to divert him from a Scheme in which he could be so easily foiled, without having any credit given him by his antagonist for his generosity and sensibility. He intimated that Your Excellency did not discountenance it, and that he had pledged himself to the principal Officers of the french Squadron to carry it into execution; the charms of vindicating the honor of his country were irresistible; but besides he had in a manner committed himself and could not decently retract; I however continued to lay my friendly commands upon him to renounce his project; but I was well assured that if he determined to persevere in it, neither authority nor vigilance would be of any avail to prevent his message to Lord Carlisle. And though his ardour was an overmatch match for my advice and influence, I console myself with the reflexion that his Ldship will not accept the challenge, and that while our friend gains all the applause which is due to him for wishing to become the Champion of his Country, he will be secure cure from the possibility of such dangers as my fears wd otherwise create for him, by those powerful barriers which shelter his lship and which I am persuaded he will not in the present instance violate.

The report of Lord Carlisles having proposed a substitute reached me, for the first time in Your Excellencys

letter; if this is really the case, his Ldship has availed himself of one of the ways in which he was at liberty to wave the Marquis's defiance, and has probably answered it in a strain of pleasantry; for the affair being wholly personal, his Ldship could not have made such a proposition seriously. Indeed I

have every reason to think that the matter has terminated as I expected; for the Marquis was still in Philadelphia by my last accounts from thence; we wait with impatience for his arrival, which he promised sooner than his affairs probably have permitted. I have the honor etc.<sup>94</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, October 25, 1778.

Sir: The certain intelligence of a large number of troops having embarked at New York; the sailing of a considerable fleet at the moment their departure was expected, and the general purport of the accounts received at the time, left me no room to doubt that this fleet which went out of the Hook the 19th. and 20th. Instant contained the detachment of the embarkation of which I had been advised. In the full persuasion of this fact my letter of the 22d. to your Excellency, was written; but from more recent

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94. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

information, through various channels, bearing every mark of authenticity, I am to conclude the supposition has been ill founded.<sup>7</sup>

The above mentioned fleet appears in reality to have carried away no other troops than invalids, and the officers of the corps lately reduced. The troops which had embarked still remained in the harbour the day before yesterday. They are said to consist of ten or twelve British Regiments and six of the new levies.

This fleet was probably composed principally of homeward bound victuallers, with some merchantmen and other vessels, which chose to take the protection of a convoy. The accounts still agree, that they were accompanied by fourteen or fifteen sail of the line and some frigates. I have the honor, etc.<sup>8</sup>

### **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

October 27, 1778.

Sir: I have read Your Excellency's two favours of the 18th. and 21st. with all the pleasure which the perusal of your letters never fails to inspire and which naturally attends the

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7. As soon as this information was received, Washington sent it (October 25) to the following officers:

To Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam, in the Highlands: "All the troops which have embarked barked still continue in the harbour you will keep the strictest lookout imaginable on the river, and give me the earliest communication of your discoveries...should a force appear on the river you will immediately throw yourself over to the fort."

To Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, at Hartford: "There were none but invalids and officers of reduced corps on board...the troops which had embarked, were still on the 23d Instant in New-York harbour."

To Maj. Gen. William Heath, at Boston: "Perhaps all outward bound Vessels might have taken the benefit of Convoy, which may have enlarged the fleet to an uncommon size. My accounts still confirm a very considerable body of troops being embarked, but that they yet remain in the Bay of New York...you shall be advised of the sailing of this second Fleet."

To Maj. Gen. John Sullivan, at Providence, the same as to Maj. Gcn. William Heath.

To Maj. Gert. Alexander McDougall, at Hartford: "You will halt the three Brigades under your command, till you hear further from me."

To Baron de Kalb, at Fishkill: "Be pleased to march early tomorrow morning to the Ground where you were before encamped, near Fishkill....The above circumstances make it necessary for us to have more force near the posts in the Highlands than is now there....A mile or two more or less for the convenience of Forage, Wood and Water will make little difference; but I had rather you should advance on the Road between Fishkill and West Point, and hold yourself in readiness for a further move at a Moments warning."

To Brig. Gen. James Clinton, at Peekskill: "This Letter is intended to countermand the orders which have been given you for marching; if therefore on receipt of it, your hoops shd still be at the Continental Village, you will remain there with them and revert to the instructions which you received relative to that post; if it shd find you on the march you will halt...at the first convenient position and wait farther orders; in either case you will give me immediate notice."These letters are in the Washington Papers.

These letters are in the *Washington Letters*.

8. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

communications of those in whom we are interested.

I rejoice with you in the prospect of your being so soon in a state to resume the sea. I cannot but ardently desire that an opportunity may be soon offered you of again exerting that spirit of well directed activity and enterprise, of which you have already given proofs so formidable to our enemies and so beneficial to the common cause.

It is to be hoped our next accounts from Europe will manifest, that the Court of Spain has properly estimated the value of the present moment, and has united her power to that of France, to give a decisive blow to the haughty dominion, which Britain has so long affected to maintain over the Sea. The satisfaction I feel in looking forward to this event is augmented by the illustrious part I am persuaded you will act in accomplishing it.

My letter of the 24th. will I hope have removed Your Excellency's apprehensions for our amiable young friend. Every days continuance where he now is, is an additional confirmation of my conjecture on the manner in which his proposal has been received. It was natural your sensibility should be affected as it was. A generous solicitude for the safety of a friend, so far from requiring an apology, is intitled to applause.

The British Commissioners, I believe, will not trouble us with any more of their harangues. They authorise us to consider the last as a farewell speech, preparatory to their final exit. They will not need our aid to accelerate their political death.

Whether they may not undergo a transmigration, of the sort Your Excellency mentions, time will discover. More unlikely things than this sometimes happen.<sup>43</sup>

The enemy's affairs in New York remain without any perceptible alteration from the state in which they were, when I had the honour of writing you last. Their troops which have embarked still lie in the harbour. I have the honor, etc.<sup>44</sup>

## **To COMTE D'ESTAING**

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, October 31, 1778.

Sir: I have had the happiness of receiving your Excellency's letters of the 23 and 26th. I thank you for the extract of Mr. Boubee's letter, which Yr. Excellency so obligingly communicates. This particular enumeration of the vessels of war which sailed with the fleet he mentions, corresponds with the advices I have received; but you will have been informed before this, that the supposed sailing of a body of troops in that fleet was a mistake of the same nature into which my observers fell. It was however the most natural one, that can be imagined, and such as might impose itself on the most careful circumspection. I have the honor to inclose

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43. In his letter of the 21st D'Estaing had suggested that the Peace Commissioners might "lose no time in going to solicit for the next year, the place of Ambassador from his Britannic Majesty to the Congress, and Philadelphia will be the place for Tories to present their addresses to them for subsistence." D'Estaing's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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44. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

copies of four letters which contain the most recent and authentic information I have collected.

I shall not be surprised if in a little time, Admiral Byron should make a demonstration before the harbour of Boston; deriving confidence from the superiority of his force. His apprehensions of Your Excellency's activity may suggest this measure to cover the movements which the Enemy are making off the Coast.

Your Excellency's sentiments give value to my own, on the utility of some well combined system of fortification for the security of our principal sea port towns. The predatory war, which the enemy threaten, and have actually carried on in several instances, and which they no doubt have the disposition, when they have the opportunity, to repeat, give additional force to the other reasons for a measure of that nature.

I impatiently expect the arrival of Mr. Holker<sup>62</sup> to confer with him on the important objects with which he will be charged. I shall cautiously observe the secrecy you desire. Colonel Hamilton's high respect for Your Excellency cannot permit him to be insensible to so flattering a mark of your confidence and friendship, as the exception in his favour affords.<sup>63</sup>

I received a letter yesterday from the Marquis. He gives me to hope the pleasure of seeing him tomorrow. He also intimates that Lord Carlisle has not only declined his proposition for the present; but, by a prudent foresight, has provided against the necessity of reviving the question at any future period.

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62. John Holker. He was agent for the French marine and French consul to the United States, and later purchased horses for Rochambeau's army and became a partner with Robert Morris in private commercial enterprises. Proscribed by the French Revolution, he remained in the United States, married, and died in Virginia.

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63. D'Estaing wrote that Holker would communicate interesting objects. "I entreat you," said he, "not to confide the secret but to Colonel Hamilton. His talents and his personal qualities have secured him ever my esteem, my confidence, and my friendship. I do not regret having given the Marquis De la Fayette some presentiment of this matter; nevertheless as much my friend as he is, I should not have done it, if I had thought that his stay at Philadelphia would have been so long".

With the warmest esteem, etc.<sup>64</sup>

### To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, November 5, 1778.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit your Excellency an Extract of a letter from Major General Lord Stirling of the 3rd. by which you will perceive, that a fleet of One hundred and eight sail, left Sandy Hook the morning of that day. This probably contains a division of the troops, the departure of which we have so long expected.<sup>99</sup>

The Marquis De La Fayette, arrived three days since at Fish Kill two and twenty miles from this place; where, I am unhappy to inform Yr. Excellency, he is detained by a fever which seized him soon after he sat out from Philadelphia. I hope our anxiety on this account may not be of long duration.

The inclosed letter from our Commissary of Prisoners<sup>1</sup> is just come to hand. With the utmost esteem, etc.<sup>2</sup>

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64. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton, who has noted that there were inclosed an "extract from a letter of Lord Stirling of the 29th. with one inclosed from a Spy signed L. dated 25th. another of the 30th. and another of Major Lee of the same date." The originals of all of these are in the *Washington Papers*. Also D'Estaing wrote: "If I determine to put to sea, which I have had it in my power to do for several days past, I will not get under sail, until it shall be demonstrated, that if the English Admiral is coming here, I shall meet him on the way; and that I shall contribute to the surety

of the town of Boston, more efficaciously, than if I should remain moored where I am." Hamilton has indorsed the draft of the Washington letter: "returned by Mr. Holker the Count having sailed."

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99. On this same day (November 5) Washington wrote to Major Generals Gates and Sullivan, sending this same information of the sailing of the fleet anti forwarding printed copies of Congress's Manifesto of Oct. 30, 1778, on retaliations.

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1. Probably the letter of November 1 from Commissary General John Beatty, which is in the *Washington Papers*.

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2. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### To BARON DE KNOBELAUCH

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, March 7, 1779.

Sir: I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me of the 1st instant. I feel the hardships and embarrassments of your situation, and I should really be happy did I see any method of rendering it more agreeable. But in the present state of our army I do not. However well founded your claim may be to the rank you mean to apply for, from the considerations you mention, it is not in my power to second it as you request.

The introduction of a number of foreign officers, especially in the higher posts of the army, is considered by our own officers, as such a breach of their privileges, and occasions so much dissatisfaction, that the practice cannot be continued without great injury to the service. And as upon this principle, I cannot with propriety recommend the appointment you now solicit. I am sorry to add, though I think it a piece of candour which is due to you, that I do not perceive any other manner suitable to your expectations in which you can be employed.<sup>77</sup> With great consideration, I am, etc.<sup>78</sup>

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77. See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Aug. 12, 1778, for report of the committee on Knobelauch's case.

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78. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

**To JOHN HOLKER<sup>25</sup>**

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, March 14, 1779.

Sir: I am to acknowledge the honor of your letter of the 6th. instant.

From the tenor of your communication, I form the most favorable presages of our affairs in the West Indies and the success which awaits, vice Admiral Count d'Estaing.

I rejoice with you on the birth of a princess and the safety of the Queen; on the further hopes to the Crown of France from this happy event to your Country.

Should the rumors you mention have a proper foundation; and the contending parties think seriously of peace; I make no doubt but the same wisdom that dictated the principles of our alliance, with his most christian Majesty will terminate the war, in that manner most honorable to both powers. I am, etc.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Consul General of France, in America, with residence at Philadelphia.

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26. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

**\*To CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD**

Head Quarters, Middle brook, May 1, 1779.

Sir: As you have been pleas'd to honor me with a communication of His Excellency Count D'Estaing's intention of returning to this Continent with the Squadron under his command, and have desired to know my sentiments of the manner in which this event may be best improved for the interest of the common cause, and what can be done on the part of these States towards that end, I beg leave to offer the following as the definitive result, of my reflections on this subject; without recapitulating the<sup>57</sup> reasons on which it is founded, and which has been<sup>58</sup> detailed in our several conferences.

I consider it, as an essential basis to any extensive combined operations between the Squadron of His most Christian Majesty and the Troops of these States, that the former shall possess and have a good prospect of preserving a clear superiority over the British naval force in America.

In this case, if explicit assurances can immediately be given, that his Excellency Count D'Estaing will proceed with all dispatch directly from Martinique to New York, so as to arrive there in all probability before the British Fleet under Admiral Byron; with permission and approbation of Congress, I will engage to relinquish all the present projects of the Campaign and collect our whole force in this quarter, with all the aid which can be drawn from the Militia of the neighbouring States, to cooperate with the Squadron of His Most christian Majesty for the reduction of the enemy's Fleet and Army at New

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57. The draft has "particular."

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58. The draft has "have been already."

York, Rhode Island and the dependencies.

I make this offer from a persuasion that we should be able to collect a sufficient force to give a reasonable prospect of success to an enterprise decisive in its nature; and Request explicit assurances of a cooperation in the manner proposed, because without them I could not be justified in abandoning measures and engagements in which the security of these States is so deeply concerned, and because a failure would be attended with the most serious mischiefs.

If these assurances cannot be given, the plan which then appears to me most eligible is this.

That his Excellency Count D'Estaing proceed with his Squadron immediately to Georgia, where in conjunction with the American troops, there is every reason to believe he would with great facility capture and destroy the enemy's fleet and Army; which they could only elude in part, and that not without great difficulty by a precipitate retreat to St. Augustine; and even in this case, their Vessels and Stores would inevitably fall.

That he next proceed directly from Georgia to New York, where if he arrives before Admiral Byron, by entering the harbour expeditiously he will be sure of taking or destroying all their fleet in that Port. The troops on Staten Island might also, I conceive, be intercepted and taken; the French troops in the Fleet landing on one part and a detachment from our Army at another. Successes of this kind might open a new field of action, and

lead to other important events. On the arrival<sup>59</sup> at the hook, if a few Frigates could be spared to be dispatched to Rhode Island to capture and destroy their Vessels and obstruct their retreat it would answer a very important end.<sup>60</sup>

Either of these plans being pursued if attended with important successes, so as to disembarass these States of the whole, or the principal part of the enemy's force now within them, would put it in their power to co-operate with the forces of his most Christian Majesty, in prosecuting such offensive enterprises against the enemy elsewhere as shall be deemed advancive of the honor and Interest of the allied powers, which cannot be expected while the immediate internal safety of the States is endangered by formidable fleets and Armies; requiring the exertion of all their strength and resources in their own defence.

Having done myself the honr. to submit to your Excellency my ideas of the joint operations which may be adopted with the greatest prospect of mutual advantage in the event you have been pleased to suggest, I doubt not if either of the plans be approved wholly or in part your answer will enable me to determine with precision the line of conduct which ought to govern my operations relatively to the objects they comprehend,<sup>61</sup> I have the honor, etc.<sup>62</sup>

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59. The draft has "of the fleet."

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60. After conferring with Washington and conversing with him for hours at a time, Gérard returned to Philadelphia and submitted a memorial to Congress. In the forwarding letter the French Minister paid his respects to Congress as follows: "I proposed the means of proceeding to the execution of that plan but the Congress preserved the most absolute silence and would not deign to inform me of their Resolution. t I learnt only from the public voice that they had abandoned their design but my zeal having led me to write to Count D'Estaing and the answer of that Vice Admiral having reached me I do not think Sir that the interest of the Alliance and of these States will permit me to conduct myself according to the presumed negative Resolution of Congress anti in consequence I beseech you to lay before them the annexed Memoir." Girard's letter is dated May 9, 1779.

The memoir recited that D'Estaing would operate on the Georgia coast and assist South Carolina, "From thence his Majesty's Squadron will repair to the mouth of the Delaware and their ulterior operations will depend upon the concert which shall be taken between the Congress and the commander of his Majesty's forces and shall be calculated for the greatest advantage of the United States. ... Facts so evident will serve on the other hand to confound those evil minded persons who by absurd and clandestine insinuations void not only of all proof but of all probability only directed by private views anti clearly opposed to the honor and interest of the confederated republic endeavor to sow doubts and jealousies of which the common enemy alone will reap the fruits." The translations are in the office of the Secretary of Congress. This memoir is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 94, fol. 198.

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61. In a note which Girard wrote to Washington, after his return to Philadelphia, a translation of which, by Hamilton, under date of May 5, 1779, is in the *Washington Papers*, he said: "I stop absolutely at the idea that you have had the goodness to suggest to me and I act in consequence." There is no clue to this "idea," but it was, possibly, Washington's opposition to the suggestion of Vergennes that peace could be negotiated on the basis of a truce, or cessation of hostilities, leaving the United States under the protectorate of France and Spain. (See Gérard's letter to Vergennes, of May 7, 1779, Despatch no. 81, *Arch. Affs, Etrgr. E. U.*, vol. 8, no. 39: 93.) The transcript is in the Library of Congress.

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62. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Polit., E. U. Supt.*, vol. 1, pp. 278-9. The draft, in the *Washington Papers*, is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

On May 1 Washington wrote a brief note to General Gates at Providence in answer to his letter of Apr. 12, 1779, that he had transmitted the pay complaint to Congress and inclosed the resolve of Congress of Apr. 14, 1779, refusing the request of Major Harnage and Captain Hawker. The original is in the New York Historical Society and a draft is in the *Washington Papers*.

### To JOHN HOLKER

Smiths in the Clove, June 14, 1779.

Sir: I have been honoured with your favor of the 7th. Instant, inclosing a Letter for Mr. Pintard, which I shall take pleasure in transmitting to him by an early and I hope a safe opportunity.

It has been rumoured here that His Excellency Count D'Estaing and Admiral Byron both, had put to Sea; but the report probably exists more in imagination, than in any well grounded authority, as you do not mention it in your Letter, and on the contrary say you had heard nothing further from the W. Indies.

I have nothing of importance to communicate and have only to add, that, I have the Honor, etc.<sup>50</sup>

### To CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD

Head Quarters, West Point, July 25, 1779.

Sir: Col Fleury having signified to me his intention of shortly returning to France and requested

50. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

permission to go to Philadelphia to make some arrangements for this purpose on which his final determination will depend; I take the liberty to give him this letter to Your Excellency as a testimony of the sense I entertain of his conduct and services in this Country, which have been such as to merit my approbation and acquire the esteem of the army. He has been very useful in the different capacities in which he has been employed, has distinguished himself upon several occasions, and in every instance manifested the talents zeal activity and bravery which constitute a valuable officer. In a recent one he has particularly signalized himself. He commanded one of the advanced parties in the late assault of Stoney point, was the first that entered the enemy's works, and struck the British flag with his own hand.

I beg your Excellency to accept my warmest thanks for your obliging letter of the [16th. Instt]. With the most perfect respect etc.<sup>51</sup>

### **To JOHN HOLKER**

Head Quarters, West-point, August 17, 1779.

Sir: I feel myself honored in your polite communication of the 10th. instant. The news it brings and that which I promise

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51. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

myself from the arms of the Count D'Estaing gives me the highest pleasure. Whilst in a victorious career of the armies of our ally, in different quarters of the world, we anticipate a reign of happiness and glory to the French nation, and tranquility and peace to America.

When to the exertions, and resources of these States, we add the power and the wealth of the great house of Bourbon, it is difficult to conceive what policy could direct the court of England to a longer continuance of the war. She is already much exhausted in men and money, and resources hence we might suppose that she cannot long resist, alone, the force which is combined against her. She may have Northern assistance in view, which is the only rational solution of her obstinacy. This however may not be the case; nor will she be the first example of a people losing all eminence in the scale of nations by pursuing false measures, and vainly trusting to themselves. With great respect etc.<sup>51</sup>

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, West Point, September 13, 1779.

Sir: Having received intelligence which made it

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51. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

probable that a Squadron of his Most Christian Majesty was approaching our coast, I thought it my duty to meet you with the earliest advice of the situation of the enemy in this quarter. Admiral Arbuthnot arrived at New York the 25th of last month with a reinforcement under his convoy, consisting from the best accounts I have been able to obtain of about three thousand men mostly recruits and in bad health. This makes the land force of the enemy at New York and its dependencies near fifteen thousand men, distributed in the following manner: on the Island of New York [abt. 700]; on Long Island about [5000]; on Staten Island [abt. 1000]; at Kingsferry up the North River [45] miles from New York [abt. 2000] and a small garrison at Powles Hook a fortified peninsular on the Jersey shore opposite the city. This distribution is agreeable to the last advices; but the enemy's disposition undergoes very frequent changes and may have since altered. They have been for some time past drawing a line of works across New York Island and have lately fortified Governors Island near the City. They have also works on Staten Island and are said to have begun a strong fort at Brooklyn on Long Island.

The best information of the naval force in the harbour of New York makes it one seventy four one sixty four two fifty, and two or three frigates with a few small armed vessels.

The land force at Rhode Island is estimated between three and four thousand. There may be one or two frigates there.

Sir George Collier sailed some time since on an expedition to the eastward of Boston. The force with him was composed of one vessel of the line, one forty four gun ship and several smaller frigates and armed vessels. He has compleated his object, but I have not heard of his return.

If it is Your Excellency's intention to operate against the enemy at New York; it will be infinitely interesting that you should immediately enter the harbour and make such dispositions as will be best calculated to prevent a reunion of their force at a single point which would make their reduction a matter of no small difficulty. If your Excellency has a land force you will be able to judge in what manner it may be most usefully employed to intercept the detachments on Long and Staten Islands.

From the situation of the former relatively to New York it will not be easy to intercept the troops there because the enemy can throw their troops from one to the other at pleasure; and your ships could not conveniently lie in the East River to cut off the communication. It is not improbable the enemy's fleet will endeavour to take shelter in this River. It will also be of importance to run two or three frigates up the North River [into Haverstraw bay] to obstruct the retreat of the garrison at Kings ferry by water; and I should be happy these frigates may announce themselves by firing a number of guns in quick succession which will put it in my power to push down a body of troops below the garrisons on the East side to intercept a retreat by land to Kings bridge. This will also answer the

purpose of giving me earlier advice of your arrival than I could obtain in any other way. But some caution will be necessary in the passage of these Frigates up the River, as there have been some chevaux de frises sunk opposite Fort Washington which has given a partial obstruction to the channel. Your Excellency will probably be able to capture some seamen who will be acquainted with the navigation of the River in its present state.

To prevent the retreat of any part of the enemy through the Sound it will be useful to detach a few ships round to take a convenient station there. These may answer another object to hinder the evacuation of Rhode Island; either to form a junction with the main body, or withdraw to a place of security and avoid falling into your hands. The detachment for this purpose need not be greater than to be a full match for Sir George Collier.

I have taken the liberty to throw out these hints for your Excellency's information and permit me to entreat that you will favour me as soon as possible with an account of your Excellency's intention, and the land force under your command, which will help me to judge what additional succour it may be expedient to draw from the country and what other measures ought to be taken for a perfect cooperation. I also entreat your Excellency's sentiments on the manner of this cooperation and you may depend upon every exertion in my power to promote the success of an enterprise from which such decisive advantages may be expected to the common cause.

I sincerely congratulate you on your glorious

victories in the West Indies, in which no one takes greater interest than myself as well from motives of personal attachment as a concern for the common cause.

I have the honor, etc.

P.S. Major Lee who will have the honor of delivering these dispatches is an officer of intelligence and judgment, in whose information your Excellency may place great confidence. He will be happy to execute any orders with which you may be pleased to honor him.<sup>42</sup>

## **SUBSTANCE OF A CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE AND GENERAL WASHINGTON**

Head Quarters, West Point, September 16, 1779.

The Minister opened the conference by observing, that The Council of Massachusetts had represented to him the disadvantages, which their commerce was likely to suffer from the late misfortune in Penobscot and the advantages which would result if His Excellency Count D'Estaing could detach a few ships of the line and frigates to be stationed upon their coast, for protecting

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42. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

their commerce and countenancing the operations of their cruisers against that of the enemy. But before he should propose such a measure to Count D'Estaing, he wished to know from The General what purposes the detachment would answer to his military operations, and whether it would enable him to prosecute any offensive enterprise against the enemy.<sup>76</sup> That if he could accompany the request of the Council with assurances of this kind, a motive of such importance would have the greatest influence in determining the concurrence of Count D'Estaing, and might the better justify him in deranging or contracting his plans in the West Indies by making a detachment of his force.

The General answered: That if Count D'Estaing could spare a detachment superior to the enemy's naval force upon this Continent retaining such a force in the West Indies as would put it out of the enemy's power to detach an equal force to this Continent without leaving themselves inferior in the Islands, the measure would have a high probability of many important and perhaps decisive advantages. But these would depend upon several contingencies; the time in which the detachment can arrive, and the position and force of the enemy when it arrives. That the season proper for military operations was now pretty far advanced, and to make a Winter campaign would require a disposition of our magazines peculiar to it, which could not be made without a large increase of expence; a circumstance not to be desired in the present posture of our affairs, unless the arrival of

a naval succour was an event of some certainty. That with respect to the position and force of the enemy, they

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76. The rough, first draft by Hamilton has: "as this would give additional weight to the application and hold out a more important inducement to compliance."

had now about fourteen thousand men at New York, and its dependencies and between three and four thousand at Rhode Island; that to reduce the former, if it should be concentrated on the Island would require extensive preparations beforehand, both as to magazines and aids of men, which could not with propriety be undertaken on a precarious expectation of assistance. But that if the garrison of Rhode Island should continue there, we should have every reason to expect its reduction in a combined operation; it might however be withdrawn. He added: That the enemy appear to be making large detachments from New York which the present situation of their affairs seems to exact. That there is a high probability of their being left so weak as to give us an opportunity, during the Winter of acting effectually against New York, in case of the arrival of a fleet to cooperate with us; even with the force we now have and could suddenly assemble on an emergency. That at all events the French Squadron would be able to strike an important stroke, in the capture and destruction of the enemys vessels of war, with a large number of transports and perhaps seamen.

He concluded with observing, That though in the great uncertainty of the arrival of a Squadron, he could not undertake to make expensive preparations for cooperating, nor pledge himself for doing it effectually; yet there was the greatest prospect of utility from the arrival of such a Squadron, and he would engage to do every thing in his power for improving its aid, if it should appear upon our coast: That if the present or future

circumstances should permit His Excellency Count D'Estaing to concert a combined operation with the troops of these states against the enemy's fleets and armies within these States, he would be ready to promote the measure to the utmost of our resources and should have the highest hopes of its success; it would however, be necessary to prevent delay and give efficacy to the project that he should have some previous notice.

The Minister replied: That The Generals delicacy upon the occasion was very proper; but as he seemed unwilling to give assurances of effectual cooperation, in conveying the application to the Admiral he would only make use of the name of the Council which would no doubt have all the weight due to the application of so respectable a body.

The General assented, observing that occasional mention might be made of the military advantages to be expected from the measure.<sup>77</sup>

The Minister in the next place informed The General that there had been some negotiations between Congress and Monsieur Gerard, on the subject of the Floridas and the limits of the Spanish dominions in that quarter, concerning which certain resolutions had been taken by Congress, which he supposed were known to The General. He added, that the Spaniards had in contemplation an expedition against the Floridas, which was either already begun or very soon would be begun, and he wished to know the General's opinion of a cooperation on our part. That it was probable

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77. The draft has: "The General assented, observing that the military advantages to be expected might be mentioned as a secondary motive."

this expedition would immediately divert the enemy's force from South Carolina and Georgia, and the question then would be whether General Lincoln's army would be necessary elsewhere, or might be employed in a cooperation with the Spanish forces. That the motive with the French court for wishing such a cooperation was that it would be a meritorious act on the side of the United States towards Spain, who though she had all along been well disposed to the revolution had entered reluctantly into the war and had not yet acknowledged our independence; that a step of this kind would serve to confirm her good dispositions and to induce her not only to enter into a Treaty with us, but perhaps to assist with a loan of money.<sup>78</sup> That the forces of Spain in the Islands were so considerable as would in all appearance make our aid unnecessary; on which account the utility of it only contingent and possible, was but a secondary consideration with the Court of France; the desire to engage Spain more firmly in our interests by *a mark* of our good will to her was the leading and principal one.<sup>79</sup>

The General assured the Minister, That he had the deepest sense of the friendship of France but replied to the matter in question, that he was altogether a stranger to the measures adopted by Congress relative to the Floridas and could give no opinion of the propriety of the cooperation proposed in a civil or political light; but considering it merely as a military question, he saw no objection to the measure on the supposition that the enemy's force in Georgia

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78. The draft has: "that the French Court was extremely desirous the United States should do some act which would be expressive of attachment to Spain and tend to conciliate and confirm her friendship and induce her to acknowledge our independence, and perhaps to give us those aids of money of which we stood in need."

79. The draft has: "The forces of Spain in the West Indies were so considerable that there was every reason to believe she could make a detachment fully equal to the reduction of the Floridas without our assistance, on which account the principal inducement with the Court of France for desiring it would be to give us a claim of merit with Spain which would be favourable to our interests with her. The utility of such an aid, though it might be necessary, was but a secondary motive."

and South Carolina be with drawn, without which it would of course be impossible.

The Minister then asked, in case the operation by the Spaniards against the Floridas should not induce the English to abandon the Southern States, whether it would be agreeable that the forces, either French or Spanish employed there should cooperate with our troops against those of the enemy in Georgia and South Carolina.

The General replied that he imagined such a cooperation would be desirable.

The Minister inquired in the next place, whether in case The Court of France should find it convenient to send directly from France a Squadron and a few Regiments attached to it, to act in conjunction with us in this quarter, it would be agreeable to The United States.

The General thought it would be very advancive of the common Cause.

The Minister informed, That Doctor Franklin had purchased a fifty gun ship which the King of France intended to equip, for the benefit of The United States to be sent with two or three frigates to Newfoundland to act against the enemys vessels employed in the Fishery, and afterwards to proceed to Boston to cruise from that port.

He concluded the conference with stating, that in Boston several Gentlemen of influence, some of them members

of Congress had conversed with him on the subject of an expedition against Canada and Nova Scotia. That his Christian Majesty had a sincere and disinterested desire to see those two provinces annexed to the American Confederacy and would be disposed to promote a plan for this purpose; but that he would undertake nothing of the kind unless the plan was previously approved and digested by The General. He added that a letter from The General to Congress<sup>80</sup> some time since on the subject of an expedition to Canada had appeared in France and had been submitted to the best military judges who approved, the reasoning and thought the objections to the plan which had been proposed very plausible and powerful. That when ever the General should think the circumstances

of this country favourable to such an undertaking, he should be very glad to recommend the Plan he should propose, and he was assured that the French Court would give it all the aid in their power.

The General again expressed his Sense of the good dispositions of his Christian Majesty; but observed, that while the enemy remain in force in these states, the difficulties stated in his letter alluded to by the Minister would still subsist; but that whenever that force should be removed, he doubted not it would be a leading object with the government to wrest the two forementioned provinces from the power of Britain; that in this case he should esteem himself honored in being consulted on the plan; and was of opinion, that though we should have land force enough for the undertaking, without in this respect intruding upon the

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80. See Washington's letter to Congress, Nov. 11, 1778, *q. v.*

generosity of our allies, a naval co operation would certainly be very useful and necessary.

The rest of the Conference consisted in mutual assurances of friendship of the two countries &c. interspersed on the General's side with occasional remarks on the importance of removing the war from these states as it would enable us to afford ample supplies to the operations in the West Indies and to act with efficacy in annoying the commerce of the enemy and dispossessing them of their dominions on this continent.<sup>81</sup>

### To JACQUES COLE-MOUNTFLORENCE

Head Quarters, West Point, September 28, 1779.

Sir: I received by yesterdays Post your letter of the 30th. of August<sup>69</sup> and am much obliged by your polite offer of service. It is however not in my power to avail myself of it. The appointment of Officers is not with me, and therefore I cannot give you any assurance of your being employed. And besides this consideration, the State of the Army with respect to Officers does not require any new

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81. Both draft and record copy are in the writing of Hamilton. "Head Quarters, September 18, 1779. The foregoing is to the best of my recollection the substance of a conference at which I was present at the time mentioned and interpreted between the Minister and The General. Alex Hamilton."

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69. Mountflorencia wrote from Newbern, N. C., and in a letter to Congress he signed himself a captain of foot.

appointments to be made. Under these circumstances I cannot think myself at liberty to encourage you to hope, that one in your favor would take place; and to induce you in consequence, to make a long, fatiguing and expensive journey. I am, &c.<sup>70</sup>

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

West Point, October 4, 1779.

Sir: On receiving advice, that your Excellency had been seen in a latitude, which indicated your approach to our Coasts, and supposing it possible you might direct your course this way, I did myself the honor to write you a letter on the 13th. September, and stationed an Officer in Monmouth County, to meet you with it on your arrival at the Hook. In that letter I explained the situation and force of the enemy, and took the liberty to propose some preliminary movements, on which the successive operations would materially depend. In the uncertainty of your coming, and having little more than conjecture on which to found an expectation of it, these were all the measures I was then authorized to take. But, I have just received dispatches from Congress, acquainting me with your arrival at Georgia, and your intention, after accomplishing your object, to proceed this way. I have,

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70. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by George A. Ball, of Muncie, Ind.

in consequence; called upon the neighbouring States for a reinforcement of Militia, and am taking every other measure in my power, to prepare for a cooperation, with all the dispatch and Vigor our circumstances will permit.

I beg leave to inclose a Copy of the above mentioned letter,<sup>73</sup> and the substance of the intelligence since received.<sup>74</sup> Your Excellency will observe that only two detachments of troops have sailed from New York; one consisting of three German and one British Regiment for Hallifax or Quebec, and the other composed of Grenadiers, Light Infantry and one British Regiment, supposed to be destined to the southern States. I have not received any account of the debarkation of the Hallifax detachment and I believe it has prosecuted its Voyage. One of the transports has been taken and carried into Philadelphia with 160 Men on board. She reports Hallifax to have been her destination. I have reason to believe, from some information recently obtained, that the latter detachment has returned; these however are not altogether authentic, but I am the more inclined to give them credit, as I think it

probable they were bound to South Carolina, and in their way may have heard of your Excellency's arrival in that quarter, which would naturally occasion their return to New York.

The Enemy's force in New York and its dependencies, supposing the return of the above detachment, I now estimate at fourteen thousand. Their fleet consists of the Russel of 74. The Europe of 64, the Renown of 50, the Roebuck 44 and

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73. Washington's letter to Comte D'Estaing, Sept. 13, 1779, *q. v.*

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74. Two copies of the "substance of the intelligence," one in the writing of Meade and one in that of McHenry, are with the letter signed of October 4 in the *Alexander Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

a few smaller Frigates. Your Excellency will perceive that their affairs are in a fluctuating state, and therefore many changes may have taken place since my last advices.

From the advanced Season of the Year, every instant of time is infinitely precious, and must be even more so to your Excellency than to us. This makes it to be lamented, that it had not been possible to preconcert a plan before your arrival. The force under your command, and the time you can devote to this business, are essential points in determining what can with propriety be undertaken, and the first steps will be of great consequence to all the succeeding ones. To enable you the better to regulate your own movements, I shall expose to you our prospects, and the different plans which present themselves to me, with the obstacles attending each.

New York is the first and capital object, upon which every other is dependant. The loss of the Army and Fleet there, would be one of the severest Blows the English Nation could experience. Rhode Island would fall of course. But your Excellency will be sensible, that the reduction of fourteen thousand Men centred upon a small Island, with the assistance of fortifications, is an enterprise of no inconsiderable difficulty; and requires a vigorous exertion of our resources, in conjunction with your force, to give it a sufficient probability of success. Not less than 30,000 Men will, in my opinion, be adequate to the operation, and we cannot collect the numbers

necessary on our part, in addition to what we already have in the field, in less than three Weeks from this time. The interval, between your arrival and that period, must for the most part be spent in a state of inactivity on our side, unless you judge it proper to direct your attention to an attempt upon Rhode Island.

The knowledge you have of this place, will enable you, better than me, to decide on the eligibility of this project. The Garrison there is respectable, and as I am informed, secured by a Chain of Redoubts and Retrenchments from one flank of the Island to the other, which would be exceedingly formidable to an Assault. The town however may be burnt, and with it, the Enemy's magazines, which it is probable would speedily reduce them to a surrender. Your Excellency is a better judge than I am of the time which would be exhausted in the enterprise, but I should imagine it might require at least four Weeks for its accomplishment. If you should think proper to pursue this plan, we have a Body of two thousand troops now ready at Rhode Island, and can march thither any additional number you deem necessary for a cooperation. But in order to this, I must request you will give me previous notice of your intention.

Success, in this attempt, would be favourable to our ulterior operations against New York, but a failure would be attended with the reverse, as it would damp the spirits of the Country and diminish its exertions. Another inconvenience would attend it, which is, that without a division of your force to continue

the Blockade of New York, the Fleet now there would make its escape. Indeed, in any plan, a division of your force will be indispensable; Rhode Island and the Sound must be blockaded, otherwise the Garrison there will form a junction with the main Body at New York, which would be so great an accession of force, as would render the success of our operations improbable, and the Frigates and smaller Vessels may find a passage through the Sound, and elude your Excellency in that way: But the difference is this: In the latter case, two or three fifty Gun Ships and as many Frigates will answer the purpose: in the former, some of your Ships of the line must be left at New York, to have a superiority to the two that are there aided by the Frigates.

In case of the attempt upon Rhode Island, the only expedient, to avoid a division of your ships of the line, will be, to remain with the whole at New York, and send your troops round under the protection of your Frigates. Your Excellency is the best judge with what propriety a movement of this kind can be hazarded.

In either event, it appears to me advisable, that you should first enter the Bay of New York with a part at least of your Fleet, and as suddenly as possible to intercept the troops on Staten Island and the Garrisons up the River, as the capture of these will materially facilitate the reduction of the remaining force; and I take the liberty strongly to recommend, that a proper detachment may without loss of time block

up the sound and the port of Rhode Island. I have taken measures for furnishing you with pilots, one of them accompanies this letter but I have directed three or four to be stationed with Major Lee at Monmouth to put off to your Excellency on your first appearance. Among these is one — who is acquainted with the navigation of the North River in its present state, and will be able to take up the Frigates which I had the honour to request might proceed into Haverstraw Bay.

I have written to Congress, to recommend the assembling all our Frigates and armed Vessels to act in conjunction with the fleet under your command.

With candour and freedom have I exposed to your Excellency my sentiments and expectations: and I entreat you will honor me with a similar communication of your views and intentions. Nothing will give me greater pleasure, than to concur with these, to the utmost of our Ability.

I have not concealed the difficulties in the way of a cooperation, because I thought it my duty fully to apprise you of them. I am persuaded you will ascribe what I have said, to the proper motive, and to that caution which ought always to influence enterprizes pregnant with such interesting consequences. You will not impute them to an unwillingness to exert the resources of the Country, or to a distrust of the event; for I assure your Excellency, I feel the importance of this generous and seasonable succour, and have the highest hopes of its utility to the common

cause, and a termination glorious to the allied Arms. I rejoice in the opportunity it affords, nor is the prospect of acting, in immediate conjunction with your Excellency, one of the least flattering circumstances. I shall with the greatest alacrity concur in the execution of any plan which shall be thought advancive of the Interest and Glory of the two Nations, and may add to the Laurels you have already reaped in so distinguished a manner.

I hope soon to have the pleasure of assuring you personally of those sentiments of respectful attachment with which, I have the Honor, etc.

P. S. Mr. Holker, soon after your Excellency left Boston, communicated to me your desire to have the navigation of Hell Gate ascertained. I have taken the greatest pains to answer your views, and the result of my inquiries is, that never more than a fifty Gun Ship has gone thro' that passage, and this with difficulty and hazard. A large ship it is believed could not pass. The reasons are not a want of depth of Water, but the extreme narrowness of the Channel, the rapidity of the current, Whirlpools and Rocks. The least mis-steerage will precipitate the Vessels on the Banks and Shoals on either side, and the power which the Current and Whirlpools have upon larger Vessels, would make it almost impossible to keep them in their proper course.

The only time when this passage is practicable for ships of any burthen, is at the height of flood tide.

I have since writing the foregoing learned that the Renown of 50 Guns and not the Reasonable of 64 conveyed the detachment to Hallifax. We may therefore suppose that the Reasonable is in the Harbour of New York.<sup>75</sup>

### To COMTE D'ESTAING

Head Quarters, West point, October 7, 1779.

Sir: Since my letter to your Excellency on the 4th. Instant, I have had the honor of a visit from His Excellency Monsieur Gerard. In the conversation we had relative to a cooperation with the fleet and troops under your command, he expressed his doubts of its being possible for you to continue such a length of time as may be essential to the success of the under taking, and which alone could justify me in going into those extensive preparations absolutely necessary on our part. I have therefore appointed Brigadier General Du Portail and Col Hamilton to wait upon Your Excellency as speedily as possible and explain to you fully my ideas of the proposed cooperation; the means we shall be able to employ; the obstacles we shall have to encounter on our side; the plans which it may be proper to pursue and the measures which are taking and may be taken by the enemy to counteract

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75. This letter signed is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. Another letter signed, in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison, is in the *Alexander Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

them. This will enable your Excellency to determine what you can with propriety undertake. I shall only add that if your Excellency will engage to cooperate with your whole naval and land force against the enemy's fleet and army at New York 'till the winter is so far advanced that the ice will make it impracticable to remain with yr. fleet any longer in the port, I will bring Twenty five thousand effective men into the field and will exert all the re sources of the country in a vigorous and decided cooperation. Without this assurance on the part of Your Excellency, it would be inconsistent with my duty to the public and to the common cause to incur the expense and hazard which would be inseperable from the enterprise; and the more disagreeable consequences which would attend a failure. I flatter myself your Excellency will be fully sensible of the weight of the reasons on which this declaration is founded and will approve the frankness with which it is made, and with which I have instructed General Du Portail and Col Hamilton to disclose to you every circumstance and every consideration with which it is necessary you should be acquainted. If your determination should be in favour of the enterprise I request you will honour me with a line in answer to this letter,

expressive of your ultimate intentions and that you will communicate to the Gentlemen who now wait upon you the previous measures you propose to pursue; and your sentiments of the most eligible plan of cooperation. I shall act in consequence, 'till the period

arrives for concerting a final and more determinate plan.

I would now observe to Your Excy, that you may repose the most implicit confidence in Genl. Du Portail and Colo. Hamilton, and accordingly I recommend them to your kind civilities and attention. And having done this, I have only to renew the assurances of that sincere attachment and perfect respect with which I have the honor, etc.<sup>5</sup>

### **To JUAN DE MIRALLES**

Head Quarters, Morristown, December 7, 1779.

Sir: I had the honor of receiving two days since your letter of the 29th. of November inclosing a copy of your late representation to Congress. I entreat you to be assured that I esteem myself highly obliged by this mark of your attention and confidence; and that the promotion of the interests of his Catholic Majesty will always be an additional motive to my zeal in the execution of any plan for the advancement of the common cause.

The objects you have been pleased to communicate are of the most interesting nature and have been very fully and seriously considered in concert with the Honourable The Committee of Congress appointed to confer with me on the occasion.

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5. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton and Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter signed is in the *Alexander Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress. It varies from the draft in abbreviations and capitalization.

Our sentiments were the same; and the result is by this opportunity transmitted to Congress who, I doubt not will immediately impart it to you, with their further resolutions.<sup>85</sup> I therefore beg leave to refer you to them and to repeat the assurances of the respect and great personal esteem with which I have the honour, etc.<sup>86</sup>

### **\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Morristown, February 4, 1780.

Sir: Major Galvan delivered me the letter which your Excellency did me honor to write me on the 23rd. of Jany., to which I have paid all the attention the importance of its contents demands. I am much flattered by this commencement of a corrispondence from which I have every thing to gain; and equally indebted for the interesting communications it affords.

It is a happy circumstance that the efforts made by the British court for obtaining Troops in Germany are attended with so little success. This will naturally increase their exertions for procuring men in this country and will no doubt make them more solicitous for effecting the exchange or release in some way or other of their prisoners in our hands. It will be well if in the negotiations on this subject we can extract concessions

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85. Congress resolved (December 16) that General Lincoln cooperate with the Governor of Havana in a move against the British in Georgia. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress* of that date.)

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86. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

favourable to those which may take place in Europe, and you may depend the experiment shall be fully tried. But from the aspect of the late propositions on the part of the enemy, I should not entertain any sanguine hopes of the success of this experiment. The reinforcement they would derive from a full compliance with their proposals is not calculated at more than ten or eleven hundred private men; and this seems hardly to be an object of sufficient magnitude to induce them to concede points of the nature wch. Your Excellency's information supposes; especially as you emphatically express it after "having sought with so much affectation to make the thirteen States be considered as subjected to the English domination." The offers made through Major General Philips<sup>18</sup> are far more moderate than any that have hitherto come from them, and appear in a great measure to have been influenced by his personal solitations dictated by an extreme anxiety to be released from captivity. But notwithstanding the matter in its present form wears to me the appearance I have mentioned I shall not neglect any measure which it may be in my power to take to improve the intimations your Excellency has given and I entreat you to be assured that I shall endeavor to make the event confirm the opinion you do me the honor to entertain, that nothing will be done derogatory to the magnanimous part your Court has acted or to the honor or interest of the united States).<sup>19</sup>

The inconsistency of the Court of London so well delineated by that of Madrid in the extract you had the goodness

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18. Maj. Gen. William Phillips, of the British Army.

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19. Great Britain, Luzerne said, had failed in her effort to buy additional German troops. The German princes who had sold men previously were now ashamed and found that their subjects were excited against them because of that practice; they were further reluctant to furnish troops to a power which was making war on France, with whom they had always preserved amicable ties. Mr. Clinton had received orders to spare no pains to effect the exchange of the Convention troops and other prisoners. He had been authorized to surmount all difficulties in exchange negotiations and in case of absolute necessity to treat with Congress or their ministers "dans les termes d'une parfaite egalite, et comme avec une puissance independante." This treating with the court of London upon a footing of perfect equality would, "prejurer a d'avance la question de votre Independance." Luzerne was well persuaded, he wrote, that as the negotiation was in Washington's hands "ne se passera rien de Derogatoire au parti que ma Cour a pris de reconnoitre L'Independance et la parfaite souverainete des Etat unis." Luzerne also enclosed to Washington an extract of a memorial communicated by the British Ambassador at Madrid to the court of Spain on the 28th of March, 1779. Hamilton's translation of thus was as follows: "Let the Colonies expose also their grievances and the conditions for their security or for their precaution, in order that the continuation and the authority of a lawful government may be reestablished. Tis there we shall see if a direct and immediate accommodation can take place. If this same method is preferred, in this last case only, let a truce be made in North America, that is to say a real truce and suspension of arms, during which may be reestablished and secured the liberty and estates of persons of every condition, and made to cease all sort of violence against the respective subjects or against the estates or effects which they possess. During this time, the French may treat upon their particular concerns avoiding thereby the suspicions, to which they would necessarily expose themselves, if they wish to involve in the negotiation their private advantage relatively to the pretended interests of those whom France with Affectation calls her allies and his Majesty will be able to establish the Government of his own dominions, without suffering the humiliation of not receiving but from the hand of a declared enemy the conditions which regard this government." Hamilton's translation is in the *Washington Papers*.

An "Extrait de L'Expose des motifs de la Cour D'Espagne relativemerit a L'Angleterre" was also enclosed in Luzerne's letter and is in the *Washington Papers*.

to annex would appear extraordinary, if their whole conduct in the course of the war did not exhibit many similar examples. But it is evident that their refusing to consider these States as independant

of fact during a negotiation was a mere pretext to cover their unwillingness to concur in the pacific views of his Chatholic Majesty, and the memorial from the British Ambassador shews that they were artfully aiming to effect a separation of interests between France and these States the better to prosecute their hostile designs against either or both.

I thank your Excellency for the agreeable intelligence you give me of his Christian Majesty's intentions to send us succours of Arms and ammunition. It is a new and valuable proof of his friendship, and will be of essential utility. I agree with you that there ought to be no relaxation in the measures otherwise intended to be taken to procure the necessary supplies of those articles.

I am sensibly mortified that the present situation of affairs will by no means suffer me to yield to the desire I have of paying you my respects in Philadelphia; and I shall impatiently look for the opportunity of doing it here which Your Excellency promises me in the course of this month. Besides the important objects of public utility which I am authorised to hope from it, I shall take pleasure in every occasion of testifying to you those real sentiments of respect and esteem with which I have the honor, etc.

The interest your Excellency is pleased to take in Major Galvan, will be an additional motive with me, to avail myself of his talents and zeal, as far as circumstances will possibly permit.<sup>20</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Morris Town, February 15, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's letter of the 4th. which only reached me late on the 13th.

Sincerely desirous of doing every thing in my power by which the interest of his Christian Majesty inseparable from that of these States can in any manner be promoted, and still more in a point so essential as that which makes the subject of your letter, I should not hesitate to furnish the detachment required by Mr. Duet,<sup>17</sup> whatever might be my opinion of its necessity did not the present state of the army absolutely forbid it. I with confidence assure Your Excellency that our force is so reduced by the expiration of the terms of service for which a considerable part of it was engaged, and will be so much more diminished in the course of a month or two from the same cause, as scarcely to suffice for the common exigencies of the service and to afford just cause

for uneasiness, should the Enemy be actuated by a spirit of enterprise, before we receive the reinforcements intended for the next campaign. So

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20. The text is from a photostat of the original in *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mem. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6. The draft by Hamilton, in the *Washington Papers*, is signed by Washington.

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17. William Duer, judge of common pleas, Charlotte (now Washington) County, N.Y. Duer's proposal was to cut trees for masts for the French Navy, Washington to furnish a guard for the cutters.

circumstanced my duty to the common cause will not justify me in adding to the insecurity of our situation by making a detachment which though apparently inconsiderable would be materially felt in our present weakness; and I am persuaded after the information now given, Your Excellency will wish me not to hazard the measure.

With respect to the necessity of a covering party I shall not venture to decide but I should imagine in the present state of things, the business may be carried on with tolerable security without one. The consequences of the late expedition promise tranquillity for some time to our frontier, and make it at any rate improbable that the Savages will be able to penetrate so far at so early a period; and the proposition does not require that the covering party should remain longer than till the last of April. The intelligence I have received corresponds with these ideas. It might be added that the Garrison at Wyoming gives some degree of protection to the part of the Country in question. But as it is very important that no interruption should be given to the workmen, if a covering party should upon the whole be thought requisite, the best mode of furnishing it will be from the neighbouring Militia. For this purpose, on Your Excellencys application to Congress, I cannot doubt they will immediately make the necessary arrangements. I have the honor etc.<sup>18</sup>

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18. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mem. & Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

## To JUAN DE MIRALLES

Head Quarters, Morris Town, February 27, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor of your letter of the 18th. inclosing an extract of one from His Excellency The Governor of Havannah. I am happy in the opportunity of congratulating you on the important successes it announces to the arms of His Catholic Majesty, which I hope are a prelude to others more decisive. These events will not only advance the immediate interest of his Majesty, and

promote the common cause, but they will probably have a beneficial influence on the affairs of the Southern states at the present juncture.

The want of any certain intelligence of the fleet which sailed from New York, I should attribute to their having been disconcerted in their voyage, by the tempestuous weather which prevailed for some time after their departure. A variety of circumstances combining proved that the intention of that embarkation was for the Southern states. All my intelligence agreed in this point; the composition of the detachment, Governor Martin and several refugees from South and North Carolina having embarked in the fleet; the current of the English accounts, by which it appears that General Clinton was expected to be in South Carolina so early as November, in which he was probably prevented by Count D'Estaing's operations in Georgia; these circumstances conspire to satisfy me that the Carolinas were the objects: But notwithstanding this, I think the

precautions you are taking to put the Spanish dominions upon their guard are wise. It can have no ill-consequence and it is adviseable to be provided against all contingencies. It would not be surprising if the British General on hearing of the progress of the Spanish arms in the Floridas should relinquish his primitive design and go to the defence of their own territories.

I shall with the greatest pleasure comply with your request for giving you information of all the movements of the enemy that come to my knowledge, which may in any manner interest the plans of your Court; and I have written to General Lincoln agreeable to your intimation. Every motive will induce him to do whatever may be in his power to effect the diversion desired. If the enemy prosecute the plan which I suppose to have been originally intended he will necessarily find his whole attention employed at home on the defensive; but if they direct their force to another quarter, I am persuaded he will make the best use of his to give them all possible annoyance and distraction.

I have the honor, etc.<sup>8</sup>

## To JUAN DE MIRALLES

Head Quarters, Morristown, March 9, 1780.

Sir: I have received a report from New York, that

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8. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

one of the transports which sailed from this place with the armament on the 26th of Decemhr. Ulto. after a succession of severe weather, and on being seperated from the fleet, had opened her orders

which it is said directed her to rendezvous at Tybee;<sup>75</sup> but finding this either impracticable or too hazardous she returned to New York.

I would observe to you on this report, that it does not come with sufficient authenticity to give it any certain determination. My desire, however to send you every thing that may have a tendency to throw light on the designs or destination of the fleet, is my reason for the present communication. I wish to have it in my power to advise you of something more interesting. With great regard, etc.<sup>76</sup>

### To JUAN DE MIRALLES

Head Quarters, Morristown, April 4, 1780.

Sir: I have been favored with your respective letters of the 14th and 22d of last month.

For some time past the arrangements of the enemy at New York and in their shipping, have looked towards another embarkation of troops and my recent intelligence on this subject is strongly confirmative of the former. The troops said to be destined

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75. Entrance of the Savannah River, Georgia.

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76. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

to this embarkation may be calculated at about 2500 including cavalry. The general report is that they are intended for the Southward.

From the effects of the storm on the fleet which sailed with Gen Sir Henry Clinton, and the inactivity of the enemy since their arrival in Carolina, it would appear that military succours were thought necessary to the success of their operations; and that the present embarkation at New-York is designed to cooperate at least in the first instance with Sir Henry Clinton. I thought it expedient to give you this information as the knowledge of any new addition of force in that quarter may have an influence on the suggested movements of his Catholic majesty's arms in the Floridas. I am much obliged to you for the present you have sent us and cannot but express my sense of your polite letter of the 15th. of last month. Mrs. Washington begs you would receive her thanks on the same occasion, and desires me to offer you her best compliments. I am &c.<sup>69</sup>

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69. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry. The last paragraph was a separate letter to Miralles written a little later this same day, but here joined in one letter. Miralles had sent lemon juice, raisins, cakes of chocolate, sugar, and almonds.

**\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Morris-town, April 26, 1780.

Sir: I am just returned from a visit to Mr. D'Miralles, and am happy to inform your Excellency, that if he has experienced any change since you left him, it is for the better. His Fever and pulse, tho' he had a very restless night the last, are now moderate and regular, and his hic-cough has entirely left him. These are symptoms which the Doctor considers as rather favourable, but I am unhappy they are not such as enable him to determine that the prospect of his recovery is either certain, or flattering.

I pray you to make an offer of my respects to Mr. Marbois, and do me the justice to believe that, with much consideration, and great personal attachment, I have the honor, etc.<sup>24</sup>

**\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Morristown, April 27, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to inform your Excellency, that Mr. De Miralles had a more refreshing Night, the last, than usual, attended with other favourable symptoms; but his pulse, at

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24. The text is from a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

times, is irregular and fluttering. Upon the whole, the Doctors think him better, though they dare not pronounce him past danger. If he should continue well through this day, and the succeeding night, I shall entertain the pleasing hope of his recovery. With much personal regard etc.<sup>30</sup>

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30. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Doct., E. U.*, vol. 6.

**\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Morris-Town, May 5, 1780.

Sir: Two days since I had the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of 29th. April.

The polite terms in which you mention the attention which my respectful attachment for you dictated during your stay in Camp adds to the obligation I felt for the honor of your visit. I was happy in that opportunity of giving you new proofs of my sentiments and I entreat you to afford me others as frequently as possible. As the Minister of a Prince to whom America owes so much you have every title to my respect; and

permit me to add, your personal qualities give you a claim which my heart cheerfully acknowledges, to all my esteem and all my regard.

I beg you to accept my thanks for your intention to represent the Army in so favourable a light as will recommend it to the approbation of his most Christian Majesty; an honor as flattering as it will be precious.<sup>82</sup> It would be want of gratitude not to be convinced of the intimate concern he takes in our affairs, after the repeated and decided proofs he has given. I have the honor etc.

P S. Mrs. Washington, Sensible of your polite attention to her, prays your acceptance of her compliments and best respects.

9 O'clock A.M.

I have this instant received a Letter from my much esteemed and amiable friend the Marquis de la Fayette, dated in Boston Harbour.<sup>83</sup> In the course of a day or two I shall expect to see him in Camp.<sup>84</sup>

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82. Hamilton's translation of Luzerne's letter of April 29 states: "I shall render an account to my Court of all that I saw at the army; of the good order and discipline of the troops; of the zeal and talents of the officers; of the good disposition reigns among them as well as of the respect and public confidence in the Commander in Chief." Luzerne's letter and Hamilton's translation are in the *Washington Papers*. Sparks quotes the following as a translation of part of Luzerne's report to Vergennes of May 13: "The time which I passed with General Washington has convinced me more than ever of the very great advantage, which the republic derives from his services. His virtues have

gained for him the affection of the army which he commands, and the confidence and respect of the generals and other officers.”

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83. In the draft are the words “the 29th of last Month.”

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84. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

### **To BARBÉ MARBOIS**

Morristown, May 5, 1780.

Sir: Any marks of consideration you may have received during your stay in camp were only a just tribute to your merit which my esteem for you made me take pleasure in paying. The manner in which you speak of them in your letter of the 29th. of April and the obliging assurances you give me, have a new title to my regard.

The opportunity which your visit to Camp afforded me of knowing you more particularly has confirmed the sentiments with which the commencement of our acquaintance impressed me; and I entreat you to be assured that there is nothing I desire more than frequent occasions of giving you proofs of the high estimation in which I hold you and of the perfect regard with which I have the honor etc.<sup>85</sup>

### **\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Morris-Town, May 11, 1780.

Sir: The attention and honors paid to Mr. De

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85. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

Miralles after his death were a tribute due to his character and merit, and dictated by the sincere esteem which I always felt for him.

I am much obliged to your Excellency for your intention of sending me a detail of the land and Sea forces arriv'd at Martinique, which I beg leave to inform you, you forgot to inclose in your letter.<sup>18</sup>

You will participate in the joy I feel at the arrival of the Marquis de la Fayette. No event could have given me greater pleasure on a personal account, and motives of public utility conspire to make it agreeable. He will shortly have the honor to wait upon your Excellency and impart matters of the greatest moment to these States. He announces a fresh and striking instance of the friendship of your Court and which cannot fail to contribute greatly to perpetuate the gratitude of this Country.

I am always happy to repeat to you the sentiments of respect and inviolable attachment with which I have the honor etc.<sup>19</sup>

### **\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Morris-town, May 14, 1780.

Sir: Since my last I have had the honor to receive

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18. This list is in the *Washington Papers* under date of March 21. (See Washington's letter to Chevalier de la Luzerne, May 14, 1780, *post.*)

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19. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aft. Etrang.. Meres. et Does., E. U.*, vol. 6

the detail of His Most Christian Majestys Fleet in the West Indies,<sup>43</sup> which your Excellency has had the goodness to send me. I congratulate you very sincerely, Sir, on this very respectable armament, which I found to surpass my expectation and I would willingly hope that an occasion will be afforded the Count De Guichen<sup>44</sup> to strike Some important blow with it, advancive of the honor and interest of his Majesty and of course, of the honor and interest of these States. I have the honor etc.<sup>45</sup>

### **To VICOMTE DE LA TOUCHE-TRÉVILLE**

May 19, 1780.

Sir: I execute with the greatest pleasure a commission with which the Marquis De La Fayette has done me the honor to charge me for you. Influenced by the double motive of complying with his desire and giving you a mark of the esteem with which the character I have heard of you has inspired me. It is to give you a detail of the enemy's naval force and disposition at New York. The last

particular account we had of them was received about ten days since. The vessels of force then in the harbour were The Russel of 74; the Pearl of 32; the Thames 32; the Delight 28; the Delaware 28; the Galatea 28; and the Swift, brig of 14. These except two,

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43. See Washington's letter to Chevalier de la Luzerne, May 11, 1780.

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44. Louis Urbain du Bouexie, Comte de Guichen. He was lieutenant general and commander in chief, French Navy, in the West Indies.

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45. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris, Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Does., E. U.*, vol. 6.

the Pearl and another not known, sailed out of the Hook the 11th. instant. 'Tis said their destination was to escort the Thames, going to England with dispatches, clear of the coast and afterwards to cruise in quest of Paul Jones whose approach they have been some time expecting. There of course remain at New York only two frigates.

It appears to me probable that the destination supposed is the true one. In this case they will be likely to steer towards the Eastward, as they will naturally conjecture that Jones' squadron will make for an Eastern port. If so, in going out you may have occasion for all your vigilance not to fall into their hands.

It is possible they may be going towards the Southward. There are rumours in New York that the enemy intend to withdraw their troops from South Carolina in consequence of late European advices. This fleet may be sent to meet and assist in escorting them to New York, or it may be supposed that Jones will be bound for the Delaware.

I confess myself at a loss to draw any certain conclusion.

The Marquis requests me to add my Ideas of the manner in which you can indulge your inclination to be useful with the greatest prospect of success. Though I am a bad judge in affairs of this kind, I should freely hazard my opinion in compliance with his request, if I did not think the

circumstances peculiarly unfavourable. I should apprehend you would run the greatest risk in cruising off New York, where you would have the best chance of doing something; on the other hand, you have not leisure to go any distance from the coast to endeavour to fall into the usual tract of vessels coming from England or Ireland to New York or going from the West Indies to those places; your time is too short to hope to effect any thing by such a plan.

You may just appear before the Hook and proceed directly towards the Capes of Virginia, or some other intermediate point between New York and Charles Town, in hopes of falling in with vessels passing from one of those ports to the other. This however would be a delicate manœuvre and perhaps hardly justified by the probability of succeeding.

I venture these hints to justify the Marquis's desire and to prove to you how happy I should be to have it in my power to be useful to you. Your better judgment and the lights you can obtain where you are make them superfluous in any other view.

Accept the assurances of the perfect consideration and esteem etc.<sup>6</sup>

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6. The draft is signed "A. H[amilton]."

### **To VICOMTE DE LA TOUCHE-TRÉVILLE<sup>3</sup>**

Morris Town, May 19, 1780.

Sir: I have the pleasure to transmit you a packet which was inclosed to me by the Marquis De La Fayette. He informs me that it contains permission for you to make a short cruise.<sup>4</sup>

The Marquis has inspired me with an opinion of your character from several details with which he has favoured me that gives me the fullest assurance you will do every thing in your power to merit success and I shall be particularly happy to hear you have met with it. The interest with which he speaks of you upon all occasions is an additional motive to those sentiments of perfect consideration with which I have the honor etc.<sup>5</sup>

### **\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Morris Town, June 5, 1780.

Sir: My time has been so entirely engrossed in the preliminary arrangements of immediate necessity towards the intended cooperation, that I have not been able till now, to do myself the honor to thank your Excellency for your letter

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3. Louis René Madeline Lavassor, Vicomte de La Touche-Tréville. He was a captain in the French Navy, and at this time commanding the French frigate *Hermione* at Boston.

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4. At this point the draft has the following crossed out: "in which I shall be very happy to hear of your success."

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5. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

of the 21st. of May. We have too many proofs of the generous zeal of your Countrymen in the cause of America, not to be convinced of it; and to feel *all* that the most grateful sensibility can inspire.

I am happy in believing, that the Troops and citizens of these states will eagerly embrace every opportunity to manifest their affection to the Troops and citizens of your Nation, as well as their gratitude and veneration to a Prince from whom they have received the most important benefits. Penetrated with a sense of these, I shall think it my duty to cultivate correspondent sentiments as far as my influence extends.

The Marquis has given me an acct. of all your Excellency had done for the advancement of the combined operation's. It will no doubt contribute essentially to their success, and gives you a claim to the acknowledgements of the two Countries.

I am too sensible of the value of the permission you give me to solicit your aid in every thing, in which you can continue to afford us your good offices, not to make use of it as frequently as possible. I begin by entreating you to favour me with your advice with the greatest freedom on whatever occurs to you, interesting to our affairs at this period. I have the honor etc.<sup>41</sup>

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41. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

### **\*MEMORANDUM FOR CONCERTING A PLAN OF OPERATIONS<sup>58</sup>**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, July 15, 1780.

The Marquis de la Fayette will be pleased to communicate the following Genl. ideas to Monsr. the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalr de Terney as the Sentimts. of the underwritten.

1st. In any operation, and under all circumstances a decisive Naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend.

2d. The advantages of possessing the Port of New York by the Squadron of France have been already enumerated to Monsr. the Count de Rochambeau, and the Chevr. de Terney, and is so obvious, as not to need recapitulation; delay in the execution of this enterprize may defeat all our projects, and render the Campaign inactive, and inglorious.

3d. To render our operations nervous and rapid, it is essential for us to be Masters of the Navigation of the No. River and of the Sound. Without this our Land transportation will be great; our expences enormous, and our progress slow, if not precarious, for want of Forage, &ca. &ca.

4th. With these Ideas, and upon this grd., it is conceived that many advantages will result from the French Squadrons

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58. Indorsed by Tench Tilghman as above, with the addition: "given to the Marquis de la Fayette."

taking possession of the inner [ sic ] of the harbor between Staten Island and the City of New York; and detachg. a frigate or two above the Cheveaux de Frieze [in the North River opposite Fort Washington] for the purpose of opening the Navigation of the River; shortening the Transportation by Land on the upper and lower communication, and bringing the enemy to an explanation respecting Staten Island. Shipping so near the Town would, at the same time they coverd the frigates in the N. Rivr. keep the Garrison in Check, and be more likely to facilitate other movements of the army than if they were to remain at the hook or below the Narrows.

5th. Our operations against the Enemy in the City of New York may commence from two points, to wit: Morrissania (or the heights near Kings-bridge), or Staten Island; both have their advantages and disadvantages; but under a full view of all circumstances the preponderancy is in favor of Morrissania; especially since the generous aid of his most Christian Majesty has come by the way of Rhode Island instead of Cape Henry, as it was expected they wd. do and touch at Sandy hook in consequence of advices lodged there.

6th. As the means for carrying on our operations are not yet sufficiently appreciated, nor is the time by which our aids will arrive sufficiently ascertained; it is impossible to be precise as to the time the American Troops can, with safety, Rendezvous at Morrissania; but as it is necessary to fix some Epoch to it,

and it is hoped that it may happen by the 5th. of August, I would propose this day for the reembarkation of the French efficient force at New London (if they should have come there) and that they proceed up the Sound to Whirstown<sup>59</sup> on Long Island, or to such other place on that Island, or on the Main, as circumstances may require, and the Count shall be advised of. for the operations against the enemy depending very much upon their holding all or dismantling some of their present Posts, and upon contingencies within ourselves, it is not possible, at this time, to mark out a precise plan, or determine whether our approaches to the City of New York shall be by the way of York Island, Brooklyn, or both. numbers must determine the latter and circumstances of the moment the former.

7th. It must be clearly understood and agreed between the parties that if any capitol operation is undertaken the French fleet and Land Forces will at all events continue their aid untill the success of the enterprize or until it is mutually determined to abandon it.

8th. In all matters of arrangement, accommodation &ca. not repugnant to the foregoing ideas the Marquiss (in behalf of the United States) will consult the convenience and wishes of the Count and Chevalier and will be pleased to assure them of the disposition I possess to make evy. thing as agreebl. to them as possible and of my desire to manifest on all occasions the high sense I entertain of their merits and of the

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59. Near Flushing, Long Island.

generous aid they have brought us.

### **To LOUIS DOMINIQUE ETHIS DE CORNY**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, July 15, 1780.

Sir: I had yesterday morning the honor of receiving your favors of the 6th: and 11th. instants. Give me leave sincerely to congratulate you on the important intelligence communicated in the latter. I am anxiously waiting the arrival of a second express to inform me of the health and condition of the Army and Navy, both of which I flatter myself are good, from the shortness of the passage.

I am exceedingly chagrined at the account you give me of the trouble you have met with in the establishment of Hospitals. The conduct of the persons you mention was highly reprehensible<sup>61</sup> and

justly merits the censure of every friend of the Alliance: But I am convinced you will not draw general conclusions from the behaviour of a few ungenerous and interested individuals.

I have written to General Heath and have directed him to take effectual measures to have the Roads and Ferries from providence to Newport put into repair.

I am happy to find that the arrangements made by Doctr. Craick meet your approbation. He will I am confident think himself amply repaid by your favourable sentiments of him

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61. "The difficulties encountered in this affair, arise principally from Mr [ ] Manning a Minister of this place; who endeavoured to inflame the people, to persuade them that the Town would be infected with a Contagious disorder, in Consequence of the Establishment; I was beyond measure astonished that the two Browns, the Brothers of Colo John Brown, publickly opposed it, they so far forgot themselves as to declare loudly, that they hoped the People would blow up the Hospital, and they threatened the Carpenters who were at work at The College with the loss of the Esteem and Custom of the townsmen and Actions of Damages at Law, if they continued to work; nor could the Workmen (who had left their Business) be prevailed upon to begin again, untill Bonds of Indemnification were given them...this Strange Conduct is totally opposite to those Sentiments that Unite the two Nations, and too full of Sedition and disrespect to be tolerated at the Instant His Majesty is sending assistance to his Allies; and will not I trust be pass'd over with impunity."— *Corny to Washington*, July 6, 1780. Corny's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

and by the honorable manner in which you promise to mention him to His Excellency The Count de Rochambeau. I have the honour, etc.<sup>62</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

[Head Qrs., New Jersey, July 16, 1780.]

Sir: I hasten to impart to you the happiness I feel at the welcome news of your arrival; and as well in the name of the American army as my own name to present you with an assurance of our warmest sentiments for allies who have so generously come to our aid. As a citizen of the United States and as soldier in the cause of liberty, I thankfully acknowledge this new mark of friendship from His Most Christian Majesty, and I feel a most grateful sensibility for the flattering confidence he has been pleased to honor me with on this occasion.

Among the obligations we are under to your Prince, I esteem it one of the first that he has made choice, for the command of his troops, of a Gentleman whose high reputation and happy union of social qualities and military abilities promise me

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62. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

every public advantage and private satisfaction.

I beg Sir, you will be the interpreter of my sentiments to The Gentlemen under your command. Be pleased to assure them, that to the pleasure I anticipate of an acquaintance with them, I join the warmest desire to do every thing that may be agreeable to them and to the soldiery under their command. But in the midst of a war, the nature and difficulties of which are peculiar and uncommon, I cannot flatter myself in any way to atone for the sacrifices they have made; but by giving them such opportunities in the field of glory as will enable them to display that gallantry and those talents which we shall always be happy to acknowledge with applause.

The Marquis De La Fayette has been by me desired from time to time to communicate such intelligence and make such propositions as circumstances dictated. I think it so important, immediately to fix our plan of operations, and with as much secrecy as possible, that I have requested him to go himself to New London, where he will probably meet you. As a General officer I have the greatest confidence in him; as a friend he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments and opinions; he knows all the circumstances of our army and the country at large; all the information he gives and all the propositions he makes, I entreat you will consider as coming from me. I request you will settle all arrangements whatsoever with him; and I shall only add, that I shall exactly conform to the intentions of His Most Christian

[Majesty] as explained in the several papers put into my hand by his order and signed by his Ministers.<sup>77</sup>

Permit me to refer you to the Marquis De la Fayette, for more particular assurances of what I feel on this occasion, which I the more readily do from a knowledge of his peculiar affection and regard for you.

Impatiently waiting for the time when our operations will afford me the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, I have the honor etc.<sup>78</sup>

## To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY

Head Quarters in New Jersey, July 16, 1780.

Sir: It is with peculiar satisfaction I receive the news of your arrival on our coast; I hasten to assure you of the gratitude we feel for this new and distinguished mark of the friendship of his most Christian Majesty and of the hopes we entertain that the important succour he sends will be productive of the happiest consequences to the freedom and independence of these states.

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77. Probably the instructions to Rochambeau, dated Mar. 1, 1780, and the secret instructions of March 2, from the Prince de Montbarey, copies of which are in the *Washington Papers*. They were inclosed in Rochambeau's letter to Washington, June 12, 1780.

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78. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

Such repeated proofs of the interest your prince takes in the success of our cause, and the zeal with which your countrymen execute his intentions, must for ever cement the union between the two countries, by the double ties of affection and interest.

Permit me in my own name, in the name of the army and of America at large, to present you with the assurances of our warmest attachment to allies who have so generously come to our aid.

Let me entreat you also to impart my sentiments to the Gentlemen under your command, and to testify to them the pleasure we shall take in doing whatever will contribute to their satisfaction and to the satisfaction of their men.

As I have the fullest confidence his most Christian Majesty will give you effectual support in the course of our operations, I anticipate the glory you will acquire in successes of the most decisive utility to the common cause; and your reputation assures me you will improve every opportunity your circumstances afford.

The Marquis De la Fayette as a general officer in whom I confide and as a friend from whom I conceal nothing, will be able to give you every information you may wish for the regulation of your conduct and is charged by me to settle with you all arrangements whatsoever relative to the intended cooperation. I entreat you to receive whatever he shall tell you as coming from me.

Looking forward with impatience to the moment which will give me the honor of your personal acquaintance,

I have that of subscribing myself with the most perfect regard etc.<sup>79</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 19, 1780.

Sir: On the first account of your arrival I did myself the honor to write you the letter annexed; but in momentary expectation of hearing from you, I thought it best to delay the departure of the Marquis 'till the arrival of your dispatches. These Monsr de Rochefontaine delivered me yesterday afternoon. The assurances you give me of the ulterior intentions of His Most Christian Majesty add to our obligations and to our hopes: On our part we shall make every effort in our power.

The contrarieties you experienced which have retarded your arrival were unfortunate; but they depended on events not at your command, and I hope will have no ill influence in the issue of our measures. My opinion perfectly corresponds with the motives which determined you in the first instance to Rhode Island; and upon which you have calculated your present disposition.

I shall be happy to hear that the health of such

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79. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

of your Troops as were indisposed by the voyage, is speedily restored, and that you receive every refreshment and supply from the country which can contribute to the comfort and convenience of the whole.

I cannot sufficiently express to you my sensibility for the marks of confidence and for the assurances of your sentiments contained in your letter, and I shall be happy in seizing every opportunity to convince you how intirely reciprocal they are. I have the honor etc.<sup>74</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 21, 1780.

Sir: I had the honor to receive yesterday a duplicate of your letter of the

Since the intelligence transmitted by the Marquis De la Fayette, I have received advices through different channels from New York that the enemy are preparing an embarkation of troops; that fifty transports have moved up the North River for this purpose, and the object of it is said to be your fleet and army. Though this may be nothing more than a demonstration, as it may possibly be serious I hasten to give you the earliest

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74. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

communication of it.<sup>90</sup> With every sentiment of esteem etc.<sup>91</sup>

**To MAJOR GENERAL BENOIT JOSEPH TARLE<sup>32</sup>**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, July 26, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored by the receipt of your favr. of the 15th. I should be happy that the little assistance which I was able to give Monsieur De Corny might have contributed in any degree to the completion of the arrangements committed to his care.

Your assurances of making all your future dispositions accord as far as possible with those of the American Army, merit my acknowledgments, and will be undoubtedly attended with very salutary consequences. You may depend that I shall with pleasure do every thing in my power to assist your operations to contribute to the accommodation of the troops of his most Christian Majesty and to testify with how much consideration I have the honor etc.<sup>33</sup>

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90. "Arrived from England 7 Ships of the Line 2 Fifty and 1 Forty Four. One from Charlestown and One from Hallifax. Both Seventy Fours bend What has Joined them from New York. The above was wrote m New York about fryday ye 21st Inst. S. H. Parsons." Parsons's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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91. The draft is m the writing of Alexander Hamilton, who had written practically the same letter at 4 o'clock p.m. to the Marquis de Lafayette. Hamilton's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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32. Intendant, French Army in America.

33. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, July 27, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to inclose Your Excellency a letter which has just come to hand from the Count De Rochambeau of the 22d. instant. It is certainly of great importance that the precaution he mentions should be taken without loss of time. I should think the Delaware the best place for the reception of the 2d division, though there ought to be cruisers off both capes. It is necessary a plan should be previously fixed for the junction of the fleets after the debarkation. I shall immediately write the Count for this purpose.

We have repeated accounts from New-York that General Clinton is making a large detachment for a combined attack upon the French fleet and army. This will be a hazardous attempt, and therefore, though I do not regard it as impossible, I do not give it entire faith. The Count De Rochambeau has been some time since apprized of these demonstrations, and seems to have been preparing for what might happen. I have the honor etc.<sup>55</sup>

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55. In the writing of James McHenry. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 27, 1780.

Sir: I was yesterday honored with your letter of the 22d. instant, which I immediately transmitted to His Excellency The Chevalier De la Luzerne. I am happy to learn the safe arrival of the missing transport at Boston. The precaution you recommend for giving notice to the 2d. division is very necessary and important. It is probable the Delaware will be thought the best reception for the troops; but I have taken the liberty to recommend that cruisers may be off both bays. It appears to me essential that a plan should be preconcerted for the junction of the two fleets. If the troops are debarked in Delaware they can easily march to the point we wish and the transports will be in safety there. The squadron may afterwards proceed where it shall be judged eligible. Will it not be

adviseable that The Chevalier De Ternay should meet it as soon as possible with his directions for this purpose?

The advices from New York, of a combined attack upon your fleet and army continue. If it be really intended it is extraordinary that there should have been so much delay. The attempt will be a hazardous one; and therefore, though I do not think the appearances ought to be disregarded, as the object is great, yet I do not give intire credit to them. The plan reported is

to embark the troops in the sound, and proceed that way to Rhode Island; while Admiral Greaves blocks up the Chevalier De Ternay. I have put the Army under marching orders and shall make such movements as may tend to disconcert the enemy while at the same time, they conduce to our ultimate object. With all the sentiments etc.<sup>57</sup>

#### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 27, 1780, 10 O'Clock, P.M.

Sir: I had the honor of addressing Your Excellency this morning. I have just received advice from New York confirming our accounts hitherto of an embarkation to proceed up the Sound to Rhode Island. It is said to consist of the principal part of the enemys army commanded by General Clinton in person and was to have sailed this morning from White Stone a few Miles on the East side of Hell-gate. Thirty Six pieces of heavy cannon of different calibers with two mortars provided with shells and carcasses, are also said to have been embarked.

The army is already under marching orders and will without delay be put in motion towards New York to endeavour to take advantage of General Clintons absence or at

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57. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

least to embarrass and precipitate his movements. I have the honor etc.<sup>58</sup>

#### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Highlands, State of New York, July 31, 1780.

Sir: Your letter of the 25th. Instant reached me yesterday. Sir Henry Clinton has sailed as mentioned in my last with the principal part of his force to attack you; estimated at about eight thousand men; it cannot be more, nor do I suppose he would hazard the enterprise with a much less number. I am glad the inactivity of the enemy has given you time to prepare; and relying on your abilities, and the excellence of your troops, I hope you will send them back with disgrace.<sup>77</sup>

Had I any prospect of arriving in time I would march to your support; but as I think there is no probability of this, the only way I can be useful to you is to menace New York, and even to attack it, if the force remaining there does not exceed what I have reason to believe. I am pressing my movements for this purpose with all the rapidity in our power. I have the honor etc.<sup>78</sup>

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58. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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77. Heath's letters to Washington (July 21 and July 26) generally describe the measures taken to withstand the expected British attack.

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78. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

## **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Peek's Kill, August 4, 1780.

Sir: Colo. Gemat arrived here last night, by whom I had the honor to receive Your Excellency's request, that I would send instructions for the second Division coming from France, with respect to the measures which it should pursue for forming a junction with the first. I beg leave to inform Your Excellency that I wrote to the Count de Rochambeau, agreeable to my Letter to You of the 27th. Ultio and requested, that he in concert with the Chevalier de Ternay would communicate to me, that it might be transmitted to Your Excellency, the line of conduct which they should judge proper to be pursued by this Division. As the Marine are concerned and the junction in present circumstances is a matter of peculiar delicacy, I did not think myself qualified to decide on the point. I have not received their Answer yet, and therefore I cannot pretend to determine what should be done. I will however take the liberty to observe, that if the Ships of War with this Division are superior or even fully equal to those of the Enemy, off Rhode Island, I should suppose it would be eligible for them, to proceed there at once, if they are met by the Cruizers Your Excellency has sent out on the Southern Coast; if

this is not the case, it ought to make the Delaware as soon as possible. In this event the Troops might be forwarded to

Trentown in the first instance, and the Ships might remain till ulterior measures with respect to them, should be determined. These however I would not offer but as mere suggestions, and much, it would seem, must depend on circumstances and the discretion of the Officer commanding the Division.

Perhaps if the Ships of war should proceed directly to Rhode Island, it will be best for them to disembarass themselves of their transports and send them into the Delaware as in the other case. I take it for granted signals of recognisance have been pre-concerted between the two Divisions.

On the 31st. Ulto the Enemy's fleet in the sound returned from Huntington harbour to New York. From every information the Count de Rochambeau and his Army were certainly their object, and they had embarked in considerable force with a view of attacking them. I cannot determine with precision, the reasons which induced the Enemy to relinguish their plan, but it is not improbable that the movements of our army and the ulterior measures I was about to prosecute, operated in some measure to produce it. I have the honor etc.<sup>32</sup>

## **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Peeks Kill, August 5, 1780.

Sir. The Count De Rochambeau being too much

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32. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mem. et Docs., E. U.,* ,vol. 6.

engaged to write to your Excellency, when the last express came away has requested me to give you an account of his present dispositions, which you will find in the inclosed copy of his letter of the 30th. of July. In the letter I did myself the honor of writing to you yesterday, I omitted sending you a detail of the enemy's naval force with Arbuthnot; because I took it for granted you were in possession of full information upon this article. But as it possibly may not be the case, I send you a list, which I believe you may rely on as accurate. With every sentiment etc.

P.S. The Marquis De la Fayette writes me that the Chevalier De Ternay intends immediately to write to the Count De Guichere by way of Philadelphia, and suggests the propriety of having two or three fast sailing vessels ready to convey the dispatches.<sup>40</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, Peek's Kill, August 5, 1780.

Sir: I was yesterday honored with your letter of the 30th. of July. I applaud all the measures you have taken, which appear to me precisely such as the occasion required; and I am very

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40. In the writing of Caleb Gibbs. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang. Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

happy to hear that the neighbouring States manifested so much ardor in doing what their interest their duty and their gratitude demanded from them. It is my wish you should detain the levies as long as you think they can be useful to you.

The Marquis De la Fayette will have informed you by my desire, that Clinton returned with his fleet the 31st of July. He has since landed his troops on Long Island, and I think will hardly resume the project which he certainly entertained of attacking you. In consequence of his return, the army is recrossing the River and will proceed to Dobbe's ferry about ten miles from Kings bridge, where we intend to establish a communication, that will save us a considerable land transportation, in case New York is our eventual object. The reasons for preferring the West side of the River to the other which at first sight will appear most natural is to meet our supplies of flour and save the forage on this side; both of which in our circumstances are objects of importance. By the inclosed copy of a letter to The Chevalier De La Luzerne you will see the opinion I have ventured to give respecting the second division, concerning which I impatiently wait to receive your sentiments and those of the Chevalier De Ternay, with a plan for a junction of the fleets as suggested in my letter of the .<sup>41</sup>

No other changes have taken place in the situation of the enemy at New York. I am &c.

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41. Washington's letter of July 27, 1780, is meant.

P.S. The Minister agreeable to the application to him has sent out fast sailing Cruisers from all the parts of the coast where it is probable they may fall in with the second division.<sup>42</sup>

### To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY

Head Quarters, Peek's Kill, August 5, 1780.

Sir: I received yesterday the honor of Your Letter of the 31st. of last Month and feel myself exceedingly obliged by the very polite manner in which You have been pleased to express Yourself. I assure You, Sir, I am persuaded that you have done and will do all in your power to answer the intentions of the King in sending you here, and to promote the common cause. It is only to be wished that you may be soon so reinforced as to be in circumstances to act according to your desires.

In consequence of a Letter which the Count de Rochambeau did me the honor to write on the 22d of July, which he requested might be forwarded to His Excellency the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and which was on the subject of the second division coming from France and of the measures to be pursued in order to announce to it that the Enemy's fleet were off Rhode Island, I took the liberty to mention to the Minister, that I thought the Delaware the best place for

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42. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

the reception of the 2d division, and also that a plan would be necessary to be previously fixed for the junction of the Fleets after the debarkation of the Troops; and that I should write to the Count for that purpose. This I accordingly did and requested him to concert a plan with You that it might be transmitted to Mr Luzerne. I have no doubt my Letter on this subject has been communicated to You by the Count, and I hope I shall be honoured, in the course of a day or Two with a communication of the plan which you shall judge proper to adopt. I am the more desirous of receiving it, as the Minister has lately requested me by a verbal message by Colo Gimat, who returned from Philadelphia the night before last, to send him instructions with respect to the measures which the Division should pursue for forming a junction with the first. I inclose You a Copy of the Letter I wrote to His Excellency Yesterday in Answer to his request, and by which You will perceive that I do not think myself qualified to decide the point, as it concerns the Marine and must combine the consideration of many circumstances which You and the Count alone can be acquainted with. I have the honor etc.

P.S. Agreeable to the application made for the purpose, I find, by the message communicated by Colo Gimat, that the Minister has sent out several Vessels to fall in with the Second Division,

if it arrives off Delaware or the Capes of Virginia.<sup>43</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Peek's Kill, August 6, 1780.

Sir: I had this morning the honor to receive Your Excellency's Letter of the 30th of July, with the One addressed to the Chevalier de Ternay, which I have sealed and forwarded by an Express.

With respect to the Continental Frigates, I beg leave to inform Your Excellency, that I did not apprehend from the Resolution of Congress concerning them, that they were to be under my orders or to receive any instructions from me, till they had joined the Chevalier de Ternay, after assembling in the Delaware. This being the case I cannot give any directions about them at present, and would take the liberty to recommend to Your Excellency to apply to Congress or to the Board of Admiralty, to the Latter of whom I have written, to give their Orders to the Captains of the Frigates on the conduct they are to pursue. The employment for them or at least for One, which Your Excellency has suggested, appears to me to be proper and that it would answer the double purposes You have mentioned. I have by my Letter of to day to the Chevalier de Ternay, requested him to advise me in what manner he thinks the Frigates may be most usefully employed to assist his Fleet;

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43. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

and that there might be no further delay when matters with respect to them are ultimately fixed, I requested him also to communicate to the Captains of the Frigates at Boston as well as to Myself, the Signals of recognisance. When I receive his answer, I will embrace the earliest occasion to transmit the Signals. I have the Honor etc.<sup>53</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY**

Head Quarters, August 6, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit you a letter which I have just received for you from The Chevalier De la Luzerne.

Congress have directed a junction of the Continental frigates with your fleet, and for this purpose have put them under my orders. They were to rendezvous in the Delaware; from whence they were to proceed to join you. As this at present seems impracticable, I should be glad of your advice in what mode they may be usefully employed to your fleet; and that you will send me signals of recognisance for them. I request you will also impart these to the captains of the frigates in Boston Harbour, if they have not yet left that place. I have the honor etc.<sup>54</sup>

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53. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

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54. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

#### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters near Orange Town, August 8, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 5th. The return of the Enemy has been confirmed by my letters previous to this. Had they gone forward your Excellency's arrangements promised every thing favorable.

I flatter myself the account you have transmitted respecting the second division will prove authentic. I think with your Excy. that under present circumstances the information should be withheld from the enemy. With the utmost esteem etc.<sup>61</sup>

#### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Orange Town, August 11, 1780.

Sir: I have the Honor to transmit Your Excellency a Letter from the Chevalier Ternay, which came under cover to me last night, with One addressed to myself. I also inclose an Extract of the Letter

from the Admiral to myself<sup>83</sup> and of one of the same date, from the Count de Rochambeau.<sup>84</sup> Your Excellency

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61. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

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83. Ternay's letter to Washington (August 8) is not now found in the *Washington Papers*, but a translation in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison therein does not bear any indication as to the extract inclosed in Washington's letter above.

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84. The extract from Rochambeau's letter to Washington of August 8, which was inclosed, read: "With regard to our Second Division, I refer you to the Letter that the Admiral is to send you including the ways and means by which its junction with this here fleet is to brought about." This extract is in the *Washington Papers*.

will perceive by these, tho I presume the Admiral has written to You fully on the subject, the measures they have concerted, with respect to the second Division, in case it arrives at the Southward.

The Letter inclosed from Lt Colo Harrison will inform Your Excellency by what accident the one addressed to you by the Admiral was opened. I have the honor etc.<sup>85</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, Orange Town, August 16, 1780.

Sir: I have successively received your two letters of the 8th. and 10th:

Other pressing occupations prevent my entering at this moment into the particulars of the last. I shall content myself with observing that I am happy to find our ideas are substantially the same, and I hope a further explanation will obviate whatever little difference there may be.<sup>26</sup>

I have received advices that the enemy are again preparing an embarkation; the number of troops said to be two thousand; pontons and waggons have been put on

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85. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

26. At this point the following is crossed off in the draft: "I shall endeavour to procure myself the happiness of the interview you propose as soon as circumstances will permit, and if possible, without waiting for either of the events you mention. Such an interview if practicable cannot but be useful."

board. It is reported that this Corps is to be convoyed by the foy-frigate and two Gallies. If so it is for some coasting expedition. With perfect attachment etc.<sup>27</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY**

Head Quarters, Orange Town, August 16, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored with your favors of the 8th: and 10th: of this month. The reasons which you assign for preferring the Harbour of Boston to that of the Delaware for the rendezvous of the 2d. division are certainly well founded, and I hope, from the steps which have been taken to give them notice of the position of Admiral Arbuthnot's Fleet, that they will reach one or the other of those ports in safety.

I immediately communicated to the Board of Admiralty at Philada: your opinion of the most advantageous manner of employing the American Frigates and Saratoga Sloop untill circumstances shall admit of our commencing serious operations against the enemy; and I have advised them, should it not interfere with any arrangements which may have been previously made, to adopt the measures recommended by you. I have the honor etc.<sup>28</sup>

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27. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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28. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Orange Town, August 17, 1780.

Sir: When I had the honor of writing to You Yesterday, from the hurry I was in, I omitted to mention, that Major General Heath would remain with You agreeable to your request, till I should think it

necessary for him to join the Army. I write to him upon the subject to day. I have also given the Minister my opinion in favor of the utility of your proposal for engaging Hessian Deserters.

Your Excellencys Letter of the 12th came to hand last night. I had heard before of the prize Mr. Greaves had taken and from her value, not without concern. From your intelligence that the Ships you fought with, were from Jamaica, it would seem that the Count De Guichen<sup>35</sup> would find no marine force to give him the least opposition when he arrived. Possibly it might have been better, if these had remained there, as it would have taken from Mr. Rodney's strength while they would have been too inconsiderable to have made any great resistance. But from the pleasing superiority which the Count has in Ships, and the skill and bravery of himself, and of his Officers and Men, I am led to expect the most favourable and happy issue to the Expedition, tho Mr. Rodney should arrive with his combined force, before it was

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35. Louis Urbain du Bouexic, Comte de Guichen. He was lieutenant general and commander in chief of the French Navy in the West Indies.

completed. From some Letters received from the Eastward, it appears the British fleet bound to Quebec, has been very severely handled indeed. I shall be happy if that expected at New York from Cork with Provision, shares the same or a worse fate. I have received further Accounts that an embarkation, as I mentioned yesterday, is going on. I have the Honor etc.<sup>36</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Orange Town, August 21, 1780.

Sir: In the letter which I did myself the honor of writing to you the 16th I had only time to acknowledge the receipt of your's of the 10th.; since which I have had the pleasure of successively receiving your two others of the 14th and 17th.

In the idea of an operation against New York it has always been a fundamental principle with me, that there ought to be a naval superiority to give such a prospect of success as would justify the undertaking. Relying however upon a moral certainty of this event shortly happening, if you had found yourself in a good condition to desire a commencement of operations previous to the arrival of the second division I should have concurred in it. The reflections you make on the difficulty of effecting a

36. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

debarkation on Long Island without a naval superiority are natural and judicious from the view you must have of it; but from a knowledge in part of the local situation and from particular inquiries of others, I think the debarkation would be practicable. From the shape of the ground on both sides and the narrowness of the Sound in several parts there are different points of debarkation; and the enemy could not with propriety uncover New York so much (especially if we had once thrown ourselves upon that Island) as to have a sufficient force on Long Island to give effectual opposition at each point. The attempt in question supposes a sufficient number of Boats collected to throw over at once a force superior to the part of the enemy's force opposed to you, which might I believe have been done. Their vessels might have been compelled to keep stations too remote to interrupt your descent by land batteries erected at different places on the main and on the intermediate Islands.

But notwithstanding the practicability of such an operation, I entirely agree in opinion with you for several reasons that it will be best to defer the commencement of the enterprise till we get a superiority at sea. One of the most powerful is, that you could not leave the fleet in security without a considerable part of the land force to cooperate with it, and in this case our collective force would be smaller than were requisite to act with vigor and confidence.

As to the particular mode of operating against

New York we may at this time combine different possibilities; but we cannot fix a definitive plan. There are three ways in which we may accomplish our purpose; by acting in the first instance with our whole force on York Island; by beginning our operations against Brookline with the principal part of our force leaving a corps of observation for the security of our communication &c. well entrenched on York Island or on the main; by dividing our force into two parts to act against the works. on both Islands at once. Which of these plans will be preferable must depend on the time we begin to act and the force we have to act with. If these circumstances correspond with our wishes, I should prefer the last of the three plans. In this case we ought, if possible, as a preliminary to establish ourselves on the Island of New York, and then detach to Long Island a force equal to the whole which the enemy may be able to bring to act there.

In taking post on Long Island a force equal to the whole of the enemy may be prudent to guard against possibilities; but after we have taken post and the usual precautions, two thirds of their whole force will in my opinion be sufficient both for security and for the reduction of the works there. Notwithstanding the facility with which the enemy can pass from one Island to the other, they will never hazard to withdraw more than two thirds of their force from York Island to attack the corps

on Long Island, while there was an army of more than their whole force in front ready to fall upon the remainder. This would

be to expose their essential point where all their magazines are to too imminent hazard. Nor even with their whole force would they have great hopes of success against two thirds of the number in intrenchments.

These Sir are my sentiments which I am happy to find in the main correspond with yours. A naval superiority we both consider as the basis of offensive operations; we both propose the same distribution of force, if circumstances will permit, with only this difference that I think a small number will suffice for Long Island.

I ardently desire that the interview you mention could take place. I am sensible it would infinitely facilitate our arrangements and it would gratify the extreme desire I feel of assuring you and the Admiral personally of my esteem. But to my great mortification and regret there are difficulties in the way not easily surmounted.

We are about ten miles from the enemy. Our popular government imposes a necessity of great circumspection. If any misfortune should happen in my absence, it would be attended with every inconvenience. I will however endeavour if possible and as soon as possible, to meet you at some convenient rendezvous. I entreat you to inform me in your next to what distance the Admiral and yourself would think it prudent to absent yourselves from the fleet and army.

In one of my last I informed you that Sir

Henry was preparing an embarkation, of which it appears you had also received advice. I have received several pieces of similar intelligence, and that there has been lately a very hot press for seamen. I cannot however suppose he has resumed his intention to attack you, as it would imply too much inconsistency. 'Tis suspected by some that he is making a detachment to the West Indies; if he means any thing serious this seems to me as probable as any other supposition; but I doubt his having any thing serious in view.

I am much obliged to you Sir for the frankness with which you have given me your opinions and for the favourable sentiments you entertain of me. Your conduct since your arrival has confirmed the prepossessions your reputation had given me of your abilities; and I promise myself from them, from your counsel and from your exertions, the most important advantages to the common cause. Let me entreat you will oblige me with the former upon all occasions and be assured of the perfect esteem and attachment with which I have the honor etc.<sup>68</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters in the vicinity of Fort Lee, August 26, 1780.

Sir: I have received the honor of Your Excellency's

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68. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

In the *Washington Papers*, filed at the end of August, 1780, is an 8-page manuscript, in the writing of Hamilton, which is apparently his ideas on a military cooperation with the French in an attack upon New York. It is indorsed by Washington: "Colonel Hamilton on the proposed Conference at Hartford with the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevr. De Ternay."

Letters of the 20 and 21 Inst, the last of which came to hand yesterday Evening, and am much obliged for the matters of intelligence they contain, although some of them do not entirely correspond with our wishes.

I am concerned for the situation of Capn Landais,<sup>1</sup> as he has been esteemed an Officer of merit, and as his indisposition has deprived us of recent and more than probable important advices. His not bringing more Arms &c. is rather unlucky, but their coming in the Ariel, should she arrive safe, which I flatter myself will be the case, will prevent any material inconvenience from the omission.

The British fleet, I should hope would not be able to keep the second division blocked up after the arrival of the combined one, which had sailed from Cadiz, and if the Enemy have not avoided an engagement, which I think is rather to be suspected, I hope our next advices will announce, that they have been most soundly beaten in a general combat.

The intelligence respecting the Irish Militia's driving the English out of the Forts, is pleasing and interesting and must be embarrassing to the British Ministry. It must be the more so from the internal ferments and insurrections which have taken place within England, and which are confirmed through a variety of Channels. But I am afraid these tumults will not do more than embarrass and will not result in any thing decisively favourable to the common cause. It appears the

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1. Capt. Pierre Landais, of the U.S. Navy. He had commanded the *Pallas* during Capt, John Paul Jones's encounter with the *Serapis*. Encouraged and supported by Arthur Lee, with John Adams declining to interfere, Landais instigated a mutiny and seized command of the *Alliance*, and with

Lee as a passenger sailed from L'Orient for the United States, leaving much-needed supplies for the Army on the dock. He became insane before the *Alliance* reached America.

Ministry were about taking vigorous measures to punish the rioters.

From the information brought by the Vessel arrived at Boston from St. Domingo, it appears that the Count De Guichen was on the point of sailing from thence on the 2d. Inst and would in a few days complete all his arrangements and proceed to Jamaica. I hope these will all have been finished, and that we shall soon have the pleasure to hear of the intire reduction of this very important Island.

Your conjectures about an expedition to Martha's Vinyard &c. are by no means improbable, as the Enemy have been there before and collected large supplies of fresh provision. I fear even if the Inhabitants are apprised of it, that it will not prevent them from effecting their purposes.

I am much obliged by the honor you did me in announcing your intention to celebrate the anniversary of St. Louis; and I am persuaded the neighbouring states will be sensible of your politeness in the precaution you took to prevent any alarm, as well as feel a lively participation in a compliment paid to a prince, towards whom they have so many motives of gratitude and veneration. The enemy will probably not admire the spectacle, as I dare say they will have no reason to felicitate themselves on the state of your batteries.

I have been much concerned on account of a Report which has just reached me, though not officially, that an Express has been intercepted on the other side of the North River and carried

into New York, who had come from thence, lest it should have been the one charged with a Letter I had the honor of writing you on the 21st. of this Month. I hope it has not been the case, but from the apprehension I am under on the occasion I have thought it proper to inclose You a Copy.<sup>2</sup> The place where the Express is said to have been intercepted is a considerable distance from the Enemy's out post at Kings bridge; but in future a still more inland route will be used. I have the Honor etc.

P.S. I have just heard from New York that several Transports, which have been wooding and watering are returning to England. It is added that they carry some Invalids. Possibly this may serve as a solution of the Reports we have had about an embarkation.<sup>3</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Liberty Pole in Bergen County, September 3, 1780.

Sir: I have been successively honored with your letters of the 25th. 28th and 31st of the past month.

A few days ago I moved the army to this place to cover a forage which we thought it adviseable to make in the lower parts of this county; which by its proximity to

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2. The report was false. Rochambeau acknowledged Washington's letter of August 21 on August 26.

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3. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison and Alexander Hamilton.

New York has afforded the enemy considerable supplies. Having effected our purpose we shall to morrow take a new position on the other side of the Hackensack about two miles from this and about five Miles from the North River, where we shall remain 'till there is a solution of the present demonstrations of the enemy; as soon as possible after which, I shall do myself the honor to meet you at one of the places you mention.

The accounts from New York of preparations for some capital movement increase. A large number of transports have fallen down first to the narrows, and since were falling down to Sandy Hook. A body of troops crossed over from Long Island to Staten island; yesterday our pickets on the North River opposite the Island of New York saw a large train of waggons moving from the upper part of the Island towards the city, which were supposed to be baggage waggons. The weather was too hazy to discover if there were any troops in march. There is no doubt a fleet of empty victuallers and transports on the point of taking their departure for Europe; but the number of transports at the narrows and Hook said to exceed an hundred is too large to be well explained into that fleet.

I have pretty good information that Sir Henry endeavoured lately to engage a person to go to Rhode Island in character of a Spy, who was to be met by a frigate in some part of the Sound, after having collected all the knowledge he could of your situation, and that of the fleet. The person declined the

errand; but the circumstance leads to a suspicion that Clintons movements look your way. I cannot however easily persuad myself that this is the case. Nor am I yet satisfied, notwithstanding the appearances are so strong, that he can be making a detachment to the West Indies. In all probability the fate of Jamaica would be decided one way or the other before it could arrive. If the object should be to save the other Islands a month hence would answer the purpose, as the season will not 'till the latter end of October admit of operations in the Windward Islands, and New York would be less exposed in the mean time. Indeed I cannot easily believe that the enemy will venture at this

period to make any considerable division of their force at New York. Yet I confess their affairs have somewhat this aspect.

In consequence of the advices brought by the alliance, I have dismissed the principal part of the Militia which were called out for three months. From the position of the fleets in Europe there is reason to apprehend the second division would arrive too late to enable us to avail ourselves of their services, which with respect to a great part of them would expire in October. If fortunate events should bring the second division here sooner than I now expect, and in time for an operation against New York, we must assemble all the militia in the neighbouring country, 'till those more remote can come to our aid. Another inducement for dismissing the Militia is to œconomise our supplies.

The visit you have had from the indians gives me great pleasure. I felicitate you on that which you must have had in the company of such agreeable and respectable guests. I dare say the reception they met with will have a good effect. It has been the policy of the English to discredit the accounts of an alliance between France and America; a conviction of which on the substantial evidence of your army and fleet, and not less of your presents and good cheer, will not fail to have an happy influence.<sup>90</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>91</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, Newbridge, Bergen County, September 8, 1780.

Sir: The great preparations of General Clinton have hitherto resulted in nothing more than the sailing of a fleet of about Ninety vessels of different sizes for Europe with a few invalids. We are however still amused with rumours of an embarkation; but these now go upon a new and more probable ground, a decent upon Virginia. We have just received the most disagreeable advices from General Gates, of a defeat of the Army under his command near Cambden in South Carolina the 16th. of last month; in which the greatest part of his best troops were cut off. We have not yet the details. This event must have the worst

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90. Rochambeau's letter to Washington of Aug. 31, 1780 (in the *Washington Papers*), stated: "Before yesterday, I received a Deputation composed of 19 Indians of Different nations who have been Led here by Mr. Deane, and who have been sent me by Mr. Schuyler from Albany. ... I showed them Yesterday the French Troops mixed with the American, I put some regiments a manœuvring before them, with field pieces and firing. ... I have given them my answer, of which I send Your Excellency a copy. ... They will go today on board the fleet." Rochambeau's letter to the Indians was dated August

30, and was in manuscript, in both French and English, on the prepared printed forms which the Comte had brought over from France to facilitate military business in America. It is headed with a woodcut of the arms of France. A copy is in the *Washington Papers*.

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91. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

effect upon the affairs of the Southern states; nor is it easy to say how far its influence may extend. It is on this account, I should not be astonished if the enemy should really make a detachment of three or four thousand men to Virginia.

If convenient to you, I have the honor to propose the 20th. instant for our interview at Hartford, where I hope we shall be able to combine some plan of future operation which events will enable us to execute. Our plans however can only turn upon possibilities, which is the more unfortunate as the affairs of this Country absolutely require activity on whatever side they are viewed.

I intend to conceal here the time of the intended interview. I dare say you will think it advisable to do the same on your part.

I had the pleasure of receiving last night your letter of the 3d. instant. With the truest esteem etc.

P.S. I have also rec'd your letter of the 26th. and [ sic ] happy to find my dispatches have all got safe. The Marquis de la Fayette and the Commandant of Artillery<sup>25</sup> and Engineers<sup>26</sup> will accompany me.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Brig. Gen Henry Knox.

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26. Lieut. Col. Jean Baptiste Gouvion.

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27. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton; the P. S. is in that of Richard Kidder Meade.

## **To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY**

Head Quarters, New Bridge, Bergen County, September 8, 1780.

Sir: I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me the 21st. of last month. Whenever circumstances may require the attendance of the two officers, they will be instructed to repair to your orders.<sup>28</sup>

I have the honor to propose the 20th. instant for our intended interview. I shall be at Hartford on that day, if the time is agreeable to you; where I shall at least have the pleasure to assure you personally of my esteem and attachment. I am etc.<sup>29</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, September 11, 1780.

Sir: I have received your Excellency's favor of the 6th: I have no intelligence of Admiral Arbuthnots arrival at New York or at Sandy Hook; Perhaps he may be standing at a greater distance from the land than heretofore, to avoid the Gales of Wind which may be commonly expected upon the Coast at this Season.

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28. Ternay had requested that two American officers be assigned him and subject to his orders.

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29. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

I received the following from New York yesterday, whether the Men of War alluded to were the English Fleet or a French Squadron time must determine "September 7th: 1780. since writing yesterday the ship Admiral Arbuthnot arrived and the Capt. of Marines tells me they were chased all last Sunday by a fleet of eight sail of heavy ships all two and three deckers which they took to be the second division of the French. As soon as this news came to town, a ship was sent out to cruise, and the Galatea will sail to day if they can get her ready, they have two hundred hands at work upon her."

I have accounts thro' a variety of channels that an embarkation of troops is preparing at New York; their number and destination is not ascertained, the accounts differ materially as to the first, but they seem generally to agree that they are bound for Virginia or Carolina.

Your Excellency may be assured of being regularly informed of every move of the enemy, and that no pains shall be spared to penetrate their designs. I have the honor etc.<sup>45</sup>

**To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, September 12, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to inclose you a letter which

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45. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

upon the whole I have thought it advisable to write to the Count De Guichen. As its contents are of a nature to make its falling into the Enemy's hands in its present form dangerous, and as I have no cypher of communication with the Count I take the liberty to request Your Excellency's assistance in making use of yours and forwarding it by triplicates with your dispatches by the first opportunities.

I make no mention of a Land force because though it would be useful it may be dispensed with. But if a body of Troops could conveniently accompany the Fleet, it would give greater energy and certainty of success to our operations. I am the more induced to desire it, as the composition of a considerable part of our army is temporary and I am not informed what measures may be taken to replace the men whose times of service will expire.

I need use no arguments to convince Your Excellency of the extremity to which our affairs are tending and the necessity of support. You are an Eye-witness to all our perplexities and all our wants. You know the dangerous consequences of leaving the Enemy in quiet possession of their Southern conquests, either for negotiation this Winter or a continuance of the War; you know our inability alone to expel them; or perhaps even to stop their career. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

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56. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aft. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

**To COMTE DE GUICHEN<sup>57</sup>**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, September 12, 1780.

Sir: The Marquis De la Fayette arrived in America in april last charged by the Court of France, to announce to me its intention to send a fleet and army to cooperate with the troops of these States. Foreseeing that this succour would not have the intended effect from an insufficiency of the naval

force, which would probably be found inferior to the enemy, I requested the Marquis to represent to you the situation of affairs on this Continent, the necessity of an active campaign, the great utility of a detachment from your fleet to reinforce the one expected from Europe, and give efficacy in the generous intentions of your Court. I was persuaded, that if it were compatible with your instructions, and the plans in contemplation in the Islands, you would cheerfully afford your assistance in a cooperation so necessary to this country, so beneficial of the common interest.

It appears since to have been the intention of your court to send a larger succour than was at first mentioned; and that a second division was to have followed that which has arrived at Rhode Island. The late advices however from Europe show that the execution of this project will at least be suspended by the appearance of the British fleet off the Port of Brest; and there is little hope that the second division can arrive in

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57. Luc Urbain du Bouexic, Comte de Guichen, Lieutenant General and Commander in Chief of the French Navy in the West Indies.

time to undertake any operations against the enemy in this part of the Continent.

The Chevalier De Ternay has informed you of his being blocked in the port of Rhode Island, by a superior British fleet; and the French troops are of course under a necessity of remaining there for the security of the fleet against a combined attack by sea, and land; nor indeed could they be more useful to us in any other position, a naval superiority being essential to every enterprise in these States.

In consequence of the expected aid, great exertions have been made on our part for offensive operations; an additional expence (immense to this country in its present exhausted state) has been incurred; great expectations have been excited among the people, and if events do not permit us to derive correspondent advantages, the disappointment will no doubt be attended with effects very injurious to our affairs.

The situation of America at this time is critical; the Government without finances; its paper credit sunk, and no expedients it can adopt capable of retrieving it; the resources of the country much diminished, by a five Years war, in which it has made efforts beyond its ability. Clinton with an army of ten thousand regular troops, aided by a considerable body of militia, whom, from motives of fear and attachment he has engaged to take arms, in possession of one of our capital towns, and a large part of the State to which it belongs; the savages desolating the other frontier; a fleet superior to that

of our allies, not only to protect him against any attempts of ours, but to facilitate those he may project against us. Lord Cornwallis with seven or eight thousand men in complete possession of two States, Georgia and South Carolina; a third, North Carolina, by recent misfortunes at his mercy, his force daily increasing by an accession of adherents, whom his successes naturally procures him in a country inhabited in great part, by emigrants from England and Scotland, who have not been long enough transplanted to exchange their ancient habits and attachments, in favor of their new residence.

By a letter lately received from General Gates, we learn that on the 16th. of last month, attempting to penetrate and regain the State of South Carolina, he met with a total defeat near Cambden, in which many of his troops have been cut off, and the remainder dispersed, with the loss of all their cannon and baggage.

The enemy are said to be now making a detachment from New York for a Southern destination; if they push their successes in that quarter, there is no saying where their career may end. The opposition will be feeble, unless we can give succour from hence, which from a variety of causes must depend on a naval superiority.

In addition to the representation made to you by the Marquis De la Fayette, the Chevalier De Ternay has done me the honor to impart to me, that he has also

applied to you for a reinforcement to put him in condition to act.

Though I have entire confidence, that the steps already taken will determine you to give us all the assistance which your situation, and the plans you have formed will permit; Yet as the Honorable The Congress have lately thought proper to vest me with full power to concert with the Officers of their most Christian and Catholic Majesties, any enterprises which appear to me advantageous to the common cause, it becomes my duty to address you immediately myself, and to expose to you the dangers and difficulties we experience in the present posture of our affairs; that you may judge how essential your assistance would be to us at this juncture.

I write to you with that confidence and candor which ought to subsist between allies, and between military men. In my eye the interest of France and America are the same; and to conceal our embarrassments would be to betray both. While I assure you that the latter stands in need of the most vigorous assistance of its friends, I entreat you to believe, that I am as remote from exaggerating as from palliating; and that I do not heighten the picture from a partiality to our own

interest. The Chevalier De la Luzerne, whom I shall beg to transmit you this Letter in cyphers, will I doubt not add his testimony to mine.

To propose, at this time, a plan of precise

cooperation would be fruitless. I shall only observe in general, that any succour you could send in consequence of this letter, must arrive too late for an enterprize against New York; but an unequivocal naval superiority would I hope enable us to act decisively in the Southern extremity.

The 20th. instant is appointed for an interview with the Count De Rochambeau and the Chevalier De Ternay, in which we shall probably combine several plans dependent for the execution on different contingencies, one of which will be the arrival of a detachment from your fleet.

Convinced as I am, that the independence of America is the primary object of the war with your Court, it is unnecessary to offer any other motives to engage your exertions in our favor. I might otherwise remark, that the destruction of the enemy here would greatly facilitate the reduction of their Islands. Supplies in much greater abundance, and on much better terms might then be drawn from hence to forward your operations there; and these States disencumbered of an internal war might unite her inhabitants and resources in vigorous efforts against the common enemy elsewhere for the benefit of the common cause.

I am happy in this opportunity of congratulating you on the advantages you have reaped in your different combats; as glorious to the flag of France, as humiliating to that of Britain. My happiness would be complete if the

coasts of this Continent should add to your laurels.

With the sentiments of the most perfect respect, etc.<sup>58</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Bridge, September 13, 1780.

Sir: The idea of an embarkation gains strength by the concurring testimony of emissaries and deserters and seems to be on the point of taking place. On such an event it might be of importance that we should both be with our respective armies, which induces me to request our meeting may be deferred 'till the 20th. instant. I hope this letter will arrive in time to anticipate your setting out;

and that no inconvenience will attend the delay. As I will not detain the express to write to the Admiral, I beg the favour of you to impart the contents of my letter to him. I have the honor etc.

P.S. I am obliged to your Excellency for your letter of the 9th. and the intelligence it contains; similar advices are just come from Philadelphia.<sup>62</sup>

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58. In the writing of David Humphreys. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aft. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

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62. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Bridge, September 13, 1780.

Sir: I have just received advices from pretty good authority, of which the inclosed is a copy. From the complexion and agreement of these accounts, it seems very probable that the Count De Guichen is really approaching the coast. Should this be the case it is of so much importance to lose no time in concerting our plans, that I renew my proposal for meeting you and the Admiral the 20th. instant and shall be at Hartford accordingly. The inconveniences which may attend our absence on the supposition mentioned in my letter of this morning are not a counterballance for the advantages of the interview on the present supposition.

Should the Count De Guichen arrive before the end of this month, I still recommend New York to be our object; and in this view I cannot forbear repeating to you how essential it is that the fleet should instantly proceed to take possession of the port, and that your troops should as soon as possible form a junction with ours by way of the Sound. The former is in my opinion the most critical point of the operation and the advanced period of the season increases the necessity for dispatch in the execution. I mention this lest the arrival of the Count De Guichen should antecede our interview.

I have directed Captains Dobbs and Shaw to hold themselves in readiness to repair to the fleet on the first notice. A letter from the Admiral or from you to Capt Dobbs at Fish Kill, will be immediately obeyed. I have the honor etc.<sup>64</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, near West Point, September 27, 1780.

Sir: On my arrival here a very disagreeable scene unfolded itself. By a lucky accident, a conspiracy of the most dangerous nature, the object of which was to sacrifice this post, has been detected. General Arnold, who has sullied his former glory by the blackest treason, has escaped to the enemy. This is an event that occasions me equal regret and mortification; but traitors are the growth of every country and in a revolution of the present nature, it is more to be wondered at, that the catalogue is so small than that there have been found a few.

The situation of the army at this time will make General Heath's presence with us useful. I have written to him for this purpose. I hope his removal will be attended with no inconvenience to your Excellency. With the greatest regard etc.<sup>66</sup>

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64. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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66. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton, who first dated it September 26 and afterwards September 27. Sparks prints the letter under date of September 26.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Prackness, October 10, 1780.

Sir: I have duly received your Excellency's favours of the 25th. and 30th. and am much obliged to you for the different informations you do me the honor to communicate. We have to regret that this campaign has not been productive of such important advantages as we had reason to flatter ourselves; but we must hope for better successes the next. The operation of the Spaniards in the floridas will be an useful diversion to the Southern states, if it can be vigorously prosecuted; but I confess, while the enemy have a naval superiority in America, I am not sanguine about any enterprise, which is connected with maritime dispositions.

I intirely approve of the detention of Greene's regiment, and I entreat you to keep it as long as you think its services can be interesting.

Your Excellency will have heard of the execution of the British Adjutant General. The circumstances he was taken in justified it and policy required a sacrifice; but as he was more unfortunate than criminal in the affair, and as there was much in his character to interest, while we yielded to the

necessity of rigor, we could not but lament it. I have detached two divisions of the army to West Point and removed the

remainder to this post, at a greater distance from the enemy. With every sentiment etc.<sup>36</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Preckaness, October 12, 1780.

Sir: Your Excellency's letter of the 5th. did not arrive 'till late last evening. I agree in opinion with you on the utility of asking to have your present park doubled; but I think this will suffice. Though we are not well provided with seige artillery, we shall be able to supply the deficiency.

We are again told of an embarkation at New York on the point of sailing; the number is not ascertained; but the embarkation does not appear to be general. So soon as I obtain particulars and with certainty, I shall do myself the honor to transmit them to you.

I had the pleasure of writing to you the 10th.; by the same opportunity went some important dispatches from the Marquis de la Fayette for France. With greatest regard, I am &c.

P.S. I have just received the inclosed curious Performance

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36. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

the completion of Arnolds Disgrace,<sup>59</sup> which I send for Your Amusement.<sup>60</sup>

### **To FRANCISCO RENDON**

Head Quarters, Preckaness, October 13, 1780.

Sir: I had the honor of receiving in due time your letter of the 29th. of July, transmitting me one from the Governor of Havannah and another from the lady of our deceased friend; but the movements of the army which soon after ensued prevented my acknowledging the receipt. I have now the pleasure of your dispatch of the 30th. of September with duplicates of the above mentioned letters. I beg you when you write to the Governor next, to express to him my sensibility for the favour of his letter, and to forward the inclosed by the first opportunity.

I am much obliged to you for the interesting intelligence you communicate; I wish the success of the expeditions<sup>70</sup> you mention from the double motives of the warm interest I take in every thing that contributes to the honor and advantage of the arms of His Most Catholic Majesty, and from the beneficial influence which the intended operation may have on the affairs of the Southern states.

If it may be in my power at any time to promote the objects of your commission the motive I have already

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59. The inclosure was, presumably, a copy of Arnold's letter of Oct. 1, 1780, to Washington, resigning his commission in the American Army.

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60. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton; the P.S. is in that of Richard Varick.

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70. Presumably the intended expeditions from Havana against St. Augustine and Pensacola.

expressed and my esteem for you personally will make me happy to do it. We have recently received advices of a considerable embarkation at New York, which was to have sailed three days since. We have not the particulars; but they shall be forwarded to you the moment they come to me. It may be useful to the officers charged with the expeditions you announce to be acquainted with this event. I have the honor etc.<sup>71</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, Preckaness, October 14, 1780.

Sir: I had the honor of writing to you the 12th. Instant, approving the demand you intended to make to your court for an augmentation of your siege of artillery to double the present quantity. I have since received your letter of the 8th.

The season is so far advanced that I think you cannot too soon make the dispositions you propose for winter quarters, which are as agreeable to me as they are judicious. I beg you at all times to use your discretion in the necessary arrangements for the Army under your command, in which I have too intire confidence in your judgment not to be convinced, you will do that which will most effectually promote the common service.

From the reputation of the Duke De Lauzun,<sup>77</sup>

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71. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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77. Armand Louis de Gontaut Biron, Due de Lauzun. He was brigadier general and commander in chief of the French cavalry in America.

I am persuaded he will do every thing in his power to give satisfaction to the inhabitants of Providence, and I flatter myself he will find the greatest cordiality in them.

We have nothing more definitive from New York, than was mentioned in my last; I momentarily expect further accounts. With the truest attachment I am &c.<sup>78</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Prakness, October 18, 1780.

Sir: On the 16th. the fleet containing the embarkation, mentioned in my last, sailed. It consisted, according to the general tenor of my advices, of the grenadiers and light infantry, two levy corps detachments from several regiments and a small one of horse amounting in the whole to about three thousand. The destination most commonly supposed is a Southern one, which appears to me the more probable, as Cornwallis by the last advices had advanced to Charlotte in North Carolina, Rhode Island however is spoken of.

My advices mention the arrival of a fleet from England; a part of it transports with troops, two British regiments, some german and scotch recruits, in the whole about

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78. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

2600 men. The Cork fleet not yet arrived. I have the honor etc.<sup>31</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Precaness, October 24, 1780.

Sir: I have been successively honored with your letters of the 13th. 16th. and 19th. of October. I think the change you have made respecting Lauzun's cavalry will be an advantageous one.<sup>96</sup>

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Since my last, we have accounts both by way of Statia<sup>97</sup> and New York, that the combined fleet consisting of thirty sail of the line off Cape Finisterre, fell in with an outward bound fleet and took fifty odd sail of them, among which were five East India men; the rest were for the West Indies. This is an important article and has all the marks of authenticity.

I have just received another account from New York that a part of the Cork fleet has been taken; but this though probable enough wants confirmation. I have the honor etc.

P.S. The fleet in New York harbour is said to consist of the Sandwich of 90 and three of 74. Two seventy fours went with the fleet to the Southward.<sup>98</sup>

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31. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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96. Rochambeau ordered Lauzun's cavalry to winter in Connecticut, owing to the scarcity of forage in Rhode Island. Lebanon was the place selected.

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97. St. Eustatius, West Indies.

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98. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

## **To FRANCISCO RENDON**

Head Quarters, Prackness, November 1, 1780.

Sir: I yesterday had the honor of receiving your letter of the 20th. of October. The sixteenth the embarkation mentioned in my former letter sailed from New York, consisting from my best accounts, of about three thousand men, composed of the grenadiers and light infantry and chiefly besides of detachments. As I mentioned to you in my last I believe they are destined to Virginia, or rather North Carolina to cooperate with Cornwallis. They may however have a destination further Southward.

I beg you to accept my acknowledgements for obligingly executing the requests contained in my last. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

## **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, November 4, 1780.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your several letters of the 23rd. 27th. and 29th. I am happy to hear that the frigate and our friend<sup>85</sup> have taken their departure under

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56. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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85. Donatien Marie Joseph de Vimeur, Vicomte de Rochambeau, son of the comte, went to France to report the result of the Hartford conference and urge the sending of the second division of the French troops and fleet. He was colonel en second, Regiment Bourbonnais; colonel commandant of the Regiment Saintonge in November, 1782; commandant of the Regiment Royal Auvergne in July, 1783.

such favourable auspices. I join with you in the warmest wishes for their safety and expedition.

By recent advices, there appears to be a large fleet of transports &c. preparing at New York to sail, and it is added another embarkation of troops is getting ready. It is also said, Rodney is preparing to sail to the West Indies with the greater part of his fleet, and is to detach two ships the Terrible and Sandwich, to convoy a homeward bound European fleet so soon as the Cork fleet arrives.

The New York paper mentions the bringing in a prize that gives an account of the arrival of the last detachment in Chesapeak-bay. I have the honor etc.<sup>86</sup>

**\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, November 5, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to return your Excellency the plan of the lines at Charles-town, which you were so obliging as to favor me with a copy of.

I hope you arrived in good health and without accident at Philadelphia. With great consideration and personal attachment I have the honr. etc.<sup>13</sup>

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86. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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13. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

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**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, November 12, 1780.

Sir: I have not been honored with any of your Excellency's favors since mine of the 4th. Inst. Neither have I received any intelligence from New York contradicting what communicated in that letter, on the contrary, the accounts seem confirmed.

I have lately made an exchange of a considerable number of prisoners with Sir Henry Clinton; part of the British are at Rutland in Massachusetts Bay; and as it is stipulated that they shall be allowed to embark at Providence or Newport on board a Flag Vessel that will be sent from New York for that purpose, I have thought it proper to give your Excellency this previous notice. I have the honor etc.<sup>86</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, November 14, 1780.

Sir: I have recd. information from New York that Admiral Rodney's Fleet, with the Transports which have

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86. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

been some time preparing, fell down to the Hook on Saturday last. The number of troops which they have on board is uncertain. If the Admiral, with his ships of War, means to form a junction with Arbuthnot, you will soon perceive it, by the augmentation of the Fleet which keeps off Newport; if, on the contrary, he is bound to the West Indies, as some say, he will, probably convoy the transports to their place of destination, and then proceed to the Islands. The ships of the Line at New York were the Sandwich, 90 Guns; Terrible, 74; Alcide; Adamant; Triumph, 74; Intrepide, 64. But whether they will all proceed to sea, I cannot tell. The press was extremely hot in New York previous to the sailing of the Fleet. I have the honor etc.<sup>93</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, November 16, 1780.

Sir: Your Excellency's favor of the 10th: reached me yesterday. It gives me great pleasure to hear that your troops have

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93. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

entered their quarters in a manner agreeable to themselves and to the inhabitants. I shall be extremely happy in seeing the Chevalier de Chattelus,<sup>11</sup> Count de Custine,<sup>12</sup> Marquis de Laval,<sup>13</sup> and Count de deux ponts<sup>14</sup> at my Quarters I will endeavour to render the time, which they spend with the Army, agreeable to them, and when they incline to visit Philadelphia, they may be assured of that permission, which you so politely make to depend upon me.

I have heard nothing lately from the Chesapeak Bay. An intelligent person, who is employed to keep a look out upon the Heights of Monmouth, informs me, that on Friday and Saturday the 10th. and 11th: instants a Fleet consisting of between 52 and 58 sail of which six were Men of War from 40 to 60 Guns came from the southward and anchored within the Hook. My informant is of opinion, that it is the Fleet returned from Virginia which sailed the 16th: ulto. from the Hook. But I rather think it is the long expected Cork Fleet, and my intelligence from New York announces the arrival of that Fleet on Sunday last. I shall however ascertain the matter very shortly, and I will communicate the result to your Excellency.

I had heard a report of the discovery of a plot concerted by one Ross of Virginia, but I believe it was without foundation. I have the honor etc.<sup>15</sup>

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11. François Jean, Chevalier (later Marquis) de Chastellux. He was marechal de camp and major general, French Army in America.

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12. Adam Philippe, Comte de Custine-Sarreck. He was colonel of the regiment Saintonge, and brigadier general in the French Army in America.

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13. Anne Alexandre Marie Sulpice Joseph Duc de Montmorency de Laval. He was colonel of the Regiment Bourbonnais, French Army in America.

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14. Gullaume, Comte de Deux Ponts. He was colonel en second of the Regiment Royal Deux Pants, French Army in America.

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15. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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## To FRANCISCO RENDON

Head Quarters, Passaic Falls, November 18, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored with your favr. of the 10th: Inst. which only came to my hands the last Evening. Admiral Rodney with five or six ships of the Line sailed from the Hook the 15th: inst. whether bound to the Eastward to form a junction with Admiral Arbuthnot, to the West Indies, or to the Southward, is not ascertained. He took under his Convoy a number of transport ships, but whether they had any troops on board I am not yet informed. It is conjectured they had, and that they are intended as a further reinforcement to the southern Army. I have thought proper to communicate the above intelligence to you, as a knowledge of the enemy's movements from this quarter may be beneficial to His Most Catholic Majesty's Commanders in the West Indies and upon the Continent.

I am anxious to hear the result of the Expeditions which you were pleased to inform me were in agitation, as I feel myself much interested in whatever concerns the advantage or honor of your Court. I have the honor etc.<sup>28</sup>

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28. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, November 27, 1780.

Sir: I am much obliged to your Excellency for the interesting particulars you do me the honour to communicate in your letters of the 18th. and 20th. We may now hope every thing for the safety of your valuable envoy and the important dispatches with which he is charged.<sup>16</sup>

Since the Confirmation of Ferguson's defeat and the retreat of Cornwallis to Camden, we have nothing new from the South, except an intercepted letter of Leslie's to Cornwallis, informing of the time he had been at Portsmouth [(in Virginia)] and that he waited his orders.

The affairs of the enemy to the South seem at present to decline. They will probably continue to do so unless Clinton sends a reinforcement from New York. This I fear he will shortly do, as near one

half of our Army will leave us in a little time. From the temper now prevailing in the states, I hope we shall not experience this inconvenience again.

I have kept the army thus long in the field to shorten the transportation of the supplies from Pennsylvania and avoid consuming those in New York on which we must materially depend through the Winter, and at the same time in some measure restrain General Clinton from making detachments.

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16. Vicomte de Rochambeau arrived at Bilboa, Spain, on Sept. 12, 1780.

The advanced season obliges us to retire and to morrow we march for winter quarters. The principal part of the army will be at West Point and its dependencies. A corps will be cantoned in the Jerseys at Morris Town Pompton &c. for the protection of the country and communication. My own Quarters will be at New Windsor. If circumstances should permit you to honor me with your company there, in the course of the Winter it will make me particularly happy.

As the two Rhode Island Regiments are to be incorporated into one by a new arrangement of the army, I would wish to unite them at West Point for the purpose of the incorporation. If their services should be of no use to you, I shall be obliged to you to give your orders to Colonel Greene to march to West Point.

As it is improbable any operations can now take place which will often require sudden communications between the two armies, I have ordered the dragoons hitherto stationed to form the chain of expresses, to be withdrawn. The post will serve for common occasions and special expresses may be employed on any emergencies.

I have been very happy for these three days past in the company of The Chevalier De Chatlies<sup>17</sup> and family. The Viscount De Noailles, the Count D'Amat<sup>18</sup> and our old acquaintance Du Plessis. I find in these Gentlemen every thing that can command my esteem. I am etc.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Chevalier de Chastellux.

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18. Comte Damas.

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19. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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**To LOUIS DOMINIQUE ETHIS DE CORNY**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 22, 1780.

Sir: I had, a few days ago, the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 4th. Inst. I am sorry that your indisposition obliges you to seek the benefit of your native Air, which I hope will soon re establish your health.

I very sensibly feel your warm expressions of esteem, which let me assure you is mutual on my part. I [avail myself of the permission you have given to trouble you with a letter to Doctr. Franklin and wishing] you a safe and pleasant passage, and a happy sight of your family and friends in France. I am etc.<sup>3</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 10, 1780.

Sir: I have received your Excellency's favors of the 14th 16th. 24th. 27th. November and 1st. of this month. In apology for suffering so many of your letters to remain so long unanswered, I must assure you, that I have been constantly

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3. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

employed, since I broke up my Camp near Passaic Falls, in visiting the winter Cantonments of the Army between Morris town and this place.

I have experienced the highest satisfaction in the visits which the Chevalier Chattelus, Viscount Noialles, Count de damas, Count de Custine and Marquis de laval have done me the honor to make me. I have only to regret that their stay with me was so short. I unfortunately missed seeing the Count de deux ponts, who had left my quarters, on his way to Philada., before I arrived at them. I, however, flatter myself, that I shall have the pleasure of seeing him on his return.

I very much approve of your intention of quartering the second division<sup>85</sup> in Connecticut rather than in Massachusetts. The troops will certainly be more convenient to the probable scene of operations.

I shall withdraw the Chain of our Dragoons and shall in future send my dispatches to the Duke Lauzun at Lebanon as your Excellency desires.

I wish it were in my power to furnish your Excellency with the New York papers; but as our communication with that place is very irregular, I only obtain them accidentally. I now inclose you one, which contains nothing material, but the account of the late dreadful Hurricane in the West Indies.

I take the opportunity of sending this by Colo. Fleury<sup>86</sup> who returns to your Army. I was made very happy

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85. The expected second division of the French.

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86. Fleury transferred back into the French Army as major of the Regiment Saintonge.

in again seeing that amiable and valuable Officer, whose services I have experienced upon so many occasions. I have the honor etc.<sup>87</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 13, 1780.

Sir: I have to inform your Excellency that I have received an account from New York that another embarkation was preparing at that place. The detachment which appears to be about 2500 Men was to be commanded by Generals Knyphausen and Phillips; the destination was not publicly known, but generally supposed to be to the southward. This information does not come to me through a Channel on which I perfectly depend; should I receive it through one in which I have more confidence I shall not fail to communicate my intelligence to your Excellency. I have the honor etc.<sup>7</sup>

### **\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Hd. Qrs. New Windsor, December 14, 1780.

Sir: Yesterday brought me the honor of your

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87. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

7. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

Excellency's favor without date; but which I suppose to have been written on the 5th. Instt, as it accompanied a letter from the Marqs. de la Fayette of that date.

Receive my good Sir, the expression of gratitude which is due to your Excellency, for the important intelligence you have communicated relative to the designs of the Court of Spain upon the Florida's. I have transmitted the acct. of these interesting events to the Count de Rochambeau and Chevr. de Ternay, with propositions which if acceded to, I shall do myself the honor of communicating to your Excellency.

It would have been fortunate for the Army, if your Excellency's feelings for its want of Cloathing could have been relieved by the agreeable tydings of the arrival of that article, but alas! we are so accustomed to want, that we dare not flatter ourselves with relief.

Your Excellency's dispatches for Rhode Island, accompanying your letter to me, came to hand at the Instant the Post was setting out, and was committed to his care. It is the only means of conveyance now left me, since the chain of Expresses which was formed by the Dragoon Horses (and worn down) have been discontinued. The Quarter Master General has it not in his power, for want of money, to furnish an Express upon the most urgent occasion.

I anticipate with much pleasure the visit I shall receive from the Chevr. de Chatteleaux, and the other Gentleman of the French army, on their return to Rhode Island, and beg the favor of your Excellency to present my Compliments to them and Monsr. Marbois. With great respect etc.<sup>14</sup>

### **To FRANCISCO RENDON**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 14, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that I have just received intelligence from New York, that another embarkation was preparing at that place; the Corps of which it is said to consist, will amount to about 2500 Men; It is also reported, this Detachment is to be under the Orders of the Generals Knyphausen and Phillips; and supposed to be destined to the Southward. Altho this information is not through such a channel, as to demand entire credit, I thought it expedient for you to be apprised

of it; when the matter is more fully ascertained I shall not fail to give you such farther particulars as may be necessary to subserve the interest of his Most Catholic Majesty. I have the honor etc.

P.S. I was duly honoured with yors of the 28th. Novr.<sup>13</sup>

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14. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs, E. U.*, vol. 6.

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13. The draft is in tile writing of David Humphreys.

Rendon's letter of Nov. 28, 1780, in the *Washington Papers*, informed of a projected Spanish expedition against Pensacola.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU AND CHEVALIER DE TERNAY**

New Windsor, December [15], 1780.

Gentlemen: [Two] days ago I did myself the honor to inform his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau that Sir Henry Clinton was making another embarkation; this is since confirmed by other accounts, but I have recd none yet which fix the particular Corps or numbers with certainty, tho' all agree, that this detachment is intended as a reinforcement to Lord Cornwallis; that it is to consist of about 2500 and that it is the intention of the enemy to push their operations to the Southward, this Winter, in the most vigorous manner. Official information is likewise lately received that this is the resolution of the British Cabinet and that for this purpose a powerful reinforcement is to be sent to America with all possible dispatch.

When it is considered how essential it is to the Independence of the United States and how important to the interest of their Allies that the common enemy should be obliged to relinquish their conquests in South Carolina and Georgia, Your Excellencies will, I am confident, agree in opinion with me that no means ought to be left unessayed to endeavour to dislodge them, in the course of this Winter and next Spring.

It is needless for me to enter into a detail of the

situation of our Affairs to the southward, your Excellencies must know that from the great loss of Men, Artillery and Stores in Charles town and from the defeat of our Army near Campden, we can only hope to reassemble such a force, and that chiefly of raw troops, as will prevent the Enemy from extending their conquests over North Carolina. To attempt the reduction of Charles town, supposing

we had men sufficient for the purpose, is a thing impracticable while the transportation of Artillery and all kinds of Stores proper for a Seige must be made from hence by land.

I am informed by the Marquis de la Fayette, who is still at Philadelphia, that a vessel had just arrived at that place from L'Orient, which port she left the middle of October, but as he makes no mention of the second division of land and sea Forces expected in America to reinforce the Army and Navy at present under your Excellencies respective Commands, I am led to believe that, that much desired event is more remote than, under present circumstances, is to be wished.

A piece of intelligence, which has been communicated to me in confidence by His Excellency the Minister plenipotentiary of France, has turned my attention towards a new object, and brought into my mind the outlines of a plan,<sup>19</sup> which, if it can be acceded to by the parties necessary to its execution, may be attended with the most solid and permanent advantages. The communication of His Excellency the Minister is, That the

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19. The proposed plan was not approved by Comte de Rochambeau. On the day Washington wrote the above letter, De Ternay died at Newport, R. I., and Chevalier Destouches, who succeeded him in the command of the French squadron, added a memorandum to Rochambeau's answer to Washington (in the *Washington Papers*, Dec. 22, 1780), giving his reasons against the plan.

Court of Spain have in contemplation two Expedition against the British settlements in the Floridas: Pensacola and St. Augustine. The first consisting of 4000 Men convoyed by eight ships of War had sailed from the Havanna the 16th. October; the force destined against the last was twelve ships of the line besides Frigates and Bomb Ketches and ten thousand Men. These were to leave the Havanna [some time in] the present Month.

The plan, with which I am impressed, and which I would submit to your Excellencies considerations is, the propriety of attempting to combine our Force with that of Spain, for the purpose of totally subduing the common enemy not only in the Floridas but in the States of South Carolina and Georgia.

It is not for me, at this moment, to enter upon a detail of the Business. My general Ideas are, that a proposition or request should be made to the General and Admiral of the Spanish Forces (and through them to the Governor of the Havanna, if they are not themselves at liberty to accede to the proposal,) to co-operate with us [conjunctively or by diversion] for the purposes I have mentioned. In case they do accede: Their ships of War are to be sent, as soon as they have made good the debarkation of their troops at St. Augustine or at any other given point to form a junction with the Squadron of his Most Christian Majesty at Rhode Island and take under their convoy the French

and American Troops, destined for the expedition against Charles town, the first of which will be embarked at New port the last at

Philada. I should make such drafts from this Army as would amount to two thousand Men *at least* . His Excellency the Count de Rochambeau would I should hope be able to detach double that number and leave a sufficiency, with the Militia who might be called in upon the occasion, to give security to your Works Hospitals and spare stores, should you choose to leave the two last behind you. These Corps and the troops which will be collected under the command of General Greene, in conjunction with the force which may be furnished by the Spaniards [in the manner aforementioned] will form an Army not to be resisted by any which the British can draw together in that Quarter and capable of effecting the utmost wishes of the allied powers.

It is unnecessary for me to remark that the Basis of my plan and propositions is, that the combined Fleets shall be decidedly superior to that of the enemy and that they shall co-operate to the completion of the enterprise or untill it shall be abandoned by general consent. To insure so essential a point as that of a naval superiority, the propriety of a further requisition to the Admiral commanding His most Christian Majesty's Fleet in the West Indies is submitted to your Excellencies judgments.

I persuade myself that your Excellencies will view these propositions with an eye to all their consequences and candidly approve or reject them as they appear to you practicable

or proper. In making them I am solely influenced by motives of general good, and would not wish them carried into execution, unless they shall be deemed as conducive to the interests of the powers, who have generously stepped in to our relief, as to those of the United States.

Should the plan happily meet your Excellencies approbations, I have to request that the Chevr. de Ternay would be good enough to dispatch a Frigate, if one can be spared, with the substance of these propositions to the Generals of his Most Catholic Majesty [Duplicate and triplicate of which I will endeavour to forward via Philadelphia]. If the communication is to be made, no time is to be lost in doing it and procuring an answer. I think I could, in a month from hearing of the proposition being agreed to on the part of Spain, be ready to embark at Philadelphia, if the State of the River Delaware will admit of it.

I cannot conclude this letter without mentioning an argument which in my opinion ought to induce the Spaniard to accept of those propositions. The force which the British will be able to draw together in South Carolina and Georgia, will be so superior to the American, that they may, without putting matters to the risque, leave small Garrisons in Savannah and Charlestown, and throw such

a reinforcement into St. Augustine, a very strong fortification as will in all probability defeat the enterprise. Whereas, if they find that measures are pursuing to divest them of those acquisitions, which I am convinced

they mean to make the Basis of a negotiation, I think it more than probable that they will abandon the Floridas to their fate, and exert themselves to the utmost to retain the only apparent compensation for their vast expenditure of Blood and treasure. Besides this, the Spaniard ought to reflect, that while Britain is in possession of Georgia and South Carolina, he must hold the Floridas either by a very precarious tenure or by a very expensive one.<sup>20</sup>

**\*To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

New Windsor, December 20, 1780.

Sir: I had the honor to receive your Excellency's favor of the 14th. by the Chevr. du Plessis. It is not in my power to determine whether it was the intent of Congress to extend the allowance of half pay for life to those Gentn. who hold Brevet Commissions in the American Army and at the same time retain their Ranks and are actually employed in that of their own Country. Should it however be the sense of Congress, that Foreign Officers who come under the above description, are entitled to half pay at the expiration of the War. I shall take a particular pleasure in securing

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20. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

that allowance to Colonels Fleury and du Plessis not only on account of their singular merit, but because your Excellency has been pleased to interest yourself in their behalf. I have the honor etc.<sup>53</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 23, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favors of the 8th: Inst. from Newport and 13th. from Boston. I am obliged by your communication of the letter from the Commanding Officer at St. Domingo, but cannot help being anxious for the safety of Monsr. Monteil's<sup>14</sup> Squadron.

The intelligence brought by the Vessel from Nantes to Boston is very interesting. I am in hopes that the Captain has good Grounds for what he has reported.<sup>15</sup> The change in the French Marine Department may, I believe, be depended upon, as it comes by a Vessel lately arrived at Philada. Should the 2d. division of your Excellency's Army arrive in the course of the Winter, I can think of no position which will better answer our general Views than the Towns in Connecticut which you have pitched upon for their quarters.

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53. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Errang., Mem. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

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14. François Aymar, Baron de Monteil, chef d'escadre, French Navy. He commanded the French squadron in cooperation with the Spaniards in the expedition against Pensacola, Fla., and was present at Yorktown in 1781.

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15. The report was that an armament was preparing to sail from Brest, consisting of the *Ville de Paris*, of 100 guns, three 80's, three 74's, one 64, three supply ships, and 30 transports, with troops.

The Baron Viomenil<sup>16</sup> has acquainted me with the sudden death of the Chevalier de Ternay; an event which I extremely regret. His loss, however, will be less felt, as the Baron informs me that his successor, the Chevalier Destouches, is an Officer of approved reputation.

If your Excellency's tour to Boston was solely with a view to improvement, perhaps it is to our advantage that you will have found few traces of Works hastily thrown up by very inexperienced soldiers, and which, were they standing, would only serve to betray our ignorance of Military matters at that time of day.

[A Detachment has embarked at New York but had not sailed when I last heard from that place. A change has happened in the Troops. The Grenadiers and light Infantry after having prepared for Embarkatn. were Countermanded and some other Corps and drafts to the amt. of, as is said, 2500 Men are on board in lieu of them.] I have the honor etc.<sup>17</sup>

## To BARON DE VIOMÉNIL

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 23, 1780.

Sir: I have been honored with your letter of the

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16. Antoine Charles du Houx, Baron de Vioménil. He was marechal camp and second in command to Comte de Rochambeau, of the French Army in America.

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17. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The portion in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

15th. announcing the sudden death of Chevr de Ternay. I extremely regret this event, as from the short acquaintance which I had an opportunity of making with that Gentleman I had conceived a high opinion of his Merit. I am pleased to hear that the command of his Most Christian Majesty's squadron devolves upon an Officer of whom you speak so favorably as you do of the Chevalier Destouches.

I feel very sensibly your expressions of esteem for me, and I beg leave to assure you that I shall take every opportunity of convincing you that I am, With great Respect etc.

I immediately forwarded your dispatches by Express to the Minister of France.<sup>18</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, December 23, 1780.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 15th. instant announcing the death of the Chevalier de Ternay, and informing me that you succeed to the command of his Most Christian Majesty's Squadron at New port.

I shall esteem myself happy in an opportunity of making a personal acquaintance with a Gentleman of your

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18. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

Merit; In the meantime I beg you will assure yourself that I am, etc.<sup>20</sup>

### **To FRANCISCO RENDON**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 2, 1781.

Sir: It was with great satisfaction I received the polite Letter, which you did me the honor to write on the 26th. Ulto. but at the same time I sincerely condole with you the misfortune which has happened to the Spanish Fleet that was destined against Pensacola; I hope however that the Transports may be reassembled without loss, and that the expedition may yet prove successful.

On the 22d. of Decr. the Fleet sailed from New York, which carried the Detachment I mentioned in my Letter of the 14th. Ulto. The Light Infantry and Grenadiers, with some other Corps which were at first under orders of embarkation, were afterwards countermanded, and consequently the number of Troops was not so great as had been reported, amounting to only 1600 Men by the best intelligence we have been able to obtain. This Detachment instead of being commanded by the Generals Knyphausen and Philips, it

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20. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

is said will be under the orders of Arnold, and supposed to be designed as a reinforcement to the Southern Army of the Enemy. I have the honor etc.<sup>77</sup>

#### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 3, 1781.

Sir: I have received your Excellency's favor of the 19th. of December. Since my last, which was on the 23rd. of Decemr. I have gained intelligence through a channel on which I can depend, that the detachment which sailed from New York the 20th. of last month consisted of about 1600 Men and was chiefly composed of drafts from the different British, German and provincial Regiments. The Queens Rangers was the only intire Corps, that I have heard of. Arnold commanded the detachment. There is little doubt but they have gone to the southward.

I have received a letter from Don Francisco Rendon the Spanish Resident at Philada. dated the 26th. Decemr. of which the following is an extract

Yesterday arrived in this River a Vessel front the Havannah by which I received letters from the Governor and Capt. General of that place in which he acquaints me with the disagreeable advice that the Men of War which sailed from that port against

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77. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

Pensacola had put back in bad condition by the Hurricane which happened the 18th. October. That of the transports 23 had arrived at Campechy with 1600 Men and that they did not as yet know what had become of the remainder of them, 41 in number. But that they were working with the greatest activity to continue that expedition, and altho' the other agt. Augustine is to take place, it is probable that the above accident may retard it.

I am anxious to know your Excellency's sentiments upon the plan proposed in my letter of the 15th: December addressed jointly to you and the Chevr. de Ternay. Should it be deemed expedient to attempt the execution of it, this delay of the expedition against the Floridas will give us the more time to make the necessary communications to the Governor of the Havanna and to the Commanders of the Spanish Armament.

Having just now discharged all the Levies who were only engaged to the last of December, I find myself obliged to call in all detachments of the Continental Army not absolutely necessary at remote posts. I have for that reason, and because Colo. Greenes Regt. is now incorporated with the other from the same State ordered him to join the main Army.

I wish your Excellency many and happy New Years and have the honor etc.<sup>87</sup>

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87. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 9, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favors of the 22d. and 25th of December and 1st: instant. The reasons assigned by Your Excellency for declining, at this time, the enterprize which I took the liberty to refer to your consideration, are weighty, But the representation made by the Chevalier des Touches of the impossibility of going to sea for want of Bread, renders the measure impracticable, had there been no other impediments.

The grounds on which your Excellency determined not to detach a single Regiment to New Haven are perfectly military. I would always wish to pursue a compact mode

of cantonment, but I am often obliged to give up my judgment and risque some Men to cover the Country and quiet the apprehensions of the people.

Your packet addressed to the Chevr. de la Luzerne was this day forwarded by a careful Gentleman to Philada.

I have received intelligence that the detachment under the command of Genl. Leslie which left Chesapeak Bay the latter end of November had again landed at Cape Fear in North Carolina. I have not learned whether Leslie seemed inclined to establish a post upon the Coast, or to march up into the Country. I have the honor etc.<sup>22</sup>

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22. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 20, 1781.

Sir: I should have done myself the honor of writing sooner to Your Excellency, on the late disturbance in the Pennsylvania line, had I not relied, that General Knox first, and afterwards Count Des deux ponts<sup>81</sup> would give you the most accurate account of this affair; and had I not been waiting to hear the event of it and collect the particulars, to enable me to give you a more perfect idea of it. The causes of complaint of this line, composed of foreigners, and having even some British deserters, must in great part be known to your Excellency. The absolute want of pay and cloathing; the great scarcity of provisions were too serious a trial for men, a great proportion of whom could not be deeply impressed with the feelings of citizens. Some cause of complaint as to their inlistments and perhaps the instigations of internal enemies added to their discontents and contributed to bring them to so disagreeable an issue. The beginning of the disturbance you had from General Knox, and the subsequent proceedings have no doubt been related to your Excellency by the Count Des Deux points, who being an eye-witness had an opportunity of knowing all circumstances. I shall therefore content myself with adding, that the civil authority having undertaken to settle the dispute, there would have been an impropriety in my

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81. Guillaume, Comte de Deux Ponts. He was colonel on second Regiment Royal Deux Ponts of the French Army in America. Christian, Marquis de Deux Ponts, Comte de Forbach, his brother, was colonel of the Regiment Royal Deux Ponts.

interfering in their conciliatory measures, which would not have suited the principles of military discipline; and that the matter is in a train of being terminated as well as the manner in which it was taken up gave us reason to expect.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that these men, however lost to a sense of duty, had so far retained that of honor, as to reject the most advantageous propositions from the enemy. The rest of our army (the Jersey troops excepted) being chiefly composed of natives, I would flatter myself, will continue to struggle under the same difficulties, they have hitherto endured, which I cannot help remarking seem to reach the bounds of human patience.

I had last evening the pleasure of seeing at my quarters Count De Charlus,<sup>82</sup> Count De Dillon<sup>83</sup> and Mons. Du Mat.<sup>84</sup> The first of these Gentlemen acquainted me with the object of his journey to Philadelphia, which he is preparing to pursue agreeable to your desire.

I cannot forbear lamenting Sir, that the absolute want of money, an evil too well known in our army, obliged me to interrupt the chain of communication. But the conveyance by the Post is so dilatory, and it is so important, we should speedily hear from each other, that I am going to renew the chain from this place to Hartford, and propose to you the expediency of having it continued to Rhode Island.

Nothing could give me greater pleasure than

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82. Armand Charles Augustin de la Croix, Comte de Charlus. He was colonel en second Regiment Saintonge of the French Army in America.

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83. Robert Guillaume, Baron Dillon. He was colonel en second of Lauzun's Legion.

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84. Guillaume Mathieu Dumas. He was aide to Rochambeau.

to have the honor of waiting on you at New Port and improving the opportunity to make a more extensive acquaintance with the troops under your orders. Besides the satisfaction I should feel in seeing you again, I think it very useful that we should have a further conversation on our affairs, in which I may avail myself of your opinion. But our circumstances have been such, that it has hitherto been out of my power to execute this favourite project of mine. The moment I do not think my presence at West Point essential, shall be devoted to a visit to Your Excellency.

The reduction of my family by various contingencies, so that I had for some days but a single Aide, and the additional weight of business which of course devolved upon me, have prevented my writing to Your Excellency lately as often as I wished.

By intelligence from New York, we hear the enemy have collected transports in the North River. It is probable that hearing of discontents among our troops, they mean to be in a situation to improve any opening that may offer.

Lt Col Laurens one of my Aide De Camps having been appointed by Congress to repair to the Court of France, to negotiate matters relative to our finances, as well as to other articles of great importance to our army, they have directed him to confer before his departure with Your Excellency and Monsieur Des-touches. In consequence of his instructions, I expect he will be shortly at New Port, where he will both

receive your orders for France and avail himself of any advice Your Excellency may be pleased to favour him with. With sentiments of the most perfect regard etc.<sup>85</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 24, 1781.

Sir: I have been duly honored with Your Excellencys letters of the 10th. and 13th. instant. The 20th. I had the pleasure of writing to you fully, principally on the subject of the Pennsylvania line.

It is with equal mortification and regret, I find myself obliged to add to that, the account of a second mutiny, which I had apprehended and which has lately taken place in the Jersey troops. When the advices came away it was only partial, that corps being divided into several detachments, but it was imagined the revolt the one part had been in consequence of a preconcerted plan between the whole and that the remainder would follow the example. Immediately on receiving the intelligence I sent a detachment from these posts under the command of Major General Howe, with orders to compel the mutineers to unconditional submission, and I have requested

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85. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

the civil Authority not to interpose with any terms of conciliation. It appears to me essential that this spirit should be suppressed by force and by an exemplary punishment of the principal instigators of the defection.

The complaints and demands of these mutineers resemble, those of the Pennsylvanians.

It is hard to say with certainty how far the disposition which has now appeared may extend itself among troops who have so many causes of dissatisfaction; but I hope we shall be able to stop the progress of the evil here.

The Count De Custine and the Marquis De la Vall<sup>11</sup> who have done the honor to call upon me on their return to Rhode Island will communicate to you all we learn concerning Arnold's descent in Virginia. 'Tis said by later accounts that he had reembarked; perhaps to fall upon some other point. We have no other intelligence. I have the honor etc.<sup>12</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 24, 1781.

Sir: The letter you did me the honor to write me the 20th. of last month by some inexplicable delay did not

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11. Anne Alexandre Marie Sulpice Joseph, Marquis de Laval. He was colonel of the Regiment Bourbonnais, French Army in America.

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12. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

reach me 'till the 20th. instant. I immediately wrote to Governor Clinton on the subject and received an answer of which the inclosed is a copy. The letter from him to you which accompanies this will I hope give you a satisfactory explanation of the disappointments you mention in the flour destined for the fleet. You may rely on the assurances the Governor gives you, of his disposition to promote the operations for procuring your supplies in this state; and that nothing will give me greater pleasure than frequent opportunities of being useful to you and of testifying the perfect consideration with which I have the honor etc.<sup>14</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 29, 1781.

Sir: I have the pleasure to inform your Excellency that the detachment sent against the mutineers as mentioned in my last, surrounded them in their quarters on the morning of the 27th. and demanded an immediate surrender, which was complied with on their part without the least attempt to resist. Two of the principal actors were executed on the spot and the remainder pardoned. From the appearance of penitence and submission among them, it was deemed unnecessary

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14. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

and inexpedient to extend the punishment to a greater number. I believe I may venture to assure Your Excellency that the spirit of mutiny is now completely subdued and will not again show itself. In the present instance indeed it was very partial; for the mutineers amounted to only two hundred, a great part of the line having refused to participate in their crime.

I requested M. Dumat<sup>35</sup> to inform you of the success of a little enterprise against a corps of the enemy at West Chester.<sup>36</sup> I have since received an official account. Fifty two of them were made prisoners, a large quantity of forage destroyed and a considerable number of horses and Cattle brought off; with scarcely any loss on our side.<sup>37</sup> The execution required hardiness and address; the position of the corps attacked being [three or four] miles within the enemy's redoubts. A bridge across Harlem under the protection of one of the redoubts was burnt to prevent reinforcements coming speedily from the island.<sup>38</sup> The success would in all probability have been more complete had not a heavy rain the preceding night rendered a particular pass so difficult as to make it necessary to transport the infantry across on horse back which produced a delay that accidentally gave notice of the approach.

Recent letters from Virginia give me the particulars of Arnold's incursion to Richmond. He burnt there some public and private stores and buildings, a foundery and

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35. Dumas.

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36. The raid on Morrisania.

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37. In killed, wounded, and missing the American loss was 31.

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38. Of New York.

some other public works in the vicinity; and afterwards retired to West Over,<sup>39</sup> where he first landed, five and twenty miles from Richmond. This part of the country is so thinly inhabited, that no force could be assembled in time sufficient to give him any material opposition. It was expected he would immediately reembark from West Over. Virginia intersected as it is with large navigable Rivers is greatly exposed to those kinds of predatory expeditions; nor is there any remedy against them but a naval superiority. I think it probable the enemy will continue to disquiet that State and divert its force from the Southern extremity, while they push their operations there.

Leslie with his detachment having landed at Charles Town was marching to form a junction with Cornwallis. This being performed will enable him to recommence the offensive; and we have to apprehend with too much success, as General Greenes accounts of his situation are far from being flattering. He had taken a new position on the left of Charlottes[burg] at a place called Checaws<sup>40</sup> on the East side of the river Peedee which gives him the command of a country more abundant in itself and less exhausted by Military operations. He had previously established a post on the South side of the Catawba near the forks of Broad river to straiten the limits of the enemy and cover the upper Country. His disposition as far as I can judge at this distance

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39. On the James River.

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40. Cheraws.

and with an imperfect knowledge of the country, seems judicious. I have the honor etc.<sup>41</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 7, 1781.

Sir: I am much obliged to your Excellency for the agreeable intelligence contained in your letter of the 29th. of January. I hope the confirmation will have enabled Mr. Destouches to take advantage of the event, in a manner as advancive of his own glory as of the good of the service. I impatiently wait further advices.<sup>4</sup>

By the last accounts from Virginia which came down to the 20th. Arnold had reembarked from West-Over, the place mentioned in my former letter had descended as far as Smithfield relanded there and marched to Portsmouth. Here it was expected he would fortify. There have been some skirmishes but to little effect on either side. The enemy on their march showed their usual avidity for plunder. If Mr Des touches should have acquired a superiority, which would make it prudent to act, Yr. Excellency may think this detachment an object.<sup>5</sup>

I am informed in a manner, I credit,

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41. The draft is in tile writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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4. The British lost a 74, the *Culloden*, and another, the *Bedford*, was badly damaged.

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5. "The line of battle ship and two Frigates serset sail on the 9th inst. in the evening. with a very fresh wind....If Arnold is not by this time out of the Rivers of Virginia I believe he will not have the best of the game....The Virginia militia is sufficient to destroy the 1600 men that Arnold has with him, if We can but destroy his ships. I beg of your Excellency to send this intelligence to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, recommending always to him the utmost Secrecy even for Congress."— *Rochambeau to Washington*, Feb. 12, 1781. Rochambeau's letter in the *Washington Papers*.

though not officially, that Maryland has acceded to the confederation and that Virginia has relinquished her claim to a large tract of country West of the Ohio, in favour of the United States. Both these events will have an important influence in our affairs. With the truest respect etc.

Your letters of the 20th. and 26th. reached me the same day with the above, the 3d instant. I expect to have the pleasure (nothing extraordinary intervening) of setting out from this place about the 15th. on a visit to Your Excellency and the army.<sup>6</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 14, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favr. of the 2d: and am much obliged by the confidential communication of your dispatches from St. Domingo.<sup>43</sup>

It is with pleasure I transmit your Excellency the Copy of a letter from Brigadier Genl. Morgan to Major Genl. Greene giving an account of a most decisive victory gained by him over Lt. Colo. Tarleton on the 17th. of January. I am in hopes that this fortunate stroke will at least retard

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6. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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43. A copy of the letter from the Governor of San Domingo to Rochambeau, dated Jan. 6, 1781, is in the *Washington Papers*. Its important news was the failure of the Spanish expedition against Pensacola through a hurricane.

the offensive operations of Lord Cornwallis, untill General Greene is in a better condition to oppose his progress than he was by the last accounts from the southward. A little time previous to this Action, Genl. Morgan having recd. intelligence that a Body of 250 Tories were on their march from Georgia to join the British Army, he detached Lt. Colo. Washington with the 3d. Regt. of Dragoons and a Body of Militia Horse to intercept them. Colo. Washington met them at a place called Hammonds Store House; immediately charged them; killed and wounded 150 and made about 40 prisoners. Not a man on our side was killed or wounded.

I propose setting out from hence for New port on Friday next, if the North River should be passable, and if no unforeseen circumstances should intervene.

The Count De St. Moines<sup>44</sup> has not arrived, which makes me fear I shall not have the pleasure of seeing him at my quarters, until he returns from Philada. I am at present made happy by the agreeable company of the Duke De Lauzun, Colonel Sheldon and Count Fursen.<sup>45</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>46</sup>

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44. Jean Baptiste Louis Philippe Felix d'Olieries, Comte de Sainte-Mesme. He was colonel of the Regiment Soissonnais, French Army in America.

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45. Hans Axel, Comte de Fersen. He was aide-de-camp to Rochambeau

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46. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

On this same day (February 14) Washington wrote again to Rochambeau. introducing Lieutenant Colonels Gouvion and Gunat, who were going to the French Army in Rhode Island as officers who had acquired Washington's "particular esteem." The draft of this letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

New Windsor, February 15, 1781.

Sir: The Count de Ste. Maine last evening did me the honor to deliver me your letter of the 3d. instant. It appears by the report of the naval officer that the enemy were inferior to the Chevalier Des touches, and from the situation of the Bedford and the America<sup>54</sup> would probably remain so for some time.

It appears, also to have been Your Excellencys expectation, that Mr. Des touche would either go with his whole fleet, or send a detachment to Chesapeak bay in quest of Arnold.

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54. British ships of war which were damaged by the recent storm.

There are a variety of positions where Arnold by putting his vessels under protection of land batteries, may defy a naval attack and by collecting the provisions with which the Country abounds and raising a few works may remain in security 'till the enemy by repairing their damaged ships should regain the superiority at sea and come to his relief. Portsmouth where he was by the last accounts is particularly favourable to his security in this view. Unless therefore the ships which Mr. Des touches may have sent should by good fortune suddenly fall in with him, embarked and moving from one place to another, they will have little prospect of success.

From these considerations if the object is judged of sufficient importance, it is in my opinion essential that there should be a cooperation of land and naval forces and that Mr. Destouches should protect the expedition with his whole fleet. How far this will be safe or adviseable he can best judge; but it has appeared to me probable that he would prefer going with his whole fleet to a separation; as by making a detachment he would lose his superiority and would give Mr. Arbuthnot an opportunity to escort his disabled ship safe to New York and follow his detachment with the remainder.

Imagining it to be not unlikely that he may think it adviseable to employ his whole fleet upon the occasion; and that your Excellency would approve a cooperation with a part of your army the propriety of which for want of a knowledge of

your local situation I cannot judge; to give the enterprise all possible chance of success I have put under marching orders a detachment of twelve hundred men which will proceed in a few days

towards the Head of Elk River there to embark and proceed to a cooperation. I did not delay the march of this detachment, 'till I could hear from Mr. Des touches and you, as there is not a moment to be lost, if the expedition is to be undertaken, and the inconvenience of moving the troops to no purpose will be small in comparison with the advantage of gaining time. I should have made it more considerable could I have spared the troops. It may arrive at its destination of operation in about four Weeks from this time.

If the Chevalier Destouches and your Excellency should approve the project of a cooperation in which the whole fleet shall be employed, it would be desirable you could embark about a thousand troops on board the ships anti as many pieces of siege artillery, with the necessary apparatus, as you will think proper to spare. This will give a degree of certainty to the enterprise which will be precarious without it.

Arnold's force consists of about fifteen hundred men; as these will be in intrenchments (though not formidable) an inferior regular force with the Militia will find it difficult to reduce them; but with the addition of the detachment I have proposed to you to send, the affair would soon be terminated. This addition is of importance; but the sending of Artillery is

absolutely necessary, as it would be productive of too much delay and expence to send heavy pieces, with their stores from hence by land at this season.

As by this movement the troops will be exposed to a disagreeable march and some expence will be incurred, I shall be glad both inconveniencies may cease as soon as possible if the project is not carried into execution, and I therefore request your Excellency will favour me with an immediate answer.

The capture of Arnold and his detachment will be an event particularly agreeable to this Country; a great relief to the Southern states and of important utility in our future operations.<sup>55</sup>

I regret that the present prospect will compel me to postpone setting out for Rhode Island till I hear from you and will deprive me still longer of the pleasure, for which I impatiently wish, of seeing your Excellency and the army. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

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55. "It is most certain that the Ch. De La Luzerne, at the requisition of Congress and of the Governor of Virginia, had only asked from Mr. Destouches the Assistance of Some Frigates, and of one ship of the Line, and had not mentioned any transporting of Troops, that Mr. Destouches had done all in his power to send off with all possible Speed this little Squadron."— *Rochambeau, to Washington*,

Feb. 20, 1781. Rochambeau's letter is in the *Washington Papers*. Washington's letter did not arrive until after this naval detachment had sailed, under the command of Capt. Le Gardeur de Tilly. It was then inexpedient to further weaken the French armament. Rochambeau stated that had he thought Destouches would have sailed with his whole fleet he (Rochambeau) would have detached the 1,000 men Washington requested

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56. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

Sparks prints this and the letter to Rochambeau of February 19 as, one letter, correctly dating, however, such part of the latter as he uses.

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

New Windsor, February 19, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor to congratulate your Excellency on the safe arrival of the Viscount de Rochambeau at

the Court of Versailles. My authority is deriv'd from the President of Congress who in a letter of the 14th Instr. writes me thus:

"By letters just come to hand from Mr. Carmichael<sup>77</sup> at Madrid, I am informed that the Son of Count De Rochambeau is safe arrived in France." I hope every thing pleasing will follow this [agreeable] Event.

Since the date of mine of the 15th. I have not been honoured with a letter from your Excellency, nor have I heard whehr. the whole, or any part of the Squadron of Monsr. dis touch has left Rhode Island for the Bay of Chesapeak. The destruction of the detachmt. under the Comd. of Arnold, is of such immense importance to the welfare of the Southern States that I have resolved to attempt it [with the detachment I now send in conjunction with the Militia, even if it should not be convenient to Your Excellency to detach a part of your force, provided Mr. Des touches is able to protect our operations by such a disposition of his fleet as will give us the command of the bay and prevent succours being sent from New York.

By a letter I have just received from Major General the Baron De Steuben who commands in Virginia, it appears we may expect every thing from the temper of the Militia of which Militia are capable; but an additional regular force to that I am sending would no doubt make the

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77. William Carmichael. He was secretary to the United States mission to Spain.

success much more prompt and certain. If Mr. Des touches should send any ships into the bay on the principle of a cooperation it will be necessary that a light frigate should come up to the Head of Elk to protect the passage of the troops across the bay.<sup>78</sup>

I impatiently wait to be favoured with Your Excellency's answer on these points. With the truest respect &c.]<sup>79</sup>

### **To THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE FRENCH SQUADRON IN CHESAPEAKE BAY**

New Windsor, February 20, 1781.

Sir: The Chevalier Des Touches having been pleased to inform me that he had detached one sixty four and three frigates to act against the enemy in Chesapaek bay and held the remainder of his fleet ready to support the operation; persuaded that a maritime operation alone would probably not be effectual, as the enemy might secure their vessels under their land batteries, and at the same time that the Militia were not proper for dislodging them from their works unaided by regular troops; I have therefore on the first notice of the Chevaliers intention detached a corps of Troops from this army under the command

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78. De Tilly's squadron was at this time already in the Chesapeake. Arnold sent his ships up the Elizabeth River where the water was too shallow to permit the heaviest French ship to get within range. One of the French frigates, indeed, ran aground. De Tilly captured a British frigate, the *Romulus*, of 44 guns, and two privateers. As his orders from Des Touches were to spend no more time in the Chesapeake than necessary, De Tilly returned to Rhode Island as soon as he found that Arnold could not be taken. He reached Newport February 24.

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79. The parts in brackets are in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

of the Marquis De la Fayette to act in conjunction with you. I am not informed precisely what are your instructions nor would it be my wish that in expectation of this cooperation you should delay any measures which you judge practicable on your arrival for effecting the object of your commission. I only mean to propose if you should meet with the difficulties I have anticipated, and if it be compatible with your instructions that you will continue in such a position as you think eligible

to blockade the enemy, 'till the arrival of the detachment I have announced and that you will then protect and aid the ulterior operations.

The detachment will proceed immediately to the head of Elk where I hope it will arrive by the fifth or sixth of March, to embark there and proceed down the Bay to the point of operation. I beg leave to observe to you the utility (if convenient to you) of sending a frigate up the bay to protect the passage of the troops; in all cases they must depend upon you for security in this operation.

I have Instructed the Baron De Steuben, who now commands in Virginia to procure for you trusty pilots well acquainted with the navigation of the several rivers and every information that may be of use to you, and to make all the necessary preparations with the militia for acting in conjunction.

The Marquis De la Fayette will immediately

open a correspondence with you to concert your future arrangements. I entreat you will be pleased immediately to impart to him your ideas and intentions.

The capture of the corps of the enemy under Arnold will be of the greatest importance to these states and will be as pleasing as it will be useful to them. I am persuaded you will do every thing that depends upon you to contribute to this end as far as your instructions and the circumstances will permit. I have the honor etc.<sup>90</sup>

## **To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 22, 1781.

Sir: I received two days since the letter which you did me the honor to write me of the 7th. instant.

The desire you express of being useful to these states evinced by the measure you have taken to rid the coasts of Virginia of very troublesome and destructive neighbours has a title to our acknowledgements. I hope the ships you have sent will meet with immediate success but I am rather apprehensive the enemy will be able to secure their vessels under the protection of land batteries.

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90. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

The Count De Rochambeau will have communicated to you my propositions. The detachment mentioned to him has marched and may arrive at the Head of Elk by the fifth or sixth of March to

proceed thence by water to the point of operation. The information you were pleased to give me that you held the remainder of your fleet ready to protect your expedition in the bay, was a motive for accelerating its motions. If you have it in your power to block up Arnold in the bay and make such a general disposition with your fleet as will at the same time prevent succours going from this quarter to him, I shall flatter myself that this cooperation will effect the reduction of the corps now in Virginia and the ships will then of course fall into your hands. I am sensible the safe return of the America may make a material difference in your arrangements; but however this may be I wait your determination to regulate my ulterior measures.<sup>12</sup>

If the late important and agreeable intelligence of the success of Count D'Estaing is confirmed,<sup>13</sup> we may flatter ourselves that it will at once lead to a decisive and glorious issue to the war. I am impatient to have it in my power to congratulate you on its certainty.

With sentiments of perfect consideration, etc.<sup>14</sup>

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12. On the return of Captain De Tilly from the Chesapeake a further project of a French expedition from Newport to Virginia was considered:

"The Letters, found on board the Vessels taken by Mr. De Tilly, have decided Mr. Destouches to follow at full the plan given by your Excellency, and to risk every thing to hinder Arnold from establishing himself at Portsmouth in Virginia....Mr. Destouches is arming with the greatest diligence the 44 gun ship that was taken, and he hopes that with the Frigates, will be able to go up Elizabeth river, Mr. Destouches will protect this expedition with his whole fleet. Your Excellency has given me orders to join thereto 1000 men. I will send 1120, all my Grenadiers and Chasseurs will be there, which corps shall be commanded by the Baron de Viomenil. I will join to them, four 4 pounders, four 12 pounders, and four *Obusiers*. The Navy will furnish the 24 pounders, if necessary, but it is presumed that against earthen intrenchments, the 12 pounders will be Sufficient. As to Leaving our road and harbour without defense, tho' I shall have a great many transports to protect and very little artillery of a Long reach, with about 2500. men under arms that I shall have remaining. I'll do my best to prevent our transports or magazins from receiving any damage. I propose asking the States of Boston and Rhode-island to send me, for that purpose, 2000, militia to stay here all the time this expedition may last. I hope your Excellency will approve of my making use of your name in my demand to the Governors of both of these States. The great consequence, that your Excellency seemed to lay to the Establishment of Arnold at Portsmouth, has determined Mr. Destouches to sacrifice every other object to this one....I expect all this armament to be ready, eight days hence. ...Mr. Destouches will do his best to reunite, by the protection of his fleet, the detachment that

your Excellency has sent upon Elk river, but he says that he cannot answer for it by reason of the Length 1st. of the way by Land, 2d. of the Navigation thro' all the Length of the Bay."— *Rochambeau to Washington*, Feb. 25, 1781. Rochambeau's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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13. A report of an engagement between D'Estaing and Hood, which was untrue.

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14. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 24, 1781.

Sir: I am honored with Your Excellency's letters of the 8th. 12th. and 18th. since mine to you of the 19th.

The important intelligence you do me the favour to communicate comes so many ways and with so many marks of authenticity that we have the greatest reason to hope it is true. If so, without the interference of other powers, of which there seems to be no probability, I think we may regard it as an event decisive of a speedy and glorious termination of the war, and that his Britannic Majesty, in spite of his last speech, will be obliged to receive the law.

In mine of the 19th. I informed you of my ultimate determination respecting the detachment from this army. The inclosed for the Chevalier Des touches (which after perusal I beg you to seal and transmit) communicates its march, the time of its expected arrival at its destination and my present views. There are rumours from New York that Sir Henry Clinton has received orders to concentrate his force at one point; but as they come through a suspected channel, I give them no credit. Yet if the enemy have received the blow of which our West India accounts speak, this would be a natural consequence.

The flattering distinction paid to the anniversary of my birthday is an honor for which I dare not attempt to express my gratitude. I confide in your Excellency's sensibility to interpret my feelings for this, and for the obliging manner in which you are pleased to announce it.

The measures we have been taking for the expedition to Virginia will delay some time my visit to Rhode Island. I wait to see whether Sir Henry Clinton may form any new projects in consequence. When this is ascertained and the additional precautions, we are taking for security here, are

completed, I shall yield to my impatience for testifying personally my attachment to your Excellency and your army. I have the honor etc.<sup>24</sup>

**\*To THE DUC DE LAUZUN**

New Windsor, February 24, 1781.

Sir: Dispatches equally unexpected and important prevented my following you the day after I left this as I intended. They have been the cause of my detention since, and has placed me in circumstances which will render the hour of my departure for Rhode Island uncertain but the honor of doing it, and the pleasure I enjoy even by

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24. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

anticipation I cannot suffer myself to be deprived of.

It was mortifying to the Marqs. De la Fayette and me that his Servant did not overtake you as soon as we expected (at the Fish-kill landing) for in that case we flattered ourselves with the hope of having the pleasure of your company a few days longer.

The Marqs. is in pursuit of glory; the particulars of which I shall relate when I have the honor to pay my respects to you at Lebanon; in the mean while with much consideration and great personal attachment I am etc.

**To COMTE DE ST. MAIME**

Head Quarters, February 25, 1781.

Sir: I beg you to be persuaded that I was happy in the opportunity which your short stay at Head Quarters afforded me, of giving you those marks of my attention and esteem to which you are so justly intitled.

I cannot but see with pleasure the zeal which induces you to accompany the Marquis De la fayette in his present journey, assured that you would not take any step which you were not convinced would be perfectly agreeable to His Excellency the Count De Rochambeau. I beg the favour

of you to impart from me the same sentiments to Captain St. Victor.<sup>39</sup>

I hope the occasion will afford you all the satisfaction you promise yourself, and that you will be persuaded of the interest I take in all that concerns you, and of the attachment with which I have the honor etc.<sup>40</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

New Windsor, February 26, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor to inclose Your Excellency under a flying seal my letter to The Chevalier Des Touches in answer to his of the 20th. instant, in which I explain more precisely the grounds and import of the propositions which I had the honor to make to him through you.

I shall add to the observations contained in this letter that so far as related to my proposition for a detachment of land troops, that also turned upon the supposition of a maritime superiority, in which case the enemy would certainly not have enterprised anything against the garrison or transports at Rhode Island. And I beg leave at the same time to assure Your Excellency that I made it under the persuasion,

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39. Capt. François Anselme de Saint Victor, of the Regiment Soissonnais, French Army in America.

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40. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

that you would be able to secure your transports under your land batteries or by sending them up Providence River; and that the enemy even acquiring a naval superiority before the conclusion of the expedition, could not detach from their present force in New York, a force sufficient to endanger the remaining troops under your command aided by the Militia of the neighbouring country, [who could and would fly to your assistance at a momts. warning; or on the appearance of an Enemy.] I entreat you also to believe that I should have been sorry you would have accepted my proposition under a belief that it might have been attended with ill consequences to your army.

I have an increase of happiness from the subsequent intelligence you do me the favour to communicate respecting Count D'Estains success. This repetition of advices justifies a confidence in their truth [which I pray God may be confirmed in its greatest extent.]

By recent accounts from North Carolina it appears that a body of the enemy had arrived in Cape Fear river, had landed, and, joined by some of the disaffected, had penetrated forty miles into the Country. This corps is supposed to be one announced to us by Mr. Adams, one of our ministers, which was to come from England under General Provost. I have reason to believe that Cornwallis is at the same time operating vigorously in his quarter. The Southern states are in a very disagreeable situation pressed in all sides, and destitute of the means

of resistance, arms, ammunition, clothing ac., which a scarcity here and the great distance make it almost impossible for us to send them. The Pennsylvania line will march to the Southward as fast as it can be recruited and reorganized.

Congress influenced by the danger to which the Southern states are exposed, and believing that the Chevalier Des touches is superior to the enemy have desired me if not incompatible with the general projects of the next campaign to urge your attempting with your army or a part of it the succour of those states, or a diversion in their favour. I have replied to them that Mr. Des touches not having the superiority, which they imagine, the possibility of attempting the relief of the Southern states from your army ceases.

The corps which has ascended Cape Fear River from the nature of the navigation can only be covered by small frigates.<sup>46</sup>

With perfect respect and the truest personal attachment etc.<sup>47</sup>

## **To THE DUC DE LAUZUN**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 26, 1781.

Sir: I have received intelligence that, four or five

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46. See Washington's letter to Rochambeau, Feb. 27, 1781, *post*.

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47. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

days ago, three hundred of the Enemy mounted went Eastward upon Long Island, and that Boats were sent up the Sound to receive them and pass them over to the Main. Should this be true,

there is a remote probability that your Corps is their object, but it will be impossible for them to accomplish the enterprise, with the precautions you will naturally take to obtain notice of any debarkation.

I do not place much confidence in the Channel through which this report comes; but as I make it a rule never to slight any intelligence of this nature, I think it my duty to communicate it to you. I have the honor.<sup>43</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 26, 1781.

Sir: I am this day honored with your letter of the 20th. I beg you to be persuaded that in my propositions to you through His Excellency the Count Rochambeau, nothing was more remote from my wish than that you should take any step, which might in the least endanger the Fleet under your command. Supposing you to have possessed a temporary superiority if you had thought it safe to employ it in the

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43. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

cooperation which I had the honour to propose, the success would have been of great importance to this country in its present circumstances. Where there seemed to be a chance of effecting so desirable an object, I could not but suggest it to your consideration.

My reasons for having supposed you to possess such a superiority were these: The officer you had sent to reconnoitre the English fleet reported the Bedford to be so damaged in her hull, that after remasting her she was only fit to be conducted into Port to be repaired before she would be in condition to act, and the America was not only said to have been seen dismasted before she disappeared, but the length of her absence afforded a presumption that she was either lost or so much injured as to have made it difficult to her to regain her station. After these deductions from the force of the enemy, there would have remained to them in condition for service five ships of the line and one of fifty guns, opposed to seven ships of the line on your part.

I have the honor to state these facts to explain to you the grounds on which my proposals were founded.

The detachment sent to Chesapeak Bay, and the return of the America uninjured, make a material change in the situations of the two fleets; and render ineligible what might have been before advantageous.

Under the information you had received and from the applications made to you, you had a right to expect that the detachment sent into the bay would fully answer the end, and the readiness with which you embraced the opportunity for sending it has a just claim to our acknowledgements. I shall be happy to congratulate you on its success, which if it should arrive unexpectedly, I do not despair of having it in my power to do. With perfect consideration etc.<sup>48</sup>

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

New Windsor, February 27, 1781.

Sir: I thank you for the immediate communication contained in your letter of the 24th. of the agreeable intelligence of the success of the naval detachment in Chesapeak bay; and I am happy to find at the same time that Mr. Destouches was preparing a second detachment for an ulterior cooperation.

I have renewed my orders to the Marquis De la Fayette who commands the Corps sent from hence to push forward his March to the head of Elk.

In my last to you of the 26th. I mentioned that I had reason to believe Cornwallis was advancing vigorously on

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48. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

his side. Advices from General Greene have since come to hand confirming this supposition. After the defeat of Tarleton, he divested himself of all his Baggage and made a rapid march upon Morgan, but he was disappointed in this object for Morgan retired in time with all his Prisoners who were on their way to Virginia. He afterwards crossed the Catawba river and was penetrating the Country. It was the interest of General Greene to avoid a general action, but he was apprehensive it would not be in his power without sacraficing all his baggage and Stores which would be an irreparable loss.

Lord Cornwallis had with him between two and three thousand regular Troops. General Greene was inferior in number and greatly so in force; the principal part of his little army being militia and the whole ill provided with every thing.

The Corps that has ascended Cape Fear river is estimated at four or five hundred Men and supposed by General Greene, to be a detachment from Charles Town.

The Militia of North Carolina have been exceedingly harrassed, which added to their being ill armed will make their opposition less vigorous than might be expected from the Spirit they have shewn.

Since the defeat of Tarleton there have been several little successes on our part in which Prisoners have been made; the most considerable of which is the surprize

of George Town by Major Lee, in which he put the greater part<sup>63</sup> to the Sword, took the commandant a Lieutt. Colo. and others Prisoners. The cruelties of the enemy seem in several late instances to have excited a spirit of retaliation.

The idea of holding your Fleet and Army in readiness gives me pleasure, as besides imposing on the enemy in Gardners bay these demonstrations may be thought to have something more in view and may serve as a diversion in favor of the Southern States.

I rely on being honored with the earliest notice of your subsequent dispositions as mine must correspond.

Your Excellency may be assured that as soon as the circumstances mentioned in my last are effected, I will certainly have the pleasure of paying a visit to you and to the Army. I am convinced with you that it is essential we should have a further conference, and that as soon as possible. with great esteem etc.

P S. By advices from New York I am informed that a detachment of five or 600 Men was preparing for embarkation, designed, it was said, to reinforce Arnold. That the Iris and some other Vessel was to Convoy it; and that two or three Expresses had been sent from New York to Gardners bay upon receiving the Acct. of the French Squadron appearing in Chesapeak bay.<sup>64</sup>

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63. The draft, in the writing of Hamilton, at this point has "of the garrison."

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64. From a photostat of the original in the Chateau de Rochambeau, France.

## To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES

Head Quarters, New Windsor, February 27, 1781.

Sir: I had the honor of writing to you the 26th. Your letter of the 24th. is this moment delivered to me. The Count De Rochambeau has also transmitted me the copy of yours to him announcing the return of your ships from Chesapeak bay after having captured the romulus made a number of prisoners and destroyed some transports. I receive the news of this success with the greatest pleasure, and am happy to learn at the same time that you axe preparing for a second visit to the bay to assist the operations of the detachment I have sent. I have repeated my orders to the Marquis De la Fayette who commands it to prosecute his march to the Head of Elk. Permit me to observe that to give success to the expedition it will be not only necessary to protect the passage of the troops to the point of operation, but to block up the bay afterwards to prevent the retreat of the enemy or succours going to them.

In my letter to the Count De Rochambeau which accompanied my last to you, I informed him of an incursion of the enemy up Cape fear River in North Carolina. This corps can only be protected by some light frigates from the nature of the navigation; if any thing could be attempted there without interfering with the project of Chesapeak bay, it might

be very useful to the state of North Carolina pressed in different quarters by superior forces.

I assure myself that I shall have the earliest notice of your subsequent arrangements as mine depend upon them. I have the honor etc.<sup>65</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Colonel Morehous's,<sup>85</sup> March 2, 1781.

Sir: The third day after he left you the Baron Le Colsen<sup>86</sup> did me the pleasure of delivering me Your Excellency's letter of the 25th. His diligence and zeal perfectly equalled your expectations. The important and agreeable intelligence, the dispatches by him contained, determined me to lose no time in setting out to enjoy the satisfaction which I have been so long promising myself.<sup>87</sup> I hope to arrive at New Port, early on tuesday, in time to have a conversation with Your Excellency and the

Chevalier Des touches previous to the departure of the fleet. I had early given all the directions to the Commanding officer in Virginia intimated in your letter; but I have sent fresh orders, which will be conveyed to him by Col Gouvion.

On my way to this place I met your dispatch

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65. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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85. Col. Andrew Morehouse, of the Dutchess County militia. His house was on the Fishkill-Hopewell road, near the Connecticut State line.

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86. Jean Christopher Louis Frederic Ignace, Baron de Closen-Haydenbourg. He was captain of the Regiment Royal Deux-Ponts and aide-de-camp to Rochambeau.

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87. Tench Tilghman's memoranda of expenses on this journey from New Windsor to Newport and return shows the following places: Vandenburgs, Morehouses, getting a horse out of Bulls Falls, Litchfield, Farmington, Hartford Ferry, Bolton, Traceys at Norwich, Lothrop's at Norwich, Norwich Ferry, Preston, Kennions, Potters at Little Rest, Narragansett Ferry, Connaicut Ferry, and Newport. A "Poor Woman at Newport" was given \$75, and \$1,450 was paid for board at Newport. The return journey shows the itinerary as Bristol Ferry, Providence Ferry, Providence, Dorrences, Bolton, Hartford Ferry, Farmington and the Widow Strongs, Litchfield, Morehouses, Vandenburgs, Brinkerhoffs, and New Windsor. Tilghman's memoranda are in the *Washington Papers*.

of the 27th. I congratulate you on the arrival of the *Astree*. I hope it will satisfactorily enlighten our future projects.

The Baron De Colesens politeness makes him insist on taking the trouble to precede me to announce my coming to your Excellency. With all the sentiments of the sincerest esteem etc.<sup>88</sup>

## To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES

Morehouses, March 2, 1781.

Sir: I had the honor of receiving your dispatch by the Baron De Coleson the third day after its date, informing me of the resolution you had taken of renewing the attempt in Chesapeake bay with your whole fleet. Persuaded that this determination is warranted by prudence as well as a spirit of

enterprise, I receive the intelligence with peculiar pleasure. It is the strongest evidence of your desire to be useful to these states, and I hope will be productive of correspondent advantages.

On receiving the information I immediately set out for Rhode Island where I shall be happy to arrive in time to have the pleasure of a conversation with you, and of assuring you personally of my wishes for your success and of the perfect

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88. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

esteem etc. I shall arrive at Rhode Island early the 6th.<sup>89</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Newport, March 11, 1781.

Sir: I did myself the honor to inform your Excellency that the French Fleet put to sea on the evening of the 8th: By advices from New London, the British in Gardiner's Bay did the same yesterday morning. They took their sick on board and departed with their whole force. They gave out that they were destined for Chesapeake.

From appearances, a meeting of the two Fleets seems unavoidable. Their force is nearly equal, and the issue of a naval combat was perhaps never more interesting. I will, however, hope that the good fortune, which has hitherto attended our Allies, will not desert them on the present occasion. I have the honor etc.<sup>99</sup>

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89. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

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99. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Meres. et Does.*, E. U., vol. 6.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 21, 1781.

Sir: I arrived at this place yesterday at Noon. Upon my return I found intelligence contradicting that which I gave your Excellency from Hartford. The British Transports, I suppose, made some change

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of disposition, which gave rise to the report of their having sailed and returned again to New-York. I believe it may now be depended upon that they sailed from the Hook the 13th: instant. I am in hourly and anxious expectation of news from the Chesapeak, which, the moment it arrives, shall be communicated.

I do myself the honor to inclose your Excellency a New York paper in which you will find a formal declaration of War on the part of Great Britain against the States of Holland. I do not know what effect this may have upon European Politics, but I think the other Neutral powers are bound to stand by the States, as one of the causes of War urged by G. Britain is their having acceded to the Armed Neutrality. I have the honor etc.

P.S. 22d. Your Excellency's favor of the 18th. came to hand last Evening. The letters for the Chevr. de la Luzerne and

for Sir Henry Clinton which were inclosed have been immediately forwarded. The Accounts brought by the Edentown Captain are exaggerated. General Greene had received considerable reinforcements but not equal to the Captains report. It was yet uncertain whether Lord Cornwallis meant to return to South Carolina or take a post in North.

The answer given by your Excellency to Govr Hancock was in my opinion a proper one. Should circumstances render it inexpedient to undertake any operation of more importance, perhaps we may hereafter find an opportunity of striking the small detachment the Enemy have at Penobscot.

I have this Moment recd. letters from the Marquis de la Fayette dated at York in Virginia the 15th: instant; neither Fleet had reached the Chesapeak.<sup>21</sup>

**\*To FRANÇOIS DE BARBÉ MARBOIS**

New Windsor, March 23, 1781.

Sir: I had the honor to receive your favor of the 1st. at Newport, upon a most agreeable visit to Count de Rochambeau and the Gentlemen of the French Army. I shall most readily grant the certificate which the friends of the late La Radier desire, but as it will be necessary for me to see Genl. Du Portail to ascertain some particulars

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21. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

relative to the different ranks which he bore in the American service, I must defer transmitting the certificate<sup>32</sup> until the return of the Genl. from Rhode Island. I am etc.<sup>33</sup>

### To FRANCISCO RENDON

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 23, 1781.

Sir: Your favor of the 26th: ulto. reached me at Newport, where I have lately been upon a visit to the Count de Rochambeau. I am obliged by the interesting intelligence which you have been pleased to communicate, and I most earnestly hope, that no unfortunate incident will again prevent the progress of the expedition against Pensacola.

Our whole attention is turned to the Southward, which is at present the Theatre of the most important operations. A successful blow in that quarter may give a total change to the face of affairs there.

I am happy to find that my former communications have not only been servicable to your Court but to you personally. You may be assured that duty and inclination will lead me to the continuance of a correspondence which is held in high estimation by Sir &c.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Radiere's certificate was fully inclosed to Marbois in a brief note (May 16, 1781) explaining the delay. The draft of this note is in the *Washington Papers*.

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33. From a photostat of the original in the *Biblio. Natl. (France) Mss. Fr.*, vol. 12768.

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34. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From the original in the Connecticut State Library.

### To COMTE DE CHARLUS<sup>35</sup>

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 23, 1781.

Sir: On my return from Newport I had the pleasure of finding your letter of the 1st. from Philada: Convinced that you would not have taken a step in the least disagreeable to His Excellency the Count De Rochambeau, I cannot but be flattered with the offer you make of attending the Marquis De la

Fayette as a Volunteer in the American Army. I wish and hope that every thing may concur to make the expedition perfectly agreeable to you and have the honor etc.<sup>36</sup>

### To BARON DILLON<sup>37</sup>

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 23, 1781.

Sir: Your favor of the 1st. from Philada. met me at this place on my return from Newport. I cannot but approve that Zeal which carries you to the southward with the Marquis de la Fayette while I am assured that you would not have undertaken the measure had it in the least interfered with your duty in the French Army.

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35. Armand Charles Augustin de la Croix, Comte de Charlus Castries. He was colonel, en second, Regiment Saintonge, French Army in America.

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36. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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37. Robert Guillaume, Baron Dillon. He was colonel, en second, Lauzun's Legion, French Army in America.

I had the pleasure of seeing your Brothers and other Friends well at Lebanon. I am etc.<sup>38</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 29, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 21st. I have not received any intelligence from the Southward since the letter of the 15th. from the Marquis de la Fayette, the substance of which I communicated to your Excellency in my last. I cannot but look upon this as very unaccountable, for I think had either Fleet reached the Chesapeak by the 20th. I should have heard of it, unless a dispatch should have miscarried. I can judge of your Excellency's anxiety by my own, and shall therefore make you the most instant communication of what I may receive.

The Transports with Troops at New York had twice sailed and twice put back and were yet within the Hook on the 24th. instant. This accounts for the seeming inconsistency of the intelligence which

I have heretofore transmitted respecting them. Colo. Dayton, an officer on whom I much depend, thinks they probably sailed again on the 25th. I have the honor etc.<sup>78</sup>

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38. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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78. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 31, 1781.

Sir: I was last evening honored with your Excellency's favor of the 27th. covering an open letter for the Count de Rochambeau, by which, you have been so good as to make me the earliest communication of the action on the 16th. between the French and British Fleets off the Capes of Chesapeak. By the inclosed you will be informed of the return of the former into the harbour of Newport.

I must confess to your Excellency, that I was never sanguine as to the success of that expedition, after the sailing of the two Fleets so nearly together, knowing it would turn in great measure, upon the arrival of Mr. des Touche in the Chesapeak before Mr. Arbuthnot. A circumstance of the utmost uncertainty, not depending upon the valor or skill of the commanding officer, but upon Winds and Weather; and I assure you, I more sensibly feel the anxiety expressed by the Baron Viomenil and the Chevr. des Touche lest any thing should be attributed to the want of execution on their parts, than I do the disappointment in the plan which we had in contemplation. But certain I am, that instead of sentiments of so ungenerous a nature, there will be an universal admiration of the good conduct and bravery exhibited by the Officers and Men of His Most Christian Majesty's Squadron,

when opposed to one of superior force. I have the honor etc.<sup>94</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 31, 1781.

Sir: I last night received your Excellency's favor of the 27th: announcing the return of the Squadron under the command of the Chevalier Des Touche to the Harbour of Newport. A few minutes before your letter reached me, the inclosed, which His Excellency the Minister of France had the goodness

to send under an open cover to me, informed me of the Action wh'ich had happened on the 16th: off the Capes of Chesapeak. I likewise received letters from the Chevalier de Touche and the Baron Viomenil by the same conveyance.

While I regret the disappointment of our plan, I cannot but admire the good conduct and valour displayed by Mr. des Touche. The Officers and Men of his Squadron in the course of the action, and I am happy to find by the letters from him and the Baron Viomenil that there was the most generous emulation between the land and sea forces.

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94. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From a photostat in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang. Mems. et Does., E. U.*, vol. 6.

It may, I think, be fairly said, that Great Britain owes the safety of her detachment under the command of Arnold to the influence of the Winds and not to the superiority of her Navy in the late affair.

I have received an account, though not the particulars, of an engagement on the 15th. instant between General Greene and Lord Cornwallis near Guilford Court House in North Carolina. I impatiently expect official accounts which I shall transmit to your Excellency.

I am extremely sorry to learn by your favor of the 25th. that the Chevalier Chattelus has been ill. Your next I hope will inform me of his perfect recovery, than which scarce any intelligence can be more agreeable. I have the honor etc.<sup>95</sup>

## To BARON VIOMEÉNIL

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 31, 1781.

Sir: I had last Evening the honor of receiving your letter dated on Board the Duke De Bourgogne<sup>96</sup> the 19th. instant. By a letter from the Chevalier des Touche which accompanied yours I am informed of the unavoidable causes of the failure of the enterprise which we had in contemplation. I am perfectly convinced that every effort was made to carry you to the place

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95. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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96. *Duc de Bourgogne*, the flagship of Destouches.

of your destination, and I attribute the disappointment to the influence of the Winds and not to any want of valour or good conduct in the Officers and Men of his Majesty's Fleet. Mr. des Touche speaks in the handsomest manner of the zeal with which the Officers and Men under your command seconded his endeavours. I regret that they had not an opportunity of giving proofs of their bravery on land: But I hope, with you, that we shall be more fortunate another time. I beg you will be assured that I am &c.<sup>97</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, March 31, 1781.

Sir: I was last evening honored with your favor of the 19th. instant by the Hermione Via Philada. and with a duplicate from Newport. I am obliged by the minute detail which you are pleased to give me of the Action on the 16th. instant between the Squadron of his Most Christian Majesty under your command and that of the British under Admiral Arbuthnot. Though you have not been able to accomplish the object which you had in view, you have merited the thanks of every American by the boldness of the attempt, and by the gallantry and good conduct displayed through the whole course

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97. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

of the engagement. I will confess to you, Sir, I was never sanguine in my expectations, after I saw the British Fleet follow you so closely from Gardiners Bay. I knew that the success of the expedition depended almost intirely upon your arrival in the Chesapeak before Admiral Arbuthnot. A circumstance in which the Winds and Weather had more influence than valour or skill. Had it depended upon the latter, I should have had perfect confidence, and the event has justified my opinion. I have the honor to be &c.<sup>98</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 3, 1781.

Sir: In my Letter of the 31st. Ulto. I inform'd your Excellency, that there had been an Action between General Greene and Lord Cornwallis, on the 15th of March;<sup>5</sup> the particulars of which, had not then been received. I have now the honour of inclosing the Copy of a Letter from Major General Greene,

in which he gives the circumstances of that Engagement in detail:<sup>6</sup> from this, and other Accounts, I cannot but persuade myself (however the Enemy may have won the glory of maintaining the field of Battle) that Lord Cornwallis will find his efficient force greatly diminished by the Number of killed and wounded. and that

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98. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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5. At Guilford Court House, N. C.

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6. Greene's account of the battle is given in his letter to the President of Congress, March 16, in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, a copy of which he inclosed with his letter to Washington, March 17. Greene's account is in the *Washington Papers*.

being encumbered with the latter, he will experience such embarrassments as to retard and injure essentially all his future movements and operations. This appears to have been a great object with General Greene, by a Letter of his, written some days previous to the Action.

I do myself the honour, also, to transmit the Account given by the Enemy, of the engagement of the 16th Ult. between the Fleet of His Most Christian Majesty under the command of the Chevalier Des Touches and that of the British under the Orders of Admiral Arbuthnot. From their confession, that three of their Ships were intirely disabled; and from their not vaunting (as they are ever disposed to do) of any considerable advantages obtained by them; it is evident they find nothing to boast of, even in their own opinion. I have the honor etc.<sup>7</sup>

**To MONSIEUR DE SIBILLE<sup>35</sup>**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 5, 1781.

Sir: I have been involved in such a variety of business since my return from New Port, as has prevented, until the present time, my acknowledging the receipt of the letter which you did me the favor to write on the 25th Ult.

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7. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

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35. Secretary to Comte de Rochambeau.

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It is not unusual, I believe, in different services, that the same class of Gentlemen should (from the difference of the establishment) be entitled to different Rank and Military consideration. This cannot, under any circumstances, preclude a Man of Merit from the reputation he deserves.

That his Excellency the Count De Rochambeau has reposed his confidence very properly in you I have not the least doubt; the honor of holding so important an Office as that of secretary, in such a respectable family, in addition to personal considerations, will ever intitle you to the very great esteem and regard of Sir Your, etc.<sup>36</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 7, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 31st. ulto. Your remarks upon the uncertainty of operations which depend upon a combination of Land and sea forces, except there is a decisive superiority over the enemy as to the latter, are judicious, and consonant to the Ideas which I had ever entertained upon the subject.

Upon maturely considering the offer which your

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36. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

Excellency has been pleased to make, of marching all your force to this place, except 1200, to be aided by 3000 Militia for the security of the Fleet, I am of opinion that it ought, under present circumstances and appearances, to be deferred, as it would be putting you to, perhaps, to an unnecessary trouble, and would, besides the expences incident to calling out so large a body of Militia, tend to injure the completion of the Continental Battalions by Recruits, as the Militia service is preferred by the peasantry to the Continental, the pay being greater, the duty less, and the discipline more relaxed. My reasons for waving your Excellency's offer at the present time are briefly as follow: I do not look upon the French Troops as *essentially necessary* at this place untill an operation against New York shall have been determined upon, or untill we shall have been obliged to make so large detachments to the Southward that we shall have occasion for them to assist in securing the post of West point and its dependencies; the communication from the Delaware to the North River, and affording cover to the Country within reach of the enemy's marauding Parties. Although I have, upon finding that the enemy have sent a reinforcement of about 1500 Men to the southward, ordered the Marquis de la Fayette to proceed with the detachment under his command and join General Greene,

I hope I shall be able, with my remaining force and the Recruits which now begin to come in, to effect the

latter purposes, more especially as I can, upon an emergency, suddenly call in a respectable Body of Militia [from the adjacent Country.] It does not appear to me that an enterprise so weighty as that against New York can be decided upon, untill we hear what reinforcements of Men and Ships may be expected from Europe. I therefore think, that the Troops under your Excellency's command may remain in their present position, untill the arrival of the Viscount de Rochambeau (which I hope may be soon) or some other intelligence from Europe, [or untill the Situation of our southn. Affairs become yet more critical:] But as it may have an effect upon the fears of the enemy in New York and hinder them from making further detachments to the Southward, I beg your Excellency to circulate a report that you are soon to join this Army, and to make some demonstrations of preparing for a march. [Indeed the approaching Season, if it should not be our unhappy lot to spend another inactive Campaign, will well warrant every necessary preparation for the Field, be the Theatre of Action where it may; which will not only countenance the report, but actually facilitate the measure if events should render it necessary to carry it into execution, which is by no means improbable.]

As Genl. Du portail did not arrive 'till yesterday, I had no opportunity of conversing with him before this day. After relating to me what had passed between your Excellency and himself, and being informed by me of the resolution

I had taken to let your Troops remain at Newport for the present, and with the reasons which induced me to take that resolution, he fully acquiesced with me in the propriety of it. I have the Honor etc.

P. S. I have, since I began this letter, received your Excellency's favor of the 3d. instant. The detachment, which had twice put to Sea and returned, sailed finally from the Hook about the 20th: of last month. I imagine they arrived in the Chesapeak the 25th: as The Marquis de la Fayette writes me from Virginia that the British Fleet which had left Lynn Haven Bay on the 24th: had returned again on the 25th. with a number of Transports. The detachment is said to consist of 1500 Men and to be under the command of Major General Phillips.

Sir Henry Clinton must be by this and former detachments too much weakened to think of offensive operations in any other quarter than the South. Should there, therefore, be occasion to draw your Excellency's force this way, I dare say you will think a less number of Men, than what you mentioned in your letter of the 31st ulto., will be sufficient to protect the Fleet in the Harbour of Newport. But

that is a matter which as your Excellency is pleased to observe, must be regulated by the force the Enemy actually have in New York at the time you shall form a junction with me; [and

their plan of Campaign, which will not, indeed cannot, easily be diverted when it is once entered upon.]

I have also recd. your Excellency's favor of the 4th. instant.<sup>42</sup>

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU AND CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES**

Hd. Qrs. New Windsor, April 8, 1781.

Sir: Major Talmadge an Officer of great merit who will have the honor of delivering this letter, will inform your Excellency minutely of the state of the Enemys refugee Post on Loyd's Neck (Long Island) and will suggest the practicability of cutting off this Corps, and destroying the Enemy's shipping in the Sound, while the British fleet is absent. This would be a very desireable event on every account, but particularly as it would, in a great measure, destroy the dangerous intercourse between the Enemy on Long Island, and the disaffected on the Main; and would, moreover, most effectually destroy a conspiracy which is forming, and which we have reason to believe, is getting to a disagreeable height.

Should it be thought advisable (on Major Talmadges representation, who is well acquainted with the situation and Circumstances) to make the attempt with a

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42. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From a photostat of the original in the Chateau de Rochambeau, France. The words in brackets in the draft are in the writing of Washington.

Naval and Land force, I need not mention how much of the success would depend on Secrecy and Surprise. I submit the whole to your Excellencies consideration; without a wish, that the enterprize should be undertaken (however advantageous it might be) unless the prospect of Success, should more than counter ballance the risk which will be run. Major Talmadge would be able to point out the necessary Guides; and would be happy in rendering any personal Service if the plan should be adopted. I have the honor etc.<sup>65</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 10, 1781.

Sir: I had the pleasure of receiving your Excellency's letter of the 6th. instant only two hours ago. We are greatly indebted to The Chevalier Des Touches for the disposition he shows to undertake the expedition to Penobscot and to you for your readiness to furnish a detachment of troops for tile same purpose. The object is certainly worth attention and if it can be effected will be very agreeable to the States particularly

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65. From a photostat of the original in the Chateau de Rochambeau, France.

to those of the East. Mr. Des touches can best judge from the situation of the enemy's fleet, how far it may be attempted with prudence, and Your Excellency from the information you have recently received, what number of troops will be sufficient for the enterprise. I am persuaded it will be calculated how far it is probable the enemy may follow with a part of their fleet; whether the post can be carried by a coup de main, or may require so much time as to make it likely the operation will be interrupted before its conclusion, in case of a superior squadron being sent by the enemy what possibility there is of protection or a safe retreat for the ships and even for the land force (through an unsettled country) All these are points too important not to have been well weighed, and your convesations with the Massachusetts deputies will have been able to enlighten you upon them. The confidence I have in your judgment assures you the concurrence of my sentiments in whatever you may do, on the occasion. I will only take the liberty to remark two things; one that it appears to me frigates without any ships of the line will answer the purpose as well as with them, and less will be risked by dividing the body of the fleet. Frigates (including the forty fours) will afford a safe escort to the troops against any thing now in those seas, and with respect to a detachment from the enemy's fleet it would be always proportioned to the force we should send and if we have two sixty fours, they would even be an object for their whole fleet. The other observation I would make is that as dispatch is essential to

success, it will in my opinion be adviseable not to depend on any cooperation of the Militia, but to send at once such a force from your army as you deem completely adequate to a speedy reduction of the Post.

The country in the neighbourhood of Penobscot is too thinly inhabited to afford any resource of Militia there, and to assemble and convey them from remote places would announce your design, retard your operations and give leisure to the enemy to counteract you. Indeed I would recommend, for the sake of secrecy, to conceal your determination from the state itself.

These hints you will be pleased to make use of only so far as they appear to be well founded. I am etc.

P. S. I inclose a piece of intelligence just received from the President of Congress.<sup>70</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 16, 1781.

Sir: I was last night honored with a letter from your Excellency bearing date the 7th. instant which I presume must have been a mistake, as you acknowledge the receipt of mine of the 6th. The intelligence communicated in mine of the

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70. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

10th. respecting a further embarkation from New York is confirmed by a variety of accounts. The number or exact destination is not yet ascertained but all agree that it is to some part of the southward and that Sir Henry Clinton is to command. I am also advised that the British Fleet has arrived at the Hook; whether all or only part of the ships are there I cannot yet tell, but the moment I receive more particular intelligences they shall be transmitted to your Excellency.

The preparations you are making will not only serve to give the enemy jealousies, but they will put you in readiness to move this way, should circumstances require it. Your Excellency may be assured of having all possible previous notice, should the measure become necessary.

I inclose you a New York Gazette which has one paragraph which makes me uneasy, it is that which speaks of a French Convoy being intercepted in the Bay of Biscay. I have the honor etc.

P. S. Your Excellency will be pleased to forward the inclosed to Colo. Laurens by the fleet of transports. Should they have sailed by the next opportunity.<sup>12</sup>

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12. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 22, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favors of the 15th. and 18th. Instants. I am obliged by the care which you promise to take of my packet for Mr. Laurens.

Major Tallmadge, who your Excellency will have seen before this reaches you, has been upon Long Island and there obtained intelligence that the British Fleet had returned to New York. From whence I conclude that the whole are there. I will however endeavour to ascertain the matter and transmit my information to your Excellency.

I have heard nothing from New York for some days past. I cannot therefore say any thing further respecting the progress of the embarkation mentioned in my late letters.

I am made very happy in hearing that you are under no uneasiness on account of the paragraph which appeared in Mr. Rivingtons Gazette extraordinary. I could not help being fearful that the Convoy mentioned in it, was the same which is expected at Newport. I am &c.<sup>50</sup>

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50. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 26, 1781.

Sir: Since my letter of the 22d: I have received intelligence which I think may be depended upon, that Admiral Arbuthnot with his Fleet was in New York Harbour, and that three or four of the Ships which suffered in the late Action were near the Town repairing their damage. Transports were fitting and preparations were making as if for an embarkation, but I can yet gain no satisfactory account upon that subject. I have the honor etc.<sup>76</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, April 30, 1781.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your Excellency's and the Chevalier des Touche's joint letter of the 25th: and your own of the 26th.

The absence of your light Frigates renders the plan which Major Tallmadge proposed impracticable for the present. We will, however, keep the enterprise in view, and may, perhaps, at some future time, find an opportunity of carrying it

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76. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

into execution with success.<sup>17</sup>

I will, in due season, send a proper Officer to make himself acquainted with the defences of Newport.

General de Beville will, I presume by this time, have reported to your Excellency the substance of his conference with me, and his own opinion of the different Routes from Newport to the North River. I can only, as I have done before, recommend to you to proceed in making the necessary preparations for the Field, and assure you again that you shall have the earliest notice should any movements of the Enemy make yours necessary by land. The detachment which is preparing at New York had not sailed by my last accounts from thence. May they not be waiting for the repair of the damaged Ships of War?

In the inclosed paper you will find several interesting intelligences from Europe and the West Indies, under the Philadelphia head. The letter of 18th: March from Martinico is said to be from one of our Agents to the president of Congress. The intelligence from the Havanna is the substance of a letter from the Governor to Don Fransisco Rendon the Spanish Agent at Philadelphia.

I shall in future address myself on naval Affairs to the Chevalier des Touch by the method which your Excellency has been pleased to point out. I have the honor etc.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Tallmadge successfully executed the proposed surprise, which was against Fort Siongo, on the north shore of Long Island, about 48 miles northeast of Brooklyn, Oct. 2-3, 1781, without the aid of the French.

On April 30 Tench Tilghman wrote to John Moylan, Clothier General of the Continental Army, that "Upon a representation of the distress of the southern Army it has been agreed to send a further supply of 1500 Woolen Vests, 300 largest and best Leather Breeches, 3000 Linen Overalls, 3000 socks." The Quartermaster General was to send them to Philadelphia, directed to the Board of War. The Commissary of Hides in Jersey "was to send all the shoes he can procure to Philada. until further orders." Tilghman's draft is in the *Washington Papers*.

18. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From a photostat of the original in the Chateau de Rochambeau, France.

### To FRANCISCO RENDON

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 2, 1781.

Sir: I have had the very great pleasure and satisfaction to receive your two favors of the 16th and 24th. Ultimo.

Suffer me to congratulate you, Sir, on the success of the Arms of the King, your Master, in the recapture of Fort St. Juan de Nicaragua, whereby the boasted exploits and expectations of the Enemy in that quarter are totally frustrated. And do me the justice to believe, that I sincerely participate in your felicity; at the pleasing prospects of further and more important successes against the British at Pensacola, as well as against the *fleet*, in pursuit of which, you are so obliging as to mention Nineteen Ships of the Line had actually sailed. I shall be made extremely happy, by being informed of the successful issue of these expeditions.

At present, I have no intelligence of importance to communicate to you. The *Reports* of another embarkation at New York, have prevailed for many days; but they have been so vague and uncertain, as not to be absolutely depended upon; Whenever anything of moment to the common cause shall turn up to view, I shall not fail to acquaint you therewith, being with very great attachment and respect etc.<sup>43</sup>

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43. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 3, 1781.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving Your Excellency's Letter of the 28th of April, and of forwarding the Dispatches for the Chevalier de la Luzerne, which were transmitted to my care. I will expect the pleasure of Mr. De Menonville's<sup>49</sup> Company in his route to Philadelphia.

Nothing material has occurred since my last Letter. With the highest esteem etc.<sup>50</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 7, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favors of the 30th. of April and 4th. of this Month. The first was delivered to me by Colo. Menonville to whom I refer you for what has passed between us on the subject of his mission.

I have received no particular intelligence from New York of a later date than that of the 29th. ulto. which

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49. Francois Louis Thibaut, Comte de Ménonville, First deputy Adjutant General, French Army and aide to Rochambeau.

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50. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

has been communicated to your Excellency.

I very sincerely wish success to the enterprise which the Chevr. des Touche has in contemplation.

Inclosed your Excellency will find a Warrant from the Quarter Master General appointing Colo. Champlin Barrack Master to the French Army.

I have taken the liberty to send under this cover, a letter for Governor Hancock<sup>78</sup> which incloses one for Maj or Genl. Howe. Should that Gentleman be in Newport or providence you will oblige me by directing the letter to be delivered to him and destroying the Governors. Should he be in neither of these places you will be pleased to seal the Governors and forward it to Boston with the inclosure.

The importance of the letter for Genl. Howe and the uncertainty of the place which he will be at, must be an excuse for my giving your Excellency the extraordinary trouble.

Your packet for the Chevr. de la Luzerne shall be safely and expeditiously forwarded. I have the Honor etc.<sup>79</sup>

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78. The draft of this brief letter to Hancock (May 7) is in the *Washington Papers*.

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79. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

[New Windsor, May 11, 1781.]

[Sir]: I have this instant received a Letter from Col Dayton (an Officer of intelligence in the American Army near Elizabeth Town) which contains the inclosed Paragraph.

His information must I conceive, have magnified the Enemy's force, both in ships of the Line, and in the strength of the Detachment. Nor do I conceive the fleet could have sailed on the 8th as he mentions, on account of the Wind and weather; still less am I disposed to believe that New Port

is the object of this Armament; but as intelligence thro' another Channel pointed to that Epoch for the sailing of the fleet; I have not delayed a moment in giving the information as I received it, and shall thank your Excellency for handing it to the Admiral. With great esteem etc.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys, who has noted on the same: "The Counts Letters of the 5th & 7th were acknowledged."

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 13, 1781.

Sir: I have this morning received your Excellency's favour of the 8th. Give me leave most sincerely to congratulate you on the safe return of the Viscount de Rochambeau, who I hope is the Bearer of agreeable intelligences.

I will meet your Excellency at Weathersfield at any time which you shall please to appoint. A Copy of your letter has been instantly transmitted to His Excellency the Minister at Philada.

I have no further accounts from New York since my letter of the 11th: except what is brought by two Deserters who speak confidently of a detachment from the Army having sailed last Week, but know nothing respecting the Fleet. I have the honor etc.<sup>9</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 14, 1781.

Sir: I had yesterday the honor of receiving your Excellency's favor of the 7th. accompanied by the Copy of one

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9. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

On this same day (May 13) Washington inclosed, as above, a copy of Rochambeau's letter in a brief note to Chevalier la Luzerne. This draft is in the *Washington Papers*.

which you had written to the Chevalier des Touche. As I very much approve the plan<sup>21</sup> which you therein recommend, I permitted the original and the packet for the Count de Rochambeau to go forward.

I last night received dispatches from the Count de Rochambeau and the Count de Barras, who has come over to take command of the Fleet at Rhode Island. They request an interview with me as soon as possible, and I have appointed Monday the 21st. of this Month at Weathersfield near Hartford.

I forward to your Excellency, by this Express, a large packet which came in the Concord, and I have taken the liberty to address one which is for the Marquis de la Fayette to your care. As the dispatches are probably of consequence, and it is somewhat uncertain where the Marquis will be, I shall be much obliged to your Excellency for causing a man of integrity to be hired for the purpose of carrying and delivering them himself. I have the honor etc.<sup>22</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 14, 1781.

Sir: I last night had the honor of receiving your Excellency's favor of the 11th: As you request me to name the

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21. A suggestion that Destouches take post in Chesapeake Bay with his squadron.

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22. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff, Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

time of meeting, I appoint Monday the 21st. of the Month at Weathers field, which I think is as soon as will be possible for you with convenience. Genl. Knox and Genl. du portail will accompany me. [I will endeavor to be at Wethersfield on Saturday afternoon myself and have made choice of this town in preference to Hartford because the latter will be occupied by the Assembly of the State which is now sitting.]

I forward the packets for His Excellency the Chevalier de la Luzerne by Express, and inform him of the time and place of our intended interview; but I do not imagine it will be possible for him to be present at it.

I shall very impatiently wait the pleasure of meeting your Excellency and the Count de Barras. I have the honor etc.<sup>23</sup>

### **To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 14, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of the 11th. Give me leave to congratulate you upon your safe arrival and upon your appointment to the command of His Most Christian Majesty's Fleet and sea forces upon

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23. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The portion in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

these Coasts. It affords no small degree of pleasure to find the command devolve upon an Officer of your Excellency's distinguished character.

I have fixed upon Monday the 21st. of this month for the time of our interview at Weathersfield. And I shall very impatiently wait for the opportunity of convincing you personally that I am &c.<sup>24</sup>

### To CHEVALIER DESTOUCHES

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 14, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your favor of the 10th. announcing the arrival of the Count de Barras to take the command of His Majesty's Fleet. You judge very rightly in supposing that the term of your command will not be looked upon as mispent. You may be assured, Sir, that America will ever retain the most grateful remembrance of the exertions you have made in her behalf. As to myself, I shall ever be happy in opportunities of testifying the high sense I entertain of your merit, and with how much Esteem. I am &c.<sup>25</sup>

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24. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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25. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 17, 1781.

Sir: The inclosed dispatches have just been sent to me with a request that I would forward them immediately to your Excellency. Count Charlus mentions that the packet for the Marquis<sup>47</sup> is of [great] importance and wishes it may be transmitted to him by a safe conveyance. I have the honor etc.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Lafayette.

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48. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. The word in brackets in the draft, which is also by Tilghman, is in the writing of Washington. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

**To COMTE DE CASTRIES DE CHARLUS**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, May 17, 1781.

Sir: I had this morning the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 12th. The dispatches for the Marquis de la Fayette have been forwarded by a servant of his own who was luckily here and just setting out for the southward.

I am exceedingly obliged by the trouble you have taken in making me a Copy of the Map of the Country in the Vicinity of portsmouth. I have the honor etc.<sup>49</sup>

**To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Wetherfield, May 23, 1781.

Sir: The letter which I have the honor to inclose from the Count de Rochambeau will, I imagine, inform your Excellency of the intended march of the French army towards the North River, and of the destination of the Kings Squadron now in the harbour of Newport, (if circumstances will admit of the respective movements). I should be wanting in respect and confidence were I not to add, that our object is new York. The Season, the

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49. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

difficulty and expence of Land transportation, and the continual waste of men in every attempt to reinforce the Southern States, are almost insuperable objections to marching another detachment from the Army on the North River; nor do I see how it is possible to give effectual support to those States, and avert the evils which threaten them, while we are inferior in naval force in these Seas, It is not for me to know in what manner the Fleet of His Most Christian Majesty is to be employed in the W. Indies this Summer or to enquire at what epocha it may be expected on this Coast; but the appearance and aid of it in this Quarter is of such essential importance in any offensive operation, and so necessary to stop the progress of the enemys arms to the Southward, that I shall be excused, I am perswaded, for endeavouring to engage your Excellencys good offices in facilitating an event on which so much depends. For this I have a stronger plea when I assure you, that General Rochambeau's opinion and wishes concur with mine and that it is at his instance principally I make you this address.

If we are happy enough to find your Excellency in sentiment with us, it will be in your power to inform the Count de Grasse of the strength and situation of the enemys Naval and land force in this Country, the destination of the French Squadron under Admiral Barras and the intention of the Allied arms if a junction can be formed. at present the B. Fleet lyes within Block Island and about five leagues

from Point Judith.

The Count de Rochambeau and the Chevr. Chartellux agree perfectly in Sentiment with me, that while affrs. remain as they now are, the West India Fleet should run immediately to Sandy hook, [if there are no concerted operations] where it may be met with all the information requisite, and where, most likely, it will shut in, or cut off, Adml. Arbuthnot; and may be joined by the Count de Barras. An early and frequent communication from the Count de Grasse, would lead to preparatory measures on our part, and be a means of facilitating the operation in hand, or any other which may be thought more advisable.

I know your Excellency's goodness, and your zeal for the common cause too well, to offer any thing more as an apology for this liberty; and I perswade myself it is unnecessary for me to declare the respect and attachment with which etc.<sup>61</sup>

### **To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Wethersfield, May 23, 1781.

Sir: I am sorry that the unexpected appearance of the British Fleet off the Harbour of Newport deprived me of the

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61. The letter sent, in the writing of Tench Tilghman, is in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Meres. et Does., E. U.*, vol. 6. It differs, of course, from the above autograph draft in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

pleasure of meeting you at this place. I must refer you to His Excellency tile Count De Rochambeau for the plan of operations, which has been settled between us and have the honor etc.<sup>64</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 2, 1781.

Sir: I am honored with your Excellency's favor of the 28th. Ulto. I flatter myself the Count de Barras will meet with no interruption on his passage, as I have reason to believe that the British Fleet are off the Hook.

I have deferred writing to your Excellency, in hopes that I should have been able to have learnt, with certainty, whether there was any thing in the report which Genl St. Clair forwarded to me at Weathers field of a further embarkation of troops and an intention to evacuate New York. By the best information which I have received, I do not find that either is in agitation. A Fleet of Merchantmen will sail shortly for Europe.

When at Weathersfield, I gave your Excellency a Sketch of what force I imagined we should be able to bring

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64. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

into the Field this Campaign. As my calculation was founded upon probability and not upon any assurances from the States that they would furnish the Men, I beg your Excellency will not consider that Estimate [as official] or definitive.

Your dispatches for His Excellency the Minister were immediately forwarded.

The opportunity for the entrance of the expected Convoy is so favorable, that I think there is little danger to be apprehended upon this Coast.

General Greene, by letters from him of the 27th. of April, was still before Campden in South Carolina. Lord Rawdon had, on the 25th, made a vigorous sally with his whole force, in which he only succeeded so far as to oblige Genl. Greene to remove a mile or two. Our loss on the occasion was 17 Killed and 96 wounded. The Enemy confess their loss about 200; we brought off about 50 prisoners. General Marion and Colo. Lee had reduced one of the enemy's posts of communication called Fort Watson in which they took 109 prisoners. If Lord Cornwallis does not march to the relief of his Frontier posts in South Carolina more of them will probably fall.

The enemy remained at Petersburgh in Virginia on the 18th. of last month. The Marquis de la Fayette with his detachment lay near them watching their motions. I have the honor etc.<sup>25</sup>

25. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman, The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 3, 1781.

Sir: I am sorry to inform you that one of our Messengers has been taken between this place and Morris Town. Among other dispatches he had that which your Excellency inclosed in yours of the 28th: of May, for the Minister of France. The enemy can gain no material information from my letters, and shall be happy to hear that they will be disappointed in yours.

By letters of the 24th. of May from the Marquis dela Fayette Lord Cornwallis had formed a junction with General Arnold at Petersburg and as a number of Transports with troops had arrived in Hampton Road I take it for granted they were the same which sailed from New York the 13th. of May. With the most perfect respect, etc.<sup>26</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 4, 1781.

Sir: I had last Evening the honor of receiving

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26. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

your favor of the 31st. of May by the Duke de Lauzun, who informs me that he is authorized by your Excellency and the Count de Barras to enter into a free communication with me upon the subject of the Council of War held on board the Duke de Burgoyne and to request my opinion upon the propriety of their determination.<sup>29</sup>

I must confess to your Excellency that there is weight in the reasons which are offered for the detention of His Majesty's Fleet in the Harbour of Newport in preference to its going round to Boston, but as I cannot think that it will be as safe in all possible cases in the Harbour of Newport, after the greater part of the French Army has been withdrawn, as it would be in the Harbour of Boston, I must adhere to my *opinion* and to the plan which was fixed at Weathersfield as most

eligible, all circumstances considered. I would not however set up my single judgment against that of so many Gentlemen of experience, more especially as the matter partly depends upon a knowledge of Marine Affairs of which I candidly confess my ignorance. I would therefore [in order to avoid delay] rest the matter upon the following footing. If your Excellency, the Count De Barras, and the other Gentlemen should upon a further consideration of the subject, aided by any new informations which you may have received, still think it most advisable to adhere to the former resolution of the Council, you may make use of the inclosed letters to the Governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, which are left open for your inspection. If on the

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29. The move of the French squadron to Boston would have been strictly in accordance with the general instructions of the French King.

contrary you should change your opinions the letters may be destroyed, as that which was written by me to the Governor of Rhode Island from Weathers field will be sufficient for the purpose of calling out 500 Militia for the present and such further numbers as exigencies may require.

At any rate I could wish that the march of the troops might now be hurried as much as possible. The strides which the Enemy are making to the southward demand a collection of our force in this quarter, that we may endeavour to commence our operations. I know of no measure which will be so likely to afford relief to the southern States in so short a time as a serious menace against New York. This your Excellency may remember was a principal inducement for our undertaking that operation in preference to the other which was spoken of, and I assure you the calls upon me from the southward are so pressing that nothing but seeing our preparations against New York in some degree of forwardness will content them or convince them that they are likely to derive any advantages from the force which they see detained here.

I have forwarded your Excellency's dispatch to the Minister by a Gentleman in the Quarter Masters department. I have the honor etc.<sup>30</sup>

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30. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

## **To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 4, 1781.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 31st: of May. His Excellency The Count De Rochambeau transmitted to me the result of the Council of War held on Board the Duke de

Burgoyne; and the Duke de Lauzun, who was kind enough to be the bearer of it, having informed me that he was authorized by your Excellency and the Count de Rochambeau to enter into a free communication with me upon the subject of the deliberations of the Council, and to request my opinion upon the propriety of their determination, I take the liberty, still to recommend the measure of removing His Majesty's Fleet to Boston, as a Port more safe in all possible contingencies than Newport can be after the principal part of the French Land Force shall be withdrawn: But however as I would not wish to oppose my single judgment to that of so many Gentlemen of experience, especially as there is a combination of Marine Affairs, of which I confess my intire ignorance. I have expressed my wish to the Count de Rochambeau that the matter may be again considered and have informed him that if with such aids as the Council of War may possibly acquire from later intelligences, they should still adhere to their opinion, that the Fleet may safely remain in Newport under the protection of 400 french troops and 1000 Militia, I shall be satisfied. I have furnished the

Count with letters to the Governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island which he will make use of as circumstances may require.

I shall be happy to receive a confirmation of the agreeable intelligence brought by Capt. Ledyard.<sup>31</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>32</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 7, 1781.

Sir: I do myself the honor to inclose your Excellency a Martinico Gazette of the 3d. of May which announces the arrival of the Count de Grasse and gives an imperfect account of the Action between the Fleets. This was sent to me by the Minister with a desire that it might be forwarded to you. But by intelligence as late as the 8th. of May it appears that the Count, unable to overtake Hood, had returned to Martinico, and that an attempt was immediately to be made upon St. Lucia at which there was a garrison of 1200 British Troops.

Your Excellency will observe a very extraordinary paragraph in the inclosed paper. It is asserted that 5 Ships of the Line, having 42 transports under their Convoy, parted from the main Body of the Fleet and were destined for Rhode Island. Should you have received similar official

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31. Lieut. Col, William Ledyard, of the Connecticut Militia. He had just returned from Guadaloupe.

32. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

intelligence, or should you and Mr. de Barras think that such a circumstance is probable, in that case, His Majesty's squadron ought not in my opinion at this moment to leave Rhode Island, but await the reinforcement there. Possibly the despatches for your Excellency and Count de Barras which I forward by this opportunity may throw more light upon the matter and enable you to judge with precision upon the measure which ought to be pursued.<sup>43</sup>

Accounts from Virginia are exceedingly alarming. The enemy, having concentrated their force are marching thro' the State almost without controul, as the Body of Men under the command: of the Marquis de la Fayette was too small to give effectual opposition. This obliges me again to entreat your Excellency to move this way as soon as circumstances will possibly admit. The reasons which were urged in my last now operate more powerfully in favor of the movement than they did before. I have the honor etc.<sup>44</sup>

#### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 8, 1781.

Sir: I am exceedingly obliged to Your Excellency for your interesting Communication of the 1st. instant. The Martinico

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43. Washington, after having considered the deliberations of the French naval council of war held on the *Duc de Burgogne* on May 31, stated to Barras on June 4, that he again recommended Boston as a safer port for the French squadron than Newport, R. I., and desired the matter might be reconsidered. (See Washington's letter to Barras, June 4, 1781.) A council of war was held on board the *Neptune* on June 8, which adhered to the former determination to remain at Newport.

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44. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

Paper has been forwarded to the Count de Rochambeau.

As You promise me the Pleasure of your Company the first Leizure Moment You can find, I shall defer entering upon a Detail of public Affairs, until I shall have the Happiness of a personal Conversation. Indeed the Accidents which have lately befallen several of our Messengers between

this Place and Philadelphia makes one extremely cautious of trusting any Thing of Importance to paper.

I presage the happiest Consequences from the Appointment of a Gentleman of Mr. Morris's Character and Abilities to the Superintendance of our Finance. I wait impatiently for his making me the Visit which he proposes, as many very essential Matters in the Operations of the Campaign will [depend] upon the Assistance which he will be able to afford us. I beg you to be assured that I am &c.<sup>55</sup>

### To FRANCISCO RENDON

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 8, 1781.

Sir: I have the Honor to receive your Favor of the 29th Uto. and have to assure you that I shall be very happy in a Confirmation of the very agreeable account you mention of the Success likely to attend the Arms of His Catholic

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55. In the writing of Richard Varick. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang. Mem. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6. The word in brackets is supplied from the draft, which is in the writing of Tilghman.

Majesty under the command of his General Don Galvez<sup>56</sup> at Pensacola.

Having nothing of particular Importance to communicate, I have the Honor etc.<sup>57</sup>

### To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 13, 1781.

Sir: His Excellency the Count de Rochambeau having requested me to forward the Dispatches herewith transmitted, by the safest possible conveyance, I now do myself the honor to send them by a Gentleman of the Quarter Master General's Department.

Having been made acquainted by the Count de Rochambeau with the design of the Count de Grasse to come to this Coast with his fleet;<sup>91</sup> I cannot forbear expressing to your Excellency my ardent

wishes that a body of land Forces might also attend this Naval Armament: as, I am apprehensive, such a decided superiority of Men may not be drawn together by us, by the time *the Count de Grasse will be here* , as to ensure our successes against the Enemy's most important Posts; as his continuance in these Seas may be limited to a short period; and as the addition of a respectable Corps of Troops from the West Indies would in all human probability, terminate the matter very soon in our favor. If these should

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56. Gov. Bernardo de Galvez, of Louisiana.

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57. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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91. "I have already wrote to the Count de Grasse that your Excellency had desired my marching to the north river to [strengthen or even attack N Y] when the circumstances will admit of it. I have Apprized him of the number of the garrison at New York and of the considerable forces which the enemy has sent in Virginy, that the only means which seem practicable, to your Excellency is [a diversion upon New Yk. which you propose to do as soon as the circumstances will allow of it. I have spoken to him of the Enemy's naval forces and told him that by reason of the constant wind, I thought it would be a great stroke to go to [Chesapeake Bay in which], he can make great things against the naval forces that will be there, and then the wind could bring him [in 2 days before N Yk.] that if he could bring us some [moveable Forces, 5 or 6 thousand Men More] would render our expedition much more probable and likewise by bringing us [money from] the [West Indies where] it is said that our [Bills of Exchange are at par]. I beg your Excellency, if yove any thing to add to this dispatch, to send it to me at Providence because possibly the frigate that carries my Letter may not be gone when your Excellency's answer will arrive."— *Rochambeau to Washington*, June 12, 1781. Rochambeau's letter is in the *Washington Papers*. The words in brackets in Rochambeau's letter were in cipher, translated in the writing of Washington.

likewise be your sentiments, and if this Plan should not interfere with the intentions, and interests of His Most Christian Majesty elsewhere, I entreat your Excellency by the first good conveyance, to represent the propriety and necessity of this Measure, to the Commanders in the West Indies; that by one great, decisive stroke, the Enemy might be expelled from the Continent, and the Independence of America established at the approaching Negotiation. I have the honor etc.<sup>92</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 13, 1781.

Sir: I am honored by your Excellency's favors of the 9th. and 10th: instants; and with their very interesting communications which you may be assured will be kept perfectly secret. I flatter myself that the whole Convoy will arrive in safety in some of the Eastern ports, as I believe the British ships are all cruising off the Hook.

The Count De Barras has furnished me with the Result of the second Council of War. I have so high a respect for the opinions of the Gentlemen who composed it, that I should have been satisfied had they barely mentioned their

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92. In the writing of David Humphreys. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

adherence to their former determination, but the new arguments which have been introduced in favor of the detention of the *Fleet at Rhode Island* leaves me no room to doubt of the propriety of the measure.

I am so fully convinced that your Excellency will make no unnecessary delay in your march, that I have only occasion to repeat my former request, that it may be commenced as soon as circumstances will admit. My last accounts from the Marquis de la Fayette were of the 3d. of June. The British Army, in very considerable force, were then between Richmond and Fredericksburg; their destination was uncertain, but from their superiority they were at full liberty to go wherever they pleased. The inclosed Copy of a letter from the president of Congress to me will give your Excellency the latest intelligence from South Carolina.

Your requisitions to the *Count De Grasse*, go to every thing I could wish. You cannot, in my opinion, too strongly urge the necessity of bringing a *Body of Troops* with him, more especially, as I am very dubious whether our force can be drawn together by the time he proposes to be here. Now 4000 or 5000 *Men* in addition to what we shall certainly have by that time, would almost beyond a doubt, enable us, with the assistance of the *Fleet* to carry our object. It is to be regretted that the *Counts* stay upon this *Coast* will be limited. That consideration is an additional reason for wishing a force equal to giving a speedy determination to the operation.

Your Excellency will be pleased to recollect that

*New York* was looked upon by us as the only practicable object under present circumstances; but should we be able to secure a *naval superiority*, we may perhaps find others more practicable and equally advisable. If the *Frigate* should not have sailed, I wish you to explain this matter to the *Count de Grasse*, as, if I understand you, you have in your communication to him, confined our views to

*New York* alone. And instead of advising him to run immediately into *Chesapeak*, will it not be best to leave him to judge, from the information he may from time to time receive of the situation of the *enemy's Fleet* upon this Coast, which will be the most advantageous quarter for him to make his *appearance* in.<sup>93</sup> In the letter which was written to the Minister from Weathers field, in which he was requested to urge the *Count* to come this way with his *whole Fleet*, *Sandy Hook* was mentioned as the most desirable point. Because, by coming suddenly there he would certainly *block* up any *fleet* which might be *within*; and he would even have a very good chance of *forcing* the *entrance* before dispositions could be made to *oppose* him. Should the *British Fleet* not be there, he could follow them to *Chesapeak*, which is always accessible to a superior force. I have the Honor &c.<sup>94</sup>

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93. Rochambeau's *Memoires* show that he went rather beyond the point of leaving this matter to De Grasse, for he informed the French admiral that it was his private opinion that a move against Cornwallis, who was then being opposed by Lafayette in Virginia, would be the most practicable and least expected by the enemy, as the allied armies were so far away from that quarter. It seems evident that Rochambeau did not consider the chances of success in an operation against New York City to be great. He acquiesced in Washington's desire, but submitted the decision to De Grasse in such language that was almost inevitable that the latter would sail to the Chesapeake.

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94. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman, who has noted that "All those Words under which Strokes are drawn were written in Cypher." Those words appear in italics in the text.

## To COMTE DE BARRAS

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 13, 1781.

Sir: I had yesterday the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of the 9th: instant accompanied by the result of the second Council of War. I have so great a respect for the opinions of the Gentlemen who composed it, that I should have been satisfied, had they barely mentioned that they had, upon a reconsideration of the subject, thought it most conducive to the common interest to adhere to their former determination; but the new arguments which have been introduced in favor of the detention of the Fleet at Newport, aided by those expressed by your Excellency in your letter, leave me no room to doubt of the propriety of the measure. I feel very sensibly and I beg you will make my acknowledgements to the Gentlemen of the Marine for the reasons which induced them, personally, to wish to remain in the Road of Newport rather than remove to that of Boston.

I shall be happy to have it in my power to congratulate you upon the safe arrival of your whole Convoy. His Excellency The Count de Rochambeau informs me in a letter of a later date than yours that they had not all got into port. I have the honor etc.<sup>96</sup>

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96. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 17, 1781.

Sir: I have the pleasure of inclosing your Excellency Copies of two letters from Major General Greene, by which it appears that an agreeable train of successes have attended our Affairs in south Carolina. The consequences will be important, but they would be more so, had we a sufficient force in that quarter to pursue the advantages we have gained. I have heard nothing further from the Marquis de la Fayette since the 3d. inst.

Were it practicable for the Count de Barras, by arming the Fantasque and joining the 50 Gun ship lately arrived from France to his fleet, to put himself so nearly upon an equality with the enemy as to enable him to take a position with security in Chesapeak Bay, it would be of the utmost importance at this moment, as it would effectually prevent a reunion of the Enemy's forces; and by preventing those in Virginia from receiving any supplies by water, they would soon be reduced to very great difficulties and distresses. I barely mention this as an Idea which has struck me, not as a matter which I would undertake to advise, unacquainted as I am with naval affairs. I have the honor etc.<sup>27</sup>

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27. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 19, 1781.

Sir: I have the Honor of your Excellency's Letter of the 15th. Being fully persuaded of your active Zeal and Wish to join the Army under my Command, I have only to intimate to you, my desire that you will not hurry your Troops by too rapid a March; but suffer them to make such Halts on their Rout, as you shall find convenient and necessary.

By Information received from the Enemy at N York It seems they are taking a position not far from East Chester, where they are markg out an Encampment. This Movement I conjecture to be formed with a Design of covering their Foraging Parties, which will probably at this Season be very busily employed.

Inclosed you will find Extracts from a Letter I have this Moment received from Genl Sullivan: the intelligence it contains is not official; but from some other concurrent Information, I have but too much Reason to fear it is too well founded. a prize is lately taken and carried into Philadelphia, the Captain of which mentions his sailing from Cork some time towards the last of March, and that a Fleet, like that mentioned in the Extract with 400 Troops on Board, bound for the Coasts of America, had sailed from the same Port on

the 27th. March.

If this Intelligence should prove true, the Enemy may give us much Trouble in the Southern Quarter, untill they are seriously opposed in Force, or their Intentions Diverted to some other Object. I have the honor etc.<sup>32</sup>

### **To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 19, 1781.

Sir: I have been honord with your Excellency's Favr of the 14th instant.

Inclosed you will find an Extract of a Letter I have just received from Genl Sullivan at Phila; the information it contains is of such Nature that I have thot it of Importance to communicate to your Excellency, and altho it is not official, yet I have too much Reason, from concurrent Circumstances, to suppose it may be true. If any further Intelligence shall ascertain the Arrival of this Reinforcement, I shall do myself the Honor to communicate the same to you. Your letter to the Chevalr Le Luzerne, shall be forwarded with all possible Care and Dispatch. I have the Honor etc.<sup>34</sup>

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32. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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34. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

## To FRANCISCO RENDON

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 21, 1781.

Sir: I with the greatest pleasure congratulate you on the success of His Catholic Majesty's Arms at Pensacola, and I have no doubt but a recital of the particulars will reflect much honor upon General Don Galvez and the troops under his command.

No material movements on the part of the enemy having taken place in this quarter since my last I have no communications of any importance to make to you. I beg you to be assured that I am etc.<sup>47</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 24, 1781.

Sir: I do myself the Honor to acknowledge the Receipt of your Excellency's Letter of the 20th instant, from which I have the Pleasure to observe the progress you make in the march of the Troops under your Command, and your Intention to come on to my Camp in Person, from Hartford. Be assured, Sir, I shall be

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47. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

very happy to see you whenever you arrive. You do not mention the Rout by which you shall come on; you will find me at Peekskill.

In mine of the 19th. instant directed to your Excellency I informed you of the Intelligence I had received of the Arrival of a large Reinforcement from England, at Chesapeak Bay. I have very good Reason now to believe that Information not to have been well founded; having since received Letters from Congress, and others of much later Date, in which nothing of this kind has been mentioned.

My Intelligence from the Southward is too vague and uncertain to communicate to your Excellency. By the Time of your Arrival, I hope to be able to give you some certain Information of our Situation in that Quarter. I have the Honor etc.<sup>67</sup>

**To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, New Windsor, June 24, 1781.

Sir: The information, I had the honor of communicating to your Excellency in my last Letter, as an extract from Genl. Sullivan's Letter, respecting the arrival of a large Fleet of Transports to Chesapeak Bay, is I believe entirely

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67. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

without foundation. My intelligence of the Enemies operations in Virginia is so vague and uncertain that I am not able to give your Excellency any particular information of their movements. I have the honor etc.

P.S. I have advices from N York that Arbuthnot is at the Hook with 7 sail of the Line.<sup>68</sup>

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Camp near Peekskill, June 27, 1781.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your Excellencys favor of the 23rd. Inst. from Hartford. It would have given me the greatest pleasure could I have made it convenient to have met you at Newtown, but independant of many arrangements which are necessary at the first taking the Field, I am detained by the hourly expectation of His Excellency the Chevr. de la Luzerne.

I am pleased to find that your Excellency's Idea of the position which will be proper for the troops under your command coincides exactly with my own, and I shall be happy in giving your Quarter Master General every assistance in reconnoitring and marking out your Camp.

You have inclosed the Copy of a piece of

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68. The draft is in the writing of David Cobb; the P.S. is in that of David Humphreys.

intelligence which I have just received from the Minister, and as it is necessary that the Count De Barras should be made acquainted with it, I have transmitted him a Copy also. I flatter myself that the number of which the reinforcement is said to consist is exaggerated.

Lt. Colo. Cobb one of my Aides de Camp will have the honour of delivering you this, and will return to me with any dispatch or message which your Excellency may wish to communicate; or should you rather incline to come forward from Newtown, before the Army, Colonel Cobb will be proud to attend you.

I will be much obliged to your Excellency, to present the Count De Barras, by the next Occasion you may have to write him, with my sincere Thanks, for the Readiness with which he was pleased to embrace the Proposition I had the Honor to make to him through your Excellency. I am &c.<sup>80</sup>

### **To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Camp near Peekskill, June 27, 1781.

Sir: I do myself the honor to transmit your Excellency the Copy of a piece of intelligence which I have just

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80. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman and Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

received from the Minister of France. Should I gain any further account of the number of ships of War which convoyed the transports, or of their destination I shall immediately communicate it. I have the honor etc.<sup>81</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters near Peekskill, June 30, 1781.

Sir: I had last Evening the honor of your Excellency's favor of the 28th. with a postscript of the 29th:

The enemy, by sending a detachment into Monmouth County in Jersey to collect Horses, Cattle and other plunder, have so weakened their posts upon the North end of York Island, that a most favorable opportunity seems at this moment to present itself of possessing them by a Coup de main, which, if it succeeds, will be of the utmost consequence to our future operations. I have for this reason determined to make the attempt on the night of the 2d. of July. But as we cannot with the remainder of our own force maintain the advantage should we gain it, I must entreat your Excellency

to put your first Brigade under march tomorrow Morning, the remaining Troops to follow as quick as possible, and endeavour to reach Bedford

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81. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

by the evening of the 2d. of July, and from thence to proceed immediately towards Kingsbridge should circumstances render it necessary. Your Magazines having been established on the Route by Crompond it may perhaps be out of your power to make any deviation; but could you make it convenient you would considerably shorten the distance by marching from Ridgebury to Salem and from thence to Bedford leaving Crompond on your right.

There is another matter which appears to me exceedingly practicable upon the same night that we attempt the Works upon York Island and which I would wish to commit to the execution of the Duke De Lauzun, provided his Corps can be brought to a certain point, in time. It is the surprise of a Corps of light Troops under the command of Colo. Delancey which lies at Morrisania, without being covered by any Works. To effect this, the Duke must be at Bedford on the 2d. of July by 12 OClock if possible, where he will be joined by Colo. Sheldon with 200 Horse and Foot and on his march from thence by about 400 Infantry, both Officers and Men perfectly acquainted with the Country. Upon a supposition that the Duke may be at Bedford at the above mentioned time and that he will be ready to carry the design into execution, he shall be met there by particular instructions from me and will find good guides. At any rate, I must request your Excellency to send orders to the Duke this evening to continue

his march tomorrow morning and to reach Bedford by the Evening of 2d. of July if he cannot be there by noon. In this latter case the enterprise against Delancey must probably be laid aside, and the Legion with the first Brigade of your Army will be at hand to support the detachment upon York Island should they succeed. I shall move down with the remainder of this Army towards Kingsbridge and shall be ready to form a junction with your Excellency below at some point which shall be hereafter after agreed upon.

I am certain I need not recommend the proper degree of secrecy to your Excellency. One reason which makes it more than commonly necessary in the Country where you are, is, that the enemy will have emissaries in your Camp in the Garb of peasants with provisions and other matters and will be attentive to every word which they may hear drop.

You will much oblige me by letting me know instantly by return of the line of Expresses whether your first Brigade and the Legion can march tomorrow Morning and whether the Duke can be at Bedford by the time first proposed (the 2d. of July at Noon).

Under the foregoing circumstances it becomes necessary for me to march from hence on Monday, and I therefore submit to your Excellency whether it will not be more convenient to both of us to defer our interview untill the Armies shall have proceeded lower down. I shall take care to establish a proper communication between the Columns and to see that a

junction is formed before there shall be any danger of an attack from the Enemy. I have the honor etc.<sup>15</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Head Quarters, Peekskill, July 1, 1781.

Sir: I have been Honored with your Fav'r of last Night, and feel myself much obliged by the Readiness with which you make a Compliance to the Request made you in my last.

The Information conveyed by your Excellency, I had before received, 'tho not in so pointed a View with respect to Numbers. The Enemy's Apprehension of our Intentions, and the Probability I had Reason to apprehend that their Force would be collected to the North End of the Island on their receiving Information of our Approach, were among the Reasons that induced me to fall upon this Enterprise and added to other Reasons for the necessity of its *sudden* Execution, the present Stage of the Moon operated for fixing the Time I mentioned. The Success of the Enterprise depending on a Sudden Surprise of the Posts, which must be attempted by Night Operations, when the Approach can only be concealed; a delay to a fuller Time

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15. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

of the Moon, which would greatly expose our Detachment to a Discovery, could not be admitted. These Reasons I hope will apologize to your Excellency for my Desire to hasten the March of your Troops, which must be fatigued with the long march which they have already performed.

Should we be so happy as to succeed in this Attempt, it would give us exceeding great Advantage in our future Operations, and indeed save us perhaps the Time of good part of the Season to [establish a communication with York Island]. I am obliged, however, to confess to your Excellency, that I am not highly sanguine in my Expectations, altho I think there is a good Probability of Succeeding; so great, that I have thot it expedient to put the Attempt at hazzard.

From my late Information however, and that I may not Risque too much, I have directed the Officer comandg the Detachment (Majr Genl Lincoln, who will Tomorrow be in a Position for the Purpose) that he shall in Person reconnoitre the Scituation of the Enemy, and inform himself by any Means in his Power of their probable Strength and Numbers; from whence he will be able to determine the Practicability of accomplishg his Aim. On this Ground the Attempt will be reduced to a Contingency; General Lincoln having my Instructions to conduct himself eventually agreeable to his own Discoveries and his Judgment of his probable Success or Failure; should he obtain such information of the Enemy's Position and Strength as to oblige

him to decline the Attempt on their Posts; he will then, agreeable to his Instructions throw himself into a situation to form a Covering Party to the Enterprise to be conducted by the Duke de Lauzun.

I shall keep myself constantly informed of the Movements of Genl Lincoln, and as the Army under my immediate Command will be moving towards the Point of Operations, I shall be able to give such Instructions and Orders from Time to Time, as Events shall render necessary; of which your Excellency may depend on being regularly advised.

Such Instructions as the present Circumstances will enable me to make out for the Duke de Lauzun, are prepared, and will meet him at Bedford by the Time of his Arrival at that Place. I have the Honor etc.<sup>23</sup>

## **To DUC DE LAUZUN**

Head Quarters, Peekskill, July 1, 1781.

Sir: I had yesterday the honor of informing the Count De Rochambeau of a Plan I had in contemplation of attempting to surprize some of the Enemy's Posts, before they were alarmed by the junction of the French and American

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23. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

Armies, and requested the aid of your Corps in the execution of that design. In consequence of the answer of the Count, and upon the presumption that you will be at Bedford by 12 OClock tomorrow I have directed Lt Col Hull to repair to that place and communicate to you verbally my wishes and intentions, he being perfectly acquainted with the different parts of my plan, I beg leave to refer you to him.

You will be informed that there are two Enterprises in contemplation, the one under the command of Major Genl Lincoln against the Posts on the No end of York Island, the other an attempt to Cut off Delanceys and other Light Corps of the Enemy at Morrissania, with the Troops under your Command.

The Troops which will compose your command (exclusive of your own Legion) will consist of the Connecticut State Troops, under the command of Brigadier Gen Waterbury, Col Sheldon's Legion and three Companies of the State Troops of New York; with the two latter you will form a junction at Bedford, should you arrive by 12 OClock as is proposed; and with the former (Genl Waterbury) at King Street if you should reach that place by sunset. They have directions to put themselves under your Orders.

As the success of the Enterprize under Major Gen Lincoln, which would be of infinite consequence to us, will depend entirely upon his reaching the point of debarkation,

landing his Men and making the attack upon the Enemy's Works before they shall be alarmed; it will be necessary for you to regulate the Movement of the Corps under your Command in such a manner as that you will be at West Chester or in the neighbourhood of it, between the Break of day and Sunrise. By this means you will be at hand soon enough to strike the Blow by surprize, and not so early as to frustrate the expedition under Genl Lincoln. General Waterbury, Colo Sheldon, Capt. Sacket, and Capt Williams of the York Troops having a perfect knowledge of the Country, the route, the distance, and the position of the Enemy, I need only suggest, that it may be expedient to consult with them respecting the Roads, the time of March, the disposition for the attack &c; they will be able to furnish you with good guides and all the necessary information.

Should the object which is to be attempted by General Lincoln, from any circumstances be laid aside, he will land above Kings-bridge to support you, at all events I shall be with the Army in the vicinity of that place, it will therefore be expedient for you when you approach towards Williams's Bridge, to open a communication with the American Troops on the Road near the North River, by sending an Officer with an Escort to that Road.

I am very apprehensive, from the long march you will have to make on the 2d of July and the night succeeding it, that the Infantry of your Legion will not be able to be brought on to Morrissania in time; I would advise in that case, that they should be left behind to come up at their leisure, and that your Cavalry (which will not probably be so much fatigued) should advance with the other Infantry to the attack.<sup>24</sup>

Colonel Hull being an Officer of great merit and perfectly acquainted with the ground at and near Morrissania, and having formerly been employed in a successful enterprise against the Enemy at that place, I take the liberty to recommend him to you as a Gentleman who will be extremely useful in assisting you to make the necessary dispositions, and who will be happy to afford you every aid in his power.

It is unnecessary to recommend that every possible precaution should be used to keep the design a perfect secret from the Enemy, from the Country People, and even from the Troops (except such Officers as it is necessary to advise with) until the moment of your arrival at the Enemy's Lines. I have the honor etc.<sup>25</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Peekskill, July 2, 1781.

Sir: I have this Mornng received your Excellency's Favr

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24. At this point in the draft the following is crossed out: "When you make the disposition of your Troops, for carrying the enterprize into execution, I am persuaded you will regard Morrissania as the principal point of attack, making proper Detachments to watch the Enemy at Frogs Neck, West Chester, Delanceys Bridge, as well as to keep up the Communications, and to cut off the Enemy's retreat to York or Long Islands, and that you will send a party as near as may be without being under the fire of their Works to watch the Bridge near the Redoubt Number 8; and another to seize and keep possession of all the Boats on the Harlem River."

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25. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

of last Evening. I think it will be very well for your Excellency to proceed Tomorrow to North Castle where you will continue untill you assemble your whole Force, unless you should hear from me within that Time. Being at North Castle will put you in a direct Rout to receive your Provisions from Crompond, and will be in a direct Way for your Troops to advance to White Plains, or any other Point below, as Circumstances shall appear to Demand.

Colo Hull, an active and very intelligent Officer, will have the Honor to deliver this to your Excellency; he is charged with my Instructions to the Duke de Lauzun; and being perfectly acquainted with our intended Movements and with the Scene of Operations, will give all the Aid in his Power to the Duke;

this same Gentleman will be able to reply to any Queries your Excellency shall be pleased to put to him. With perfect Esteem etc.<sup>32</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Valentine's Hill, July 3, 1781, 8 oClock at Evening.

Sir: Count Firchin<sup>33</sup> will do me the Favor to

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32. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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33. Hans Axel, Comte de Fersen (Firchin), aid-de-camp to Rochambeau.

deliver this to your Excellency. The Operations of this Day are over, and I am sorry to say that I have not had the Happiness to succeed to my Wishes, although I think very essential Benefit will Result to our future Operations from the opportunity I have had in a very full manner, to reconnoitre the Position and Works of the Enemy on the North End of York Island. The particular Events of the Day I shall do myself the Honour to communicate, when I have the Pleasure to join your Excellency.

The American Army, and the Legion of the Duke de Lauzun, will march to Tomorrow to White Plains; if it will be convenient to you, I shall be happy to receive your Excellency with your Troops at that Place on the Day after Tomorrow.

When I shall have an Opportunity to converse with your Excellency, I Conceive I shall be able to give you such Reasons for formg your Junctions at the White Plains in the first Instance, as will fully satisfy your Excellency of the Utility and fitness of the Position for commencing the Preparations for our concerted Operations of the Campaign. I have the Honor etc.<sup>34</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Camp near White Plains, July 4, 1781.

Sir: A few minutes after my arrival upon this ground

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34. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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"At three o'clock this Morning I commenced my March with the Continental Army in order to cover the detached Troops and improve any advantage which might be gained by them; made a small halt at the New bridge over Croton abt. 9 Miles from Peekskill and another at the Church by Tarry Town till Dusk (9 Miles more) and compleated the remaining part of the March in the Night; arriving at Valentines Hill (at Mill square) about Sunrise. Our Baggage and Tents were left standing at the Camp at Peekskill.

"Being disappointed in both objects [the surprise of the works at the north end of York Island and the surprise of Delancey's corps]...I did not care to fatigue the Troops any more...suffered them to remain on the Arms while I spent a good part of the day in Reconnoitering the Enemys Works."—*Washington's Diary*, July 2 and 3, 1781.

I received your Excellency's favor of this morning. Were I to give way to the anxiety I feel to see the Union between your Army and that of mine I should request you to march tomorrow morning from North Castle, but when I consider the fatigue which your troops have undergone from their long and rapid marches at this very warm season, I am much inclined to wish you to give them one more day's rest in your present quarters and the more so, as there is now no real occasion for making an uncommon degree of haste. I shall however leave the matter intirely to your Excellency's determination, only wishing you to give me notice of your approach that I may have the happiness of meeting and conducting you to your Camp which will be about 4 Miles on this side the Village of White plains. I have the honor &c.<sup>35</sup>

## **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 11, 1781, 8 OClock P.M.

Sir: I have this moment received Intelligence from Kings bridge, that the Refugees have been impressing some Horses this day from the Inhabitants; this used to be commonly an indication of their making an incursion towards us. If they have any thing of the kind in view at present, it is, I am

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35. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

persuaded, a design to attack some of our Picquets, or drive off any Cattle which may be exposed to them. I have given the Guards Orders to use extraordinary Vigilance, and have thought it expedient

to communicate the information, altho I do not imagine there is any thing very serious to be apprehended. I have the honor etc.<sup>75</sup>

**To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters near Dobbs's Ferry, July 11, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's letters of the 24th. and 30th. June and 2d. Inst.

I observe by a late New York paper that your missing transport has been taken and carried into Hallifax.

The reinforcement which arrived at Charlestown, is not so considerable as was at first reported, it may perhaps amount to about 2000 Men. The ships of War which escorted this Convoy have arrived at New York. They are the Warwick of 50 Guns and Solebay Frigate.

I do myself the honor to inclose your Excellency the latest intelligence which I have received of the enemy's sea and land Force at New York. It comes through a Channel in which I place much confidence. I would only observe that

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75. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

if the Royal Oak has gone to Hallifax, one of the seven ships of the line said to be remaining at the Hook must be of 50 Guns. I have the honor etc.<sup>76</sup>

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 12, 1781.

Sir: Tomorrow Evening will answer very well for the movement I mentiond to your Excellency Yesterday, and I will arrange matters accordingly: 2000 French Troops besides Lauzens Legion with the Troops I shall order from the American line will be sufficient to make the reconnoitre without hazarding an Insult from the Enemy.

I shall have the honor of speaking more in detail to your Excellency on this subject between this and tomorrow. I am just setting out for Dobbs ferry. I have the honor etc.

76. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX**

Head Quarters, July 13, 1781.

Sir: I am much obliged to you for apprehending and sending One of the Persons who caused the disturbance last night under Guard. He shall be confined and properly examined. Be assured, Sir, every measure shall be adopted to preserve good Order and prevent a repetition of the like outrages in future. With perfect respect etc.<sup>89</sup>

### **TO FRANÇOIS, MARQUIS DE BARBE MARBOIS**

Head Quarters near Dobbs's ferry, July 13, 1781.

Sir: I have received your favor of the 9th., such of the letters as were for the officers of the french army have been delivered to them. Some under the same Packet were for the Minister and Mr. Holker, those I have returned by the same Express.

I cannot find that any packet will shortly sail either from New Port or from

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89. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

Boston I shall therefore send the European letters to Governor Hancock and request him to forward them by the first good private opportunity from Boston. I am much obliged by the communication of the intelligence from South Carolina. I fear that from the West Indies is without foundation as a Vessel in a short passage from Martinique to Boston brings a report that Count de Grasse had gone to Barbadoes but makes no mention of an engagement between the Fleets. I am &c.<sup>87</sup>

### **TO FRANCISCO RENDON**

Head Quarters near Dobbs Ferry, July 13, 1781.

Sir: I do myself the Honor to acknowledge the Receipt of your Agreeable Favor of the 14th ulto, with the Invoice inclosed. I have also the pleasure to inform you pr this Conveyance, that the Articles mentioned in the Invoice, and which you have been so kind as to present to Mrs. Washington and me, are safely arrived. Be assured Sir, I receive with particular Satisfaction this Mark of your Attention and Politeness; and that it claims my most sincere Thanks.

I have not yet been honored with the particulars of the Subjection of Pensacola to the Arms of his Catholic Majesty; nor with the Terms of its Capitulation; as soon as these shall be within your Power, I am perswaded you will be pleased to give me a Copy. I am etc.<sup>88</sup>

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87. In the writing of Peregrine Fitzhugh. From a photostat of the original in the Biblio. Natl., Paris. Mss. Français, 12768.

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88. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

### **CONFERENCE AT DOBBS FERRY<sup>45</sup>**

Camp at Dobbs's Ferry, July 19, 1781.

It is next to impossible at this Moment, circumstanced as we are and labouring under uncertainties, to fix a definitive plan for the Campaign: definitive Measures must depend upon circumstances at the Time of the Arrival of the Count de Grasse; particularly on the following:

1st. The Situation of the Enemy at that Moment.

2nd. On the Succours he shall bring with him; or on the Force we shall have collected by that Period.

3rd. On the Operation and Advantages which may be gained by the Fleet in the Moment of its Arrival, and,

4th. On the Continuance of the Fleet upon, and probability of its maintaining a decisive

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45. The record of this conference between Comte de Rochambeau and General Washington consists of a list of questions by Rochambeau, in the writing of De Sibille, and the answers of Washington, in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr. The questions and answers are in parallel columns, but are not numbered. The question column is signed by Rochambeau and the answer column is signed and

dated by Washington. A copy, in which both questions and answers are in the writing of Trumbull, is in the Chateau de Rochambeau, France. This is signed by Washington.

Rochambeau's questions are not given in the above text, as they are sufficiently indicated by Washington's answers.

Superiority while it is here.

If the Fleet of Count de Grasse should be late in its arriving to this Coast; if the Count should not think it prudent to attempt forcing the Passage of the Hook, or fail in making the attempt; if he should bring no land Troops with him, and the American Force should not be considerably augmented, I am of Opinion, that under these Circumstances, we ought to throw a sufficient Garrison into W Point; leave some Continental Troops and Militia to cover the Country contiguous to New York, and transport the Remainder (both French and American) to Virginia, should the Enemy still keep a Force there; the Season and other Circumstances will admit of late Operations in that Quarter; to be prepared for such an Event, I think it highly

expedient, that Mr. Barras should hold all his Transports in the utmost Readiness to take the Detachment under Mr. De Choisy and the heavy Artillery at Providence, on Board, and sail with them to meet the Troops either in Delaware or Chesapeak, as may be ultimately agreed upon.

But should the Fleet arrive in Season, not be limited to a short Stay; should be able to force the Harbour of New York, and in addition to all these, should find the British Force in a divided State. I am of opinion that the Enterprise against New York and its Dependencies should be our primary object.

To prevent the Enemy from a possibility of forming a Junction, and to lay a foundation for their ruin, I was anxious that Count de Barras, if he thought

the Departure of the Royal Oak, had given him a naval Superiority, should sail for Chesapeak; an Event, *if the Superiority is on his Side*, I devoutly wish, as I am of Opinion that much Good, and no Evil can result from it. The reasons which induce the Count to decline the Measure, have been communicated by him to your Excellency and to me by Letter.

Upon the whole I do not see what more can be done than to prosecute the Plan agreed to at Weathersfield, and to recommend it to the Count de Grasse to come immediately to *Sandy Hook*, and if possible possess the Harbour of New York at the Moment of his Arrival, and then from a full

view and consideration of the Circumstances which exist, form a definitive plan of campaign upon the surest grounds.

## TO COMTE DE GRASSE

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, July 21, 1781.

Sir: Your Excellency will have been informed by the Chevr. de la Luzerne of the ardent wishes of these United States to see the Fleet under your command in these Seas; will have been told the advantages which would in all probability be the result of such a movement; how essential it would be to make an early communication of your approach, and that you would be met off *Sandy Hook* with such details as might be necessary for your Government.

In full confidence that you will be soon upon this Coast, I have the honor to inform you that the allied Armies have formed a junction and taken a position about ten Miles above the enemy's posts on the North end of York Island. Their right at Dobb's Ferry on the North or Hudson's River, their left extending to a small River called the Brunx. The French Force consists of about 4400 men. The American is at this time but *small*, but expected to be *considerably augmented*. In this however we may be disappointed. And as the time of your arrival and the succour you may bring are altogether uncertain no definitive plan of operation has been or can be fixed. It must depend upon the situation of the enemy at the moment of your approach, and upon the force we shall be able to oppose to them in any given point.

The Enemy's land force in *New York and its dependencies*, including some late reinforcements from England, may amount at this time to about 5000 Regular Troops besides Militia, which may be about 3000 more. but they may be reinforced from Virginia, and the event is expected, unless they should be prevented by the arrival of your Excellency upon the Coast or some other intervention. Should they be hindered from effecting a further junction of Force at New York, that City and its dependencies are our primary objects. Your Excellency, by being in possession of the Harbour within *Sandy Hook*, would give facility if not certainty to the operation, but the practicability of gaining the entrance will be with your Excellency to determine, upon your general knowledge of the place, from your own observation upon the spot, and upon the information you will receive from the pilots who accompany you.

The Enemy's naval force at New York consists at present of only six Ships of the Line. I think two of 50 Guns and a few Frigates. The Royal Oak, a ship of the line, has lately been sent to Hallifax to receive some repairs which could not be done at New York.

The second object, in case we should find our force and means incompetent to the first, is the relief of Virginia, or such of the southern States as the enemy may be found in, by transporting the principal part of our force suddenly to that quarter; and that we may be ready for such an

event, preparations are making to facilitate such a movement. But of this I hope there will be no occasion, as I flatter myself the glory of destroying the British Squadron at New York is reserved for the Kings Fleet under your command, and that of the land Force at the same place for the allied Arms.

A Gentleman of the name of Forman,<sup>52</sup> who will probably have the honor of delivering this to you, is a person in whom you may perfectly confide and who will forward your dispatches immediately to me.

If you are not sufficiently provided with pilots, some of the most expert and trusty shall be sent to you without delay. I have the honor etc.<sup>53</sup>

## To COMTE DE BARRAS

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, July 21, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 15th. Inst. I have no doubt but the reasons which induce you to decline the removal of the Squadron under your command to Chesapeak at this time are founded in propriety; but I am certain that could the measure have taken place, it would have been attended with most valuable consequences,

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52. Brig. Gen. David Forman.

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53. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

"I am much obliged by the Favor you have done me in Translating my letter to Count De Grasse and for Cypherg some Part thereof; it is very necessary to keep its Contents from Discovery. Your

Goodness I hope will effect this for which you will please to accept my sincere Thanks."— *Washington to De Sibille*, July 21, 1781. This draft is in the *Washington Papers*.

more especially as from reports and appearances the enemy are about to bring part of their Troops from Virginia to New York.

Although the detachment from your Fleet, under the command of the Baron D'Angely<sup>54</sup> did not succeed at Huntington, we are not the less obliged to your Excellency for directing the attempt to be made.<sup>55</sup> If that post is maintained, I think an opportunity of striking it to advantage may still be found, and I doubt not but you will readily embrace it. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

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54. François Marie Baron d'Angely. He was colonel and aide to Baron de Vioménil.

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55. An attempt had been made to surprise the Tory post at Huntington, Long Island, but had failed.

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56. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, July 25, 1781.

Sir: The Officer by whom I sent my dispatch for Count de Grasse has returned from Monmouth and has brought me an answer from Genl. Forman to whom it is entrusted, and who promises to take the greatest care of it. The following is an extract of a letter from that Gentleman, which your Excellency will be pleased to communicate to Count de Barras, if you think proper.

"Saturday the 21st. of this month Adml. Graves with six or seven ships of the Line sailed from his station off Sandy Hook the Wind at South West. The Fleet steered about South East. Their destination not known, but conjectured to convey Lord Cornwallis from Chesapeak to New York."

General Furman confirms the account of the Royal Oak having gone to Hallifax to refit and adds that it is thought she will not be in condition for sea this season. I have the honor etc.<sup>71</sup>

### **TO COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, August 3, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's

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71. The draft is in tile writing of Tench Tilghman.

favor of the 25th. ulto. The Count de Rochambeau communicated to me the contents of your letter to him of the same date.

It having been proposed through, and strongly urged by, the Minister of France, that the Count de Grasse should come immediately to Sandy Hook, I should conceive, if your Excellency has received no official account to the contrary, that that will be the first point at which he will touch. In consequence of this opinion I have lodged dispatches for him with General Forman of the Militia of Monmouth on the Coast of New Jersey not far from Sandy Hook, a Gentleman in whom the utmost confidence may be placed. In these I have given the Count information of our position, strength and prospects, as also of the probable force and divided situation of the enemy; and did not fail to express my fervent Wishes that his early arrival might keep them so, or intercept them in endeavouring to form a junction. The important consequences which would result from either of these events taking place are too obvious to need illustration. I have also, from a full persuasion that Count de Grasse will first make his appearance off Sandy Hook, written to Captain Dobbs.<sup>24</sup> one of our most experienced pilots, and have desired him to repair with as many more as he can obtain to a secure place contiguous to the Hook, that they may be ready to go on board the Fleet the moment they are assured it is that of our Ally. Should my expectations be answered I shall make

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24. On this same day (August 3) Washington wrote to Capt. William Dobbs "The want of money need be no Obstacle to your proceeding upon the Service required, as you will receive a supply for that purpose upon your arrival here." This draft is in the *Washington Papers*.

no delay in communicating the agreeable intelligence to your Excellency.

The information received a few days ago by a Deserter, that Troops had arrived at New York from Virginia was premature. Subsequent accounts not only contradict it, but add, that they are not expected before the 15th. of this Month. In the interval, the Harbour of New York remains in a manner open and defenseless. Fortunate beyond expression would it be, could advantage be taken of the opportunity to possess it. I have the honor etc.<sup>25</sup>

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

August 7, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor to inclose (under a flying Seal for your personal) a letter to Governour Greene, wch. I hope will produce the effect your Excellency desires as it is my wish to give perfect security to the Fleet at New port in the present critical moment. With sentiments of Attachmt. etc.

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25. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

**TO COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, August 10, 1781.

Sir: I do myself the honor to inform your Excellency that by letters from the Marquis de la Fayette dated in Virginia the 26th. and 30th. of last Month, it appears that the enemy had embarked a number of Infantry on board thirty Transports and a detachment of Cavalry on board eight Brigs. They were still lying in Hampton Road, under Convoy of the Charon of 44 Guns and six smaller Frigates. They had pilots for Potowmack River and Chesapeak Bay; but the Marquis imagined this was in order to deceive and that their real destination was New York. He had dispatched a Boat to your Excellency with the foregoing intelligence, but was apprehensive that she would be intercepted.

By a letter from General Forman of the 3rd of this Month, I am informed that Admiral Rodney is expected upon this Coast, and he mentions a circumstance which seems to corroborate the opinion; it is, that a large Store ship is kept at Sandy Hook with provisions and Vegetables.

I enclose your Excellency a Duplicate of my letter of 21st. of July to Count de Grasse. The original is lodged with General Forman upon the Monmouth Coast. Should the Count make his first appearance off Rhode Island, you will

be pleased to present the duplicate to him. It is left under a flying seal for your information.

I have several of our most experienced Pilots ready to go on board the Fleet the moment they appear off the Hook. This circumstance you will be pleased to mention to the Count should you be happy enough to see him first. I have the Honor etc.<sup>69</sup>

69. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

**\*TO COMTE DE BARRAS**

August 15, 1781.

P.S.<sup>97</sup> The sentiments contained in the foregoing letter perfectly accord with my opinion, and I am more inclined to adopt them, as we have seen, in the British Gazettes accounts of a Squadron under the command of Admiral Digby said to be intended to reinforce the British fleets in these Seas. Should this Squadron actually arrive, from a junction with Admirals Rodney and Graves, and find the French Naval force seperated, it might, eventually, prove fatal to the fleet of his most Christian Majesty commanded by the Count de Grasse and yourself. I cannot avoid repeating therefore, in earnest terms the request of the Count de Rochambeau that you would form the junction, and as soon as possible, with the Count de Grasse in Chesapeak bay. With much respect &c.

**To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, August 16, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with Your Excellency's

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97. This postscript was appended by Washington to Rochambeau's letter to Barras, August 15, the "Letter Book" copy of which is in the *Rochambeau Papers* in the Library of Congress. De Grasse's letter to Barras announcing his coming did not order Barras to join him, but left Barras free to act as he pleased. De Grasse was Barras's junior, but had been recently promoted to a higher rank, and it was, probably, some feeling over this which led Barras to decide on an expedition to Newfoundland as soon as he received word of De Grasse's intention to visit the coast of America. Rochambeau's letter of August 15, with Washington's postscript, was effective, and Barras then decided to join De Grasse in the Chesapeake.

several late favors and the Count de Rochambeau has been kind enough to communicate to me the very interesting and important particulars to which they refer. He has also informed you of our joint opinion upon the measures which seemed to us most expedient at the present moment.

I have directed several small Vessels with about 1500 Barrels of Salt provision and some Rum to be sent from Providence and from Connecticut River to Newport, to take the Convoy of your Excellency's Fleet, I hope they may be in time, and I must request your care of them. I have the honor etc.<sup>1</sup>

## To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

August 17, 1781.

Sir: Upon a full consideration of all circumstances I am of opinion, that the march of the French Army under your command had better be by the following *Route* , and on the following days:

Sunday, 19th. to North Castle 14 Miles

Monday, 20th. to Kings Ferry 18 Do.

Allowing for the common chances of Winds and Weather it may take 'till

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1. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

Thursday 22d. to cross the North River.

Friday, 23d, to Suffrans 16 Miles

Saturday 24, to Pumpton Meetg Ho 14 Do.

Sunday, 25. to Whippany 15

Monday, 26 to Bullions Tavern 15

Tuesday, 27. to Somerset Ct House 14

Wednesday 28 to Princeton 14

Thursday, 29 to Trenton 12

I have named no halting day because we have not a moment to lose, and because the Troops<sup>17</sup> will more than probably, be detained sometime at Trenton; but if you should think it absolutely

necessary, Whippany will be a good place for a halt, as there is a good Road leading from thence through Chatham (five Miles distant) to Elizabeth Town and Staten Island.

After crossing the North River, Your Excellency may, if you should prefer it, march by Brigades. With every sentiment of esteem &c.<sup>18</sup>

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

Camp at Phillipsbg., August 17, 1781.

Sir: In consequence of the dispatches received from

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17. At this point in the draft the word "French" is crossed out.

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18. The draft is in the writing of David Humphreys.

"The want of Horses, or bad condition of them in the French Army delayed the March till tins day; the same cause, it is to be feared, will occasion a slow and disagreeable March to Elk."— *Washington's Diary*, Aug. 19, 1781.

your Excellency by the Frigate La Concorde it has been judged expedient to give up for the present the enterprise against New York and to turn our attention towards the South, with a view, if we should not be able to attempt Charles town itself, to recover and secure the States of Virginia, North Carolina and the Country of South Carolina and Georgia. We may add a further inducement for giving up the first mentioned enterprise, which is the arrival of a reinforcement of near 3000 Hessian Recruits. For this purpose we have determined to remove the whole of the French Army and as large a detachment<sup>19</sup> of the American as can be spared, to Chesapeak, to meet Your Exlency there.

The following appear to us the principal Cases which will present themselves, and upon which we shall be obliged ultimately to form our plans. We have therefore stated them, with a few short observations upon each. Your Excellency will be pleased to revolve them in your own mind and prepare your own opinion by the time we shall have the pleasure of meeting you in Virginia.

1st. What shall be done if the Enemy should be found with the greater part of their force in Virginia upon the arrival of the French Fleet?

2d. Should only a detachment be found there?

3d. Should the British force be totally withdrawn from thence?

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19. "The detachment from the American [Army] is composed of the light infantry under Scammell, two light companies of York to be joined by the like Number from the Connecticut line, the Remainder of the Jersey line, two Regiments of York. Hazens Regiment and the Regiment of Rhode Island, together with Lambs Regiment of Artillery with Cannon and other Ordnance for the field and Siege."— *Washington's Diary*, Aug. 19, 1781.

Upon the first, it appears to us that we ought, without loss of time, to attack the enemy with our United Force.

Upon the second, it appears proper to destine such part of our force as will be amply sufficient to reduce the enemys detachment, and then determine what use shall be made of the remainder; and here two things present themselves for our consideration. The enemy will either have sent the greater part of their force, from Virginia, to New York or to Charles town. If to New York, (which is the least probable under present circumstances) Charles town will have but a moderate Garrison and it may be possible to attack it to advantage. If to Charles town, Then the Enemy will be so superior to General Greene, that they will be able to regain the whole of the State of south Carolina and of consequence, Georgia. We therefore think that in this last case such a force at least should be detached to South Carolina as will enable us to keep the field and confine the enemy in or near to Charles town.

In the third case which we stated, we mean that of supposing the enemy should have totally evacuated Virginia. It appears to us necessary to make a solid establishment at portsmouth, or any other place if more proper, in order to render a Fleet in Chesapeak Bay entirely secure, and to employ the remainder of our land force and such Vessels as may be proper for the service as has been explained in the preceding Article. That is, either in the seige of Charles town, if the Garrison shall be found sufficiently weak to warrant the attempt, or to cover and secure the Country

should it be found otherwise.

Returning back to the enterprise agt. New York will depend upon a number of circumstances, the discussion of which we will leave untill we have the happiness of a conference with your Excellency. We have only to observe that the execution of all or any of the plans which we have proposed, go upon a supposition of a decided Naval superiority; except that of marching a reinforcement into south Carolina.

We would beg leave to take up so much of your Excellency's time, as to point out to you the vast importance of Charles town and what advantages the enemy derive from the possession of it. It is the Centre of their power in the south. By holding it, they preserve a dangerous influence throughout the whole State, as it is the only port and the only place from whence the people can procure those Articles of foreign produce which are essential to their support, and it in great measure serves to cover and keep in subjection the State of Georgia. From thence, the enemy can also establish small posts in North Carolina. And if they maintain a post in Chesapeak, they keep up the appearance of possessing 400 Miles upon the Coast and of consequence have a pretext for setting up claims which may be very detrimental to the interests of America in European Councils.

We are not sufficiently acquainted with the position of Charles town, neither is it necessary at this time, to enter into a detail of the proper mode of attacking it, or of the

probability which we should have of succeeding. For these we will refer your Excellency to Brigadier Genl. du portail Commander of the Corps of Engineers in the service of the United States, who will have the honor of presenting this. That Gentleman having been in Charles town as principal Engineer during the greater part of the seige, and in the Environs of it as a prisoner of War a considerable time afterwards, had opportunities of making very full observations, which he judiciously improved.

A variety of cases different from those we have stated may occur. It is for this reason that we have thought proper to send General du portail to your Excellency. He is fully acquainted with every circumstance of our Affairs in this quarter, and we recommend him to your Excellency as an Officer upon whose Abilities and in whose integrity you may place the fullest confidence.

We would observe to your Excellency that it will be very essential to the dispatch of the business in contemplation for you to send up to Elk River at the Head of Chesapeak Bay all your Frigates, Transports and Vessels proper for the conveyance of the French and American Troops down the Bay. We shall endeavour to have as many as can be found in Baltimore and other ports secured, but we have reason to believe they will be very few. We have the honor etc.<sup>20</sup>

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20. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The letter was signed jointly by Washington and Rochambeau.

**To COMTE DE BARRAS**

Head Quarters, Dobbs's Ferry, August 18, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 14th. Inclosed is the Copy of the latest intelligence I have recd. from Genl. Forman from which it appears that Admiral Graves was off the Hook on the 16th. Inst. I have the honor etc.<sup>29</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, August 18, 1781.

Sir: Before Mr. Morris left Camp he made a proposal which he desired might be communicated to your Excellency. He informed me that he understood Mr. Tarlé had between two and three thousand Barrels of Flour upon the upper parts of the North River, and as he imagined it could not now be wanted in that quarter he made an offer of supplying you with an equal quantity to the southward, if that above should be delivered to our Commissary General. I shall be obliged by your making Mr. Tarlé acquainted with the above, and if it can be transacted upon the terms proposed by Mr. Morris, I shall be

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29. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

glad to know the exact quantity and where Mr. Tarlé would chuse to have the Flour which is to be given in exchange deposited. I have the honor etc.<sup>33</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Head Quarters, Kings Ferry, August 21, 1781.

Sir: I have this Moment the Honor of your Letter pr Monsr Blanchard.<sup>43</sup> I am very sorry for the Difficulties and Impediments which fall in the Way of your March, and hope they will decrease as you proceed.

I have the Pleasure to inform your Excellency that My Troops arrived at the Ferry Yesterday and began to pass the River at 10 oClock in the Morng. and by Sunrise of this Day, they were all

completely on this Side the River. I hope your Army will be enabled to cross with the same Facility when they arrive.<sup>44</sup>

I have no News worthy Communication from any Quarter. [ sic ] Shall be happy in your Company Tomorrow at Dinner at my Quarters and will meet you at the Ferry Tomorrow by 8 oClock, when we will either be furnished with some Cold Repast en passant, or will take you to my Quarters about 3 Miles from the Ferry, where you shall be introduced to a Warm Breakfast. I have the Honor etc.<sup>45</sup>

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33. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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43. Claude Blanchard, Commissary of the French Army.

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44. "During the passing of the French Army I mounted 30 flat Boats (able to carry about 40 Men each) upon carriages as well with a design to deceive the enemy as to our real movement, as to be useful to me in Virginia when I get there. Some of the french Artillery wch. preceded their Infantry got to the ferry and crossed it also."— *Washington's Diary*, Aug. 21, 1781.

The French Army, its baggage, and stores were all across the Hudson on August 25.

"By these manœuvres and the correspondent march of the Troops, our own army no less than the Enemy were completely deceived. No movement perhaps was ever attended with more conjectures, or such as were more curious, than this. Some were indeed laughable enow'; but not one, I believe, penetrated the real design." From the diary of Lieut. Col. Jonathan Trumbull, jr., under date of Aug. 21, 1781, in the *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings*, vol. 14, p. 332.

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45. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

## **ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS PROPOSED THIS DAY BY HIS EXCELLENCY COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU<sup>53</sup>**

Kings Ferry, August 22, 1781.

1st. Peekskill may not be an improper place for an Hospital of Convalescents or such persons as may be able to move themselves without the assistance of Carriages, but I should not think a permanent Hospital would be safe there, since we have so large a detachment from the Army. For the same

reason I think it an improper place for a deposit of any kind of stores. 2d. Qr. Are any stores to be left at Peekskill?

2d. This is answered under the first Head.

3d. Qr. In event of Genl. Heath being obliged to retreat to Fishkill and West Point, what place should be chosen for the stores?

3rd. At either New Windsor, Newburgh, Fishkill Landing or Fishkill Town. At the two first there are no public Buildings but what are in use, but

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53. The drafts of both questions and answers are in the writing of Tench Tilghman on separate documents. Rochambeau's questions, where it seems necessary to give them, are condensed and paraphrased sufficiently to explain Washington's answers.

there are several private Stores which might be hired. At the third there are no public buildings of any consequence. I make no doubt but part of the Barracks or some of the public Buildings at Fishkill town might be spared. At West Point we have not sufficient room for the stores which ought to be constantly kept there.

4th. Qr. Will the route from Boston to the North River via Danbury be safe, especially for the conveyance of money?

4th. The shortest and safest Route from Boston to the North River is through Springfield and to Claverac. At any rate I do not think the Route ought to be below Litchfield and from thence to Fishkill.

5th. I have not yet openly taken measures for procuring Vessels upon the Delaware, altho' I have hinted to Mr. Morris that they will be wanted at a proper time. I would propose

that the American Qr. Mr. General should engage all the proper kind of Craft upon the Delaware for the transportation of the troops and Stores from Trenton and that the expence should be paid by the French and Americans in proportion to the number of Men and quantity of Stores transported.

6th. Qr. To what points will the boats carry us?

6. To Wilmington near the mouth of Christiana Creek; to Newport, four Miles above Wilmington, or Christiana Bridge nine Miles above it, as the circumstances of Wind and Weather will permit.

7. The number of Carriages necessary for the transport of the Artillery and Baggage is so much greater than can be procured in the Country between Christiana and Elk, that I

would propose that all the teams fit for further service upon our arrival at Trenton should be sent across the Country to Wilmington; the deficiency may be made up in that neighbourhood.

8th. Qr. If the Troops embark at Trenton to go down the Delaware what Road will the Waggon and Horses take: Must they be sent to the Head of Elk to be embarked there, or will they be sent to Susquehannah Ferry to be brought down to Alexandria?

8. They will be sent to Wilmington for the reasons above assigned, which is exactly in the Route to the Head of Elk. It will be determined upon our arrival at Elk whether they are to proceed by land or sent down the Bay by Water.

9. I have every reason to believe that there are few or no vessels at this time at Baltimore or at any place in the upper part of Chesapeak Bay, and for that reason your Excellency will be pleased to remember that we in our joint letter recommended it to Count de Grasse to send up all his

Frigates and Transports to Elk River. But as it is a matter of the utmost importance, it may not be amiss for your Excellency to repeat the request either immediately to Count de Grasse or through the Minister of France.

10th. Qr. Ought not hospitals and provisions be immediately provided for the march to the Head of Elk?

10th. It will perhaps be more expedient to delay this untill our arrival at Springfield, lest doing it sooner should expose our design.

**To BENOIT JOSEPH DE TARLE<sup>54</sup>**

Head Quarters, Kings Ferry, August 22, 1781.

Sir: You will oblige me by letting me know the Quantity of Flour which you propose to deliver to my Commy. General upon the North River, and where you would chuse to have the like quantity to replace it, delivered, and in what time. This last is particularly necessary to enable

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54. Lieutenant colonel of the Regiment Bouillon, and major general and intendant, French Army in America.

me to inform Mr. Morris, that he may make his purchases accordingly. I have the honor etc.<sup>55</sup>

**To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, Kings ferry, August 24, 1781.

Sir: I take the earliest Opportunity to inform your Excellency, that by a letter which the Count de Rochambeau has received from Newport, The Count de Barras has taken a Resolution to join your Fleet in the Chesapeak; for which Purpose he intended, if the Winds should prove favorable, to depart from Newport on the 21st. instant. This Information is communicated to your Excellency, that you may take such Measures as you shall think proper, to facilitate the intended Junction.

From the Progress already made in our March towards the Chesapeak, it is estimated that the Troops may arrive at the Head of Elk by the Eighth of September.<sup>57</sup>

That no Delay may retard our Embarkation, I take the Liberty again to urge the Necessity of your Excellency's sending up all your Frigates and Transports to the Head of Elk in such Time that they may be sure of being there by the 8th. of the next Month. I have the Honor etc.<sup>58</sup>

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55. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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57. Washington himself reached the Head of Elk on September 6.

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58. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

**\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Chatham, August 27, 1781.

Sir: By intelligence which I have received since my arrival at this place, I find that the enemy have been throwing Troops upon Staten Island. This circumstance, and a desire of bringing up the rear

of the two Armies will induce me to halt the American Troops one day at Springfield, as I pray your Excellency to do those of the French at Whippany.

This [halt]<sup>75</sup> will be attended with<sup>76</sup> no delay, as I could not, before this period, take measures to assemble the Vessels of Delaware, at Trenton, without announcing the object in view; but an Express being now gone for this<sup>77</sup> purpose, I shall expect to have at least a part of them at that place by Friday next, to commence embarkation.

I shall set out the day after tomorrow for Philadelphia, and should be glad to know your Excellency's determination respecting your journey thither; if to precede your Army, we will appoint a rendezvous.

With the greatest respect etc.

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75. The word "halt" has been inserted by Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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76. Trumbull has crossed out "be attended with" and substituted the word "occasion."

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77. Trumbull has here substituted "that" for "this."

### **\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Chatham, August 28, 1781.

Sir: I do not find that the force upon Staten Island is large, or thrown over for any other purpose than that of defence, for which reason it is submitted to your Excellency's judgment to March your Troops in one or two division's as shall be most easy and convenient to them; there [ sic ] moving in two divisions succeeding days, will occasion no delay, as the Second will be up by the time the first will have embarked.

As I propose to go the lower Road I shall not have the honr. of joining your Excellency till we arrive at Princeton where I will order dinner to be ready at three OClock that we may lodge at Trenton (12 Miles further). As this will be a journey of 54 Miles from Whippany I would suggest to you the expediency of making part of it this Afternn. Colo. Smith, one of my Aides, who is well acquainted with the Roads will have the honor of attending you to the rendezvous at Princeton.

With great esteem etc.<sup>86</sup>

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86. This same day (August 28) Washington wrote a second letter to Rochambeau, that he would “agreeable to your request, order a Detachment of Troops for the purpose of covering your Bake house in this place.” This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To BARON DE VIOMÉNIL**

Chatham, August 29, 1781, 4 O.Ck.

Sir: I am just now honored with your Fav. of last Evening. A Detachment of Militia consisting of a Sub: and 25 Men, are already ordered for the Protection of your Bakery; about 400 more Men will lye near this Place which I think will be full Security so long as you mention. I am &c.<sup>99</sup>

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99. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

### **\*To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Philadelphia, September 3, 1781.

Sir: From the head of Elk, the Cavalry, Carriages and such Artillery as may be sent by Land, will proceed by the following rout: Lower ferry on Susquehannah; Baltimore; Elk ridge Landing; Bladensburg; George Town, on Potomack river. From hence a rout must be pursued to Fredericksburg, that will avoid an inconvenient ferry over Occoquan, and Rappahannock river at the Town of Fredericksburg. The latter may, I believe, be forded at Falmouth (two miles above Fredericksburg) and the latter [former] by leaving the common rout a little upon the left from George Town.

From Fredericksburg, the rout will be by Caroline Court House and Newcastle. I cannot, at this moment, point out the different Marches for want of a sufficient knowledge of the road, and convenient encamping places on it, but Lt. Colo. Gouvion being instructed to reconnoitre these will enable me perhaps to be more particular 'ere the March commences from the head of Elk. I have the honor etc.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Lieut. Col. William Stephens Smith's account of Washington's traveling expenses (filed in the *Washington Papers* under Sept. 17, 1781, the date of its settlement shows that the route of Washington and Rochambeau from Princeton, N.J., to Baltimore was to Trenton, Bristol, Philadelphia, Chester, Wilmington, Christiana Bridge, Wormsley's, Susquehanna Ferry, Darling's, Nottingham, and Baltimore. An interesting item between the Darling and Nottingham entries reads: "to Comfort the Wretched." 8 shillings

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Chester, September 5, 1781, 3 o'clock.

Sir: With the highest Satisfaction, I do myself the Honor, to transmit to your Excellency, the inclosed Copy of a Letter, announcing the Arrival of the Count De Grasse, with 28 Ships, in the Chesapeak.

With the warmest Congratulations on this happy Event, I have the Honor etc.<sup>31</sup>

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head of Elk, September 6, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored by your Excellency's Favor of the 2d Instant and do myself the Pleasure to felicitate you on the happy arrival of so formidable a Fleet of his most Christian Majesty, in the Bay of Chesapeak, under your Excellencys Command; this happy Event, I hope will be improved to the most salutary Purposes for the united interests of both Nations.

Expecting to have the Honor of a personal Interview with your Excellency, almost as soon as this will

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31. In the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr. From the original in the *Paris Archives, Affaires Etrang., Meres. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

reach your Hand, I shall not give you the trouble in Writing, of a particular Detail of my Designs. Will only inform you, that the Van of the two Armies, the French and American, consistg of about 2000 Men, (there not being Transports for the whole) will be embarked in about two Days, and will fall Down the Chesapeak to form a Junction with the Troops under the Comd. of the Ct. de St. Simon and

the Marquis Lafayette and to cooperate in Block up Ld Cornwallis in York River, and preventg him to make his Retreat by Land, or collecting any Supplies from the Country.

This Junction of the Van of our Troops is proposed to be made in James River, unless your Excellency and the Commanders of the land Troops, should judge some other Point of Debarkation to be more favorable to our Intentions, in which Case you will be pleased to meet the Transports while on their Way, with Orders to proceed to any other Point which may be fixed on.

The Remainder of the Troops from hence will be forwarded on with all the Expedition our Circumstances will admit. In the Mean Time, as it will be of the greatest Importance to prevent the Escape of his Lordship from his present Position, I am persuaded that every Measure which prudence can dictate Will be improved for that Purpose, untill the Arrival of our Compleat Force, when I hope his Lordship will be compelled to yield his Ground, to the superior power of our

Combined Forces. I am &c.<sup>44</sup>

### To COMTE DE GRASSE

Head Quarters, Williamsburg, September 15, 1781.

Sir: I had the Honour to receive your Excellencys Letter of the 4th. of this Month, soon after my Arrival at this Place. I am at a Loss to express the Pleasure which I have in congratulating your Excellency on your Return to your former Station in the Bay, and the happy Circumstances of formg a Junction with the Squadron of the Count De Barras.<sup>83</sup> I take particular Satisfaction in felicitating your Excellency on the Glory of having driven the British Fleet from the Coasts, and takg two of their Frigates; these happy events and the decided Superiority of your Fleet, give us the happiest Presages of the most compleat Success, in our combined Operations on this Bay.

It is with much Regret that I find the Want of Transports on the Bay, has much retarded the coming on of the Troops expected from the Northward.<sup>84</sup> If it is possible for your Excellency to give us any Assistance in this Distress, it will be attended with inexpressible Advantage to the prosecution of our Measures, and will be

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44. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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83. Barras arrived in the Chesapeake on August 10, (while De Grasse was engaged with the British fleet beyond the Capes) with the French troops under De Choisy and the siege artillery which had been left behind in Rhode Island by Rochambeau. (See Washington's letter to De Custine-Sarreck, Sept. 15, 1781, *post.*)

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84. At this point the draft has the following crossed out: "but small proportion of the Troops, with American Stores, are yet embarked."

acknowledged with the Highest gratitude.

Such of our Troops as Could not be embarked at Head of Elk, are marchg to Baltimore, where they are to be put on Board such Transports as may be collected at that Place.

It is very much the Wish of the Count De Rochambeau, as well as myself, to have the Honor of an Interview with your Excellency; but our particular Circumstances render us dependant on your Goodness for the Means of Conveyance; if your Excellency could dispatch some fast Sailg Cutter to receive us on Board and will inform us your Time and place, we will be very happy to attend you, at the earliest Moment you shall fix.

The Count Fercin,<sup>85</sup> an Aid to the Count Rochambeau, is sent on to hurry down the Troops embarkg on the Bay, if your Excellency can furnish him the Means of proceeding up the Bay, it will be very agreable. I am &c.

P.S. Since writing the above, I am informed with much Pleasure, that your Excellency has anticipated my Wishes in sendg Transports up the Bay.<sup>86</sup>

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85. Hans Axel, Comte de Fersen.

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86. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

**To COMTE DE CUSTINE-SARRECK,<sup>88</sup> OR OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS AT THE HEAD OF ELK**

Head Quarters, Williamsburg, September 15, 1781.

Sir: The Troops embarked, having been stopped on the Sailing of the Fleet from the Chesapeak, I have the Pleasure to inform you that the Count De Grasse, having been joined by Monsr De Barras' Squadron, and having captured two of the British Frigates, is now returned with the whole, and again taken his Station in the Bay. By this Means, the Bay being perfectly secure, you will be pleased to proceed with the Troops under your Command, with all possible Dispatch to James River, where they are to debark at James Town, and receive further Orders. I am &c.<sup>89</sup>

### QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY GENERAL WASHINGTON TO COMTE DE GRASSE

September 17, 1781.<sup>95</sup>

The noble and generous Support which is given to this Country, by His Most Christian Majesty, does, as it ought, fill the breast of every American with gratitude and Love; The zeal and alacrity with which His Officers

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88. Adam Philippe, Comte de Custine-Sarreck. He was brigadier general of cavalry and colonel of the Regiment Saintonge.

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89. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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95. Washington and Rochambeau arrived on the French flagship, the *Ville de Paris*, at Cape Henry about noon, September 17. The interview with the French admiral took place the same day.

strive to carry his Royal intentions into execution, merit our highest admiration and applause; a recent instance of this is now before us; But the distressed and unfortunate circumstances of these United States, and the dispersed situation of their Troops are such, as do not admit their Military operations to be carried on with that celerity which could be wished, nor place them in that advantageous ground, from which they may reap all that benefit from this generous Aid, that in other circumstances they might expect to receive.

The measures which are now pursuing, are big with great events; the Peace and Independence of this Country, and the general tranquility of Europe will, it is more than probable, result from our Compleat success; disgrace to ourselves, Triumph to the Enemy, and probable Ruin to the American Cause, will follow our disappointment. The first is certain, if the powerfull Fleet, now in Chesapeak Bay or such part of it as will be competent to the purpose, can remain to the close of a regular Operation, which, from various unforeseen causes, may be protracted beyond our present

expectation. The second is much to be apprehended, if from the fear of loosing the Aid of the Fleet, the operations by Land are precipitated faster than a necessary prudence and regard to the lives of Men, will warrant; the first may be slow, but sure; the second must be bloody and precarious.

Under this state of matters, General Washington

begs, that the Count de Grasse will have the goodness to give him a Resolution of the following Questions. Viz.

#### QUESTIONS

1st. Is your Excellency restricted to any certain time for the continuance of the Fleet upon this Coast? If any time is fixed, beyond which your Orders will not warrant your stay in this Bay, or if the pursuit of any other object should more attract your attention, be pleased to name the day to which your departure is determined.

2d. If your Excellency should find yourself under a necessity to return the Troops, under the Command of the Marquis de St. Simon, to the West Indies, (however to be lamented such circumstance must be) may I not be assured, that a detachment of the Fleet may be employed as a Convoy to those Troops, and that the

Main Fleet may remain in the Bay to form a sufficient cover to our Operations against the Enemy, to prevent their receiving supplies by water, and to protect us from any attempt from the British to give relief to Lord Cornwallis and raise our Seige; and this Fleet to remain untill the close of our Operations.

3d. Will it, in your Excellency's opinion, be practicable to force with your Ships, the passage of the York River, so as to git above the Enemy?

This measure, if effected, will be attended with almost infinite advantages, not only, as it will secure our Communication on both sides the River, which otherwise must be very lengthy and tedious, but will give us the Navigation of the River, and enable us to draw the supplies of the Country

throughout its whole extent; and will also form the compleat investiture of the Enemy's Posts.

4th. So long as the Enemy possesses both sides of the River, it will be necessary to keep up our force on both sides, to aid our efforts in the operation, will it be in your Excellency's power to spare us any

number of Men from on board the Fleet, to continue so long as this measure is necessary? if any, what number?

5th. If in the prosecution of our operations, our prospects of success should wear a favorable Aspect, I shall be glad to be decided, whether your Excellency will be able to detach some suitable Vessels from your Fleet, sufficient to block in the British Troops at Wilmington, and to possess the Harbour of Charlestown?

6th. If our Operations should

be of such a nature as to require it, will your Excellency be able to lend us some heavy Cannon and other Artillery, [Powder also, in what number and quantity?<sup>96</sup>

### To COMTE DE GRASSE

On Board the Charlotte,<sup>98</sup> James River, September 20, 1781.

Sir: I have been informed that some American Vessels, with salted Provisions on Board, for the Use of the Troops of my Army, have taken the Benefit of the Convoy of the Squadron of Count de Barras, and are Arrived in the Bay. I Will be obliged if your Excellency will be pleased to order those Transports to proceed up this River, near to Burrel's Ferry and let them report to me, that they may receive my Orders where they shall debark their Provisions.

I cannot omit to express to your Excellency, the high Satisfaction I had in the very cordial Reception I experienced from you on Board the Ville De Paris. I hope ere long to have the happiness to embrace you again with the like Cordiality and Sincere Affection, on the Reduction of Lord Cornwallis and his Army, an Event, which I am sure will

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96. A copy, in the writing of David Cobb and signed by Washington, is filed with Washington's letter to Congress, Oct. 27, 1781, in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. In the draft, which is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr., the words in brackets above are in the writing of Washington. The answers of De Grasse, condensed, were: To question No. 1: His instructions fixed his departure from the Chesapeake at October 15, but he would stay until the end of October. No. 2: St. Simon's troops have a particular destination; but they will stay as long as De Grasse stays. No. 3: Hesitates about sending ships up the York River above Yorktown; but will reconnoiter the situation and then decide. No. 4: Will furnish 1,800 to 2,000 men; but wish they may not be used except in a "Coup de Main." No. 5:

The form of the French vessels do not admit of the enterprise against Wilmington and Charleston. No. 6: Can furnish some cannon and powder but only a small quantity of the latter. The answers in the draft are in the writing of Tench Tilghman. A copy, in French, of the questions and answers, signed by De Grasse, is also in the *Washington Papers*.

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98. The tender *Queen Charlotte*, in which Washington and Rochambeau went from Williamsburg to Cape Henry to confer with De Grasse. Owing to contrary winds, they did not get back to Williamsburg until September 22.

convey the greatest Pleasure to each of us. I have the Honor etc.<sup>99</sup>

### **To THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE INFANTRY OF LAUZUN'S LEGION**

James River, September 20, 1781.

Sir: You will be pleased to make your best Way into Piuncatanck River, where you will disembark your Troops at the most convenient place you can find that shall be nearest to Gloscester Court House. I am &c.

P.S. After Debarkg the Troops mentioned, if any Military Stores are on Board, you will proceed with them to Burrel's Ferry in James River, where you will receive further Orders. Those Vessels as will be fully discharged with the Troops at Glouscester, will proceed immediately to Anapolis, where they will apply to Govr Lee for his Directions to receive Flour to transport to the Army and pursue his Orders.<sup>97</sup>

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99. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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97. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Williamsburg, September 22, 1781.

Sir: The inclosed letter for Your Excellency and the Copies of others to Count de Rochambeau and myself have this moment come to my Hands. I deem the intelligence they contain of so much

importance that I have thought it proper to transmit them immediately to your by the Baron Closen one of the Aides de Camp to the Count de Rochambeau. I have the honor etc.<sup>3</sup>

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

Williamsburg, September 25, 1781.

Sir: I cannot conceal from your Excellency the painful anxiety under which I have laboured since the receipt of the letter with which you honored me on the 23d inst.

The naval movements which Your Excellency states there as possible considering the intelligence

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3. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

communicated to you by the baron de Clossen, make it incumbent upon me to represent the consequences that wd arise from them, and to urge a perseverance in the plan already agreed upon.<sup>21</sup> Give me leave in the first place to repeat to Yr Excellency that the enterprise against York under the protection of your Ships, is as certain as any military operation can be rendered by a decisive superiority of strength and means; that it is in fact reducible to calculation, and that the surrender of the british Garrison will be so important in itself and its consequences, that it must necessarily go a great way towards terminating the war, and securing the invaluable objects of it to the Allies.<sup>22</sup>

Your Excellency's departure from the Chesapeake by affordg an opening for the succour of York, which the enemy wd instantly avail himself of, would frustrate these brilliant prospects, and the consequence would be not only the disgrace and loss of renouncing an enterprise, upon which the fairest expectations of the Allies have been founded, after the most expensive preparations and uncommon exertions and fatigues; but the disbanding perhaps the whole Army for want of provisions.

The present Theatre of the War is totally deficient in means of land transportation, being intersected by large rivers, and the whole dependance for interior communication being upon small Vessels. The Country has

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21. De Grasse's letter of Sept. 23, 1781, is in the *Washington Papers*. A translation is in Sparks, vol. 8, p. 528. In it De Grasse proposed that he should leave 2 vessels at the mouth of York River, the

corvettes and frigates then blockading the James River and with all the rest of his fleet put to sea in order to secure more maneuvering space. In such case, if he should be forced to leeward, he inquired of Washington what would be his procedure. De Grasse further stated he would sail toward New York, where he might do more, he thought, for the common cause than by remaining an idle spectator at Cape Henry.

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22. At this point the following is crossed off in the draft: "The dearest interests then of the common cause, and Your Excellency's personal Glory being thus deeply concerned, nothing I am persuaded can determine Your Excellency to withdraw your cooperation."

been much exhausted besides by the ravages of the enemy and the subsistence of our own Army; that our supplies can only be drawn from a distance and under cover of a fleet Mistress of the Chesapeake.

I most earnestly entreat Your Excellency farther to consider that if the present opportunity shd be missed; that if you shld withdraw your maritime force from the position agreed upon, that no future day can restore us a similar occasion for striking a decisive blow; that the british will be indefatigable in strengthening their most important maritime points, and that the epoch of an honorable peace will be more remote than ever.

The confidence with which I feel myself inspired by the energy of character and the naval talents which so eminently distinguish Yr Excellency leaves me no doubt that upon a consideration of the consequences which must follow your departure from the Chesapeake, that Yr Excellency will determine upon the possible measure which the dearest interests of the common cause wd dictate.

I had invariably flattered myself from the accounts given me by skilful mariners, that Your Excellency's position, moored in the Chesapeake might be made so respectable, as to bid defiance to any attempt on the pt of the british fleet, at the same time that it wd support the operations of a siege, secure the transportation of our supplies by water

and œconomise the most precious time by facilitating the debarkation of our heavy Artillery and stores conveniently to the trenches in York River. It is to be observed that the strength of the enemy's reinforcement announced under Admiral Digby as we have the intelligence from the british, may not only be exaggerated, but altogether a finesse, and supposing the account consistent with truth: their total force it was hoped wd. not put them in condition to attack with any prospect of success.

If the stationary position which had been agreed upon should be found utterly impracticable, there is an alternative which however inferior considered relatively to the support and facility of our land operations would save our affairs from ruin; this is to cruise with Your Excellency's fleet within view of the capes, so as effectually to prevent the entrance of any british Vessels.

Upon the whole, I shd. esteem myself deficient in my duty to the common cause of France and America, if I did not persevere in entreating Yr. Excellency to resume the plans that have been so happily arranged, and if invincible maritime reasons prevent, I depend as a last resource upon Your Excellency's pursuing the alternative above mentioned and rendering the Chesapeake inaccessible to any Enemy's Vessel.

However the british Admiral may

manœuvre and endeavour to divert Yr Excellency from the object in view, I can hardly admit a belief that it can be his serious intention to engage in a general action with a Fleet whose force will be superior supposing the most flattering accounts for the british to be true; past experience having taught them to engage with caution even upon equal terms, and forced from them acknowledgements, which prove the respect with which they have been inspired.

Let me add Sir that even a momentary absence of the french fleet may expose us to the loss of the british Garrison at York as in the present state of affairs Ld Cornwallis might effect the evacuation with the loss of his Artillery and baggage and such a sacrifice of men as his object would evidently justify.

The Marquis de la fayette who does me the honor to bear this to Yr Excellency will explain many peculiarities of our situation which could not well be comprised in a letter; his candour and abilities are well known to Yr Excellency and entitle him to the fullest confidence in treating the most important interests. I have earnestly requested him not to proceed any farther than the Capes for fear of accidents shd Yr. Excellency have put to sea; in this case he will dispatch a Letter to Yr Excellency in addition to this. I have the honor etc.<sup>23</sup>

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23. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

A draft in the Morgan Library, also in the writing of Laurens, with a few interlineations in Washington's writing, shows that this letter was at first cast in the form of instructions to Lafayette.

**To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, September 27, 1781.

Sir: I am much indebted to your Excellency for the instant Communication with which you have honored me, of the Dispositions that you have determined for your Fleet.

The Resolution that your Excellency has taken in our Circumstances proves that a great Mind knows how to make personal Sacrifices to secure an important general Good; fully sensible of those wch your Excellency has made on the present Occasion, I flatter myself, that the Result of the Operations conducted under your Auspices, will compensate them by its Utility to the common Cause.

Your Excellency may depend on every Assistance that the Allied Armies can give relatively to the Battery which you propose at Comfort Point, and that our utmost Exertions will be used in hastening the investment of the Enemy. I have the honor etc.

P.S. I am this Moment informed by Deserters, that the Enemy are preparing more fire Ships against your Vessels in the River and that the old Forvey is to be one.<sup>29</sup>

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29. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

**To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, September 27, 1781.

Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to your Excellency this Morning the Count de Rochambeau and myself have received letters from Genl Weedon and the Duke De Lauzun who are posted near Gloucester.

These Officers both represent, in the strongest terms that considering the nature of the Ground, their strength and the facility with which the Enemy may reinforce his post at Gloucester, an augmentation of their present Numbers is indispensable, both to enable them to occupy a good Defensive position and to confine the Enemy within his Lines. In those circumstances I am induced to request your Excellency to spare a detachment of six or eight hundred Men from the Garrison

of your Ships. This measure I am persuaded will answer the most valuable purposes and it will increase the obligations under a sense of which, I have the honor etc.<sup>30</sup>

**To CHEVALIER DE VILLEBRESME<sup>32</sup>**

Head Quarters, September 27, 1781.

Sir: As the Count de Grasse has been pleased to

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30. The copy is in the writing of Peregrine Fitzhugh.

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32. Thomas Jacques de Goislard, Chevalier de Villebresme (Villebresne, Ville Brune). He had been lieutenant colonel of the Musketeer Royal Guard and had volunteered for service in America with the squadron of De Ternay.

signify his desire, that you would make such arrangements for facilitating the operations of the land Army as the Service may require; I have to request that you will be pleased in the course of tomorrow to fall down the River to a convenient anchoring Ground near Mr. Burrells at Martin's hundred on the left hand Shore and remain there untill the point of debarkation for the heavy Artillery and Stores shall be determined upon. This will be designated to you without loss of Time. I have the honor etc.<sup>33</sup>

**To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Before York, October 1, 1781.

Sir: I should have had the honor of acknowledging sooner the note which Your Excellency transmitted by the Marquis de lafayette; but an expectation of being able to accompany my answer with interesting intelligence induced me to defer it to the present moment. With regard to the Station which Your Excellency has determined for the main fleet, the reasons which you are pleased to communicate prove that it unites all advantages, and inspire the greatest confidence in the accomplishment of its object.

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33. The copy is in the writing of Peregrine Fitzhugh.

I have only one proposition to submit to Your Excellency on the subject of naval dispositions, and the objects of it are too essential not to be exposed to you in their fullest light. I mean the stationing two or three Ships above the Enemy's posts on York R; for want of this only means of completing the Investment of their works, the british remain masters of the navigation for 25 miles distance above them, and have by their armed Vessels intercepted supplies of the greatest value on their way to our Camp. The loss is redoubled by diminishing our means and augmenting those of the enemy, at a most critical time.

We are even necessitated for the protection of Williamsburg, and the magazines in our rear to leave a post of seven or eight hundred men in that quarter; a diminution of our force that in present circumstances we can but illy support; but unless this detachment is made, the Enemy might in the greatest security land above Queen's Creek to cover his left flank, and by a very short march effect the most destructive purposes, while the circuitous march which we, from the nature of the Country shd be obliged to make, wld render it impossible to arrive in time to prevent or punish him. We are besides reduced to the impossibility of concerting measures with the Corps of troops at Gloucester, being obliged, in order to communicate with them, to make a circuit of near ninety miles, whereas in the other case it would be both easy

and expeditious; but what is still a more decisive consideration, is that Ld Cornwallis has by the River York an outlet for his retreat, and that he may, by embracing a leading wind and tide and stealing a march proceed unmolested to West point, where upon debarking his troops he will have the Pamunky on one flank and the [Mattapony] on the other, and that finally he may by mounting the greatest part of his men and successive forced marches, push his way, with a compact disciplined Army thro a Country whose population is too scattered to be collected for sudden opposition and make it impossible for us to overtake him; many people are of opinion that Lord Cornwallis will embrace this as the only means of safety, and it is certain that unless the investment is completed as abovementioned, he will have it in his power either now or in a last extremity.

Governor Nelson proposes to obviate the abuses which may have prevailed relatively to passports by sending a proper person to reside on board the Ville De Paris, or any other vessel your Excellency may appoint, with instructions to point out which are legal and genuine. The present position of the fleet and Army perfectly secures us against every enterprise on the part of the Enemy in James River.

Upon the whole I can assure Your Excellency that this seems to be the only point in which we are defective; the Enemy has already abandoned all his exterior works and withdrawn himself altogether to the body of the place, and given us great advantages for opening the trenches. The Engineers

have had a near and satisfactory view of his works, without interruption, and we have most to apprehend Ld Cornwallis's escape.

For these reasons I earnestly entreat that your Excellency will be pleased to authorise and enjoin the Commanding Officer of the Ships in York River to concert measures with me for the purpose abovementioned. In this case an additional Ship may be necessary to remain at the Mouth of the River. The Experiment and two frigates if Your Excellency thinks proper would be best calculated for the station above.

If upon mature examination of the passage it should appear too great a risk for the ships, I wd. at least solicit Your Excellency that the Vessels might advance higher up the River and take a more menacing position with respect to the Enemy on our right; but I must confess to Your Excellency that I am so well satisfied by experience of the little effect of land batteries on Vessels passing them with a leading breeze, that unless the two Channels near York shd. be found impracticable by obstructions, that I should have the greatest confidence in the success of this important service.

Your Excellency's approbation of this measure wd. supersede the necessity of a defence against fire Ships; but the nature of the river besides renders it physically impossible to form an obstruction of the kind proposed.

With regard to the Hospital at Hampton I have desired Governor Nelson to appoint a person of weight and influence in that town to charge himself with the whole business of procuring large and convenient public edifices or others for the accommodation of the sick, and every succour that the nature of the country and our circumstances will afford. The same person will undertake the supply of the sick in the several articles enumerated in the Note. The name of the person appointed is — Ray Esqr.

I have requested Govr Nelson to write to him in such terms as will excite his most Zealous exertions in a service so interesting to humanity to us and to our Friends.

As soon as the heavy artillery is debarked a business in which we are diligently occupied, the transports shall be dispatched to Your Excellency. It is unhappily impossible for this part of the Continent to afford Your Excellency a single sailor, the Commerce of it previous to the War having been conducted by Scotch Mariners who are no longer with us. I have only to regret that no exertion cd. procure your Excellency an assistance which you wish so much. In answer to the

third Article, I beg leave to observe to Your Excellency that the british prisoners at Hampton would interfere with the Hospital; that it would be preferable to leave your sick intirely in possession of it,

and to send the prisoners to Baltimore, the Officers on their parole, and the privates to be secured in Fort Frederick, which will greatly facilitate the supplying of them with provisions by the french Commy.

The traffic which Your Excellency is so good as to propose will be very acceptable and flour will be thankfully given in exchange for the Rum at Annapolis.

With regard to the powder although my present circumstances do not require an immediate supply; it may eventually be wanting, in which case I shall be glad to avail myself of Your Excellency's goodness.

Your Excellency may rest assured that no time will be lost in transmitting you regular accounts of every thing that may deserve your Notice; it is with peculiar satisfaction that I inclose you the Extract No. 1. from the President's Letter. I entreat you to accept my warmest felicitations upon this occasion, and the sincerity with which I share your feelings on this glorious advantage. I have likewise the honor of inclosing you No 2 and No 3 Letters intercepted in an Enemy's vessel off Cape Charles.

I entreat Your Excellency to accept the sentiments of respectful attachment, etc.

P.S. When I was closing the within letter, I received that with which Yr Excellency honored me on the 27th Ulto. At the same time that I express all my sensibility for your goodness in granting the detachment of 800 men from the Garrisons of Yr Ships. Give me leave to assure Your Excellency that the request was founded upon what appeared to me the evident good of the service and that I should be the first dissentient from any measure that could possibly commit the honor of your fleet or that of Yr Excellency, which is as dear to me as my own.

I entreat you to accept my best thanks for the communication of your sentiments on the plan to be pursued by us should Lord Cornwallis attempt his Retreat by way of Gloucester; but Yr Excellency will perceive by the letter already referred to that my principal apprehension is the possibility of his Escape by going up Yrk. River. The nature of the Country dictates this as the most eligible measure should he determine to save his army by a sudden evacuation of the place.

You will add to the many obligations I already feel myself under to Yr Excellency by honoring me with your sentiments on any part of our operations that you may be so good as to think of. I shall esteem myself

particularly happy to avail myself of your experience and knowledge.

I shd. be grieved for the reasons Yr Excellcy is apprised of, that a too limited time shd. cause a failure in the present Enterprise; the perfect confidence of the Kg and the Ministry in Your Excellcy. and the success with which you must always use a discretionary power is our only dependance. If Your Excellcy. will point out which is the part from whence you wd preferably draw the Supplies you mention, I will instantly use my utmost efforts to facilitate your obtaining them: The Eastern shore of [Virginia and] Maryland must abound in provisions. I am perfectly of opinion that the Vessels which Yr Excellcy mentions may be spared from James River, while your fleet continues strictly to guard the entrance of the Bay.

It is a pleasure to renew the assurances of respect and attachment with which etc.<sup>50</sup>

### To COMTE DE GRASSE

October 3, 1781.

Sir: I have to thank your Excellency for the letter, with which you honored me the 2d inst: and observe

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50. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

that the deciding reason with Your Excellcy. against passing the Enemy's posts on York River is the apprehension of the number of fire Ships which might be employed against the Vessels detached on that service; more especially as your Fleet is illy provided with the means of frustrating attempts of this nature. It is mine to propose, and Your Excellencys part to decide in Naval affairs, and whatever determinations may be taken, it will always be with pleasure that I shall acknowledge the eminent services that you have rendered to the common cause on the American station.

The Count Rochambeau has communicated to me Yr Excellencys proposal to send one or more naval officers to observe the motions of the Enemy in York River, their experience with Yr Excellencys instructions will certainly be very advantageous, and I shall be anxious through their channel and all others to transmit every intelligence worthy your attention, and the sincere expressions of attachment and respect etc.

I do myself the honor of inclosing to Yr Excellcy. a letter from Philadelphia and some further accounts of the british naval Loss; Your Excellency's humanity and generosity of sentiment relatively to Yr Enemies claim an Admiration equal to that which is inspired by your military virtues.<sup>58</sup>

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58. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

October 6, 1781,

Sir: The Letter with which Your Excellency honored me on the 5th. and the intelligence which you are so good as to communicate afford me great pleasure by confirming the Ideas which I had entertained relative to the Hulks sunk by the Enemy in York River. It appears to me a physical impossibility to form effectual obstructions in a Channel so wide deep and rapid as that near York; this consideration and the immense utility which wd accrue to our land operations, induced me so earnestly to solicit a detachment of Ships to be stationed above the enemy's posts. As Your Excellency has determined this to be ineligible for other reasons, the alternative which I did myself the honor to propose, if Your Excellcy adopts it, will add to other eminent advantages that of dividing the Enemy's means in artillery which we know are limited; whereas at present they are at liberty to reinforce the front attacked with Cannon from their River batteries.

The difficulty of pilots I flatter myself will be removed by an application to Capt Lilly<sup>77</sup> who besides having a perfect knowledge of the River, is a man in whom the greatest confidence may be placed; he perhaps may name some others; this however will not prevent my

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77. Capt. Thomas(?) Lilly.

unremitting search in the mean time, for persons qualified for this service, tho' the policy of the Enemy, in capturing those at Hampton which was their usual Residence, has deprived us of this useful Class of men. I have the honor etc.<sup>78</sup>

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Camp before York, October 11, 1781.

Sir: I took the liberty of engaging Monsieur de La Villeon<sup>4</sup> to explain to your Excellency the circumstances which deprived me of the pleasure of acknowledging sooner the Letter with which you honored me the 8th inst. This Gentleman and Monsr de Grandchain<sup>5</sup> have had an opportunity of reconnoitring York River and the position of the Enemy's shipping, the result of which they will probably have communicated. I am extremely sensible of your Excellency's goodness in committing the examination of this important object to officers whose talents and experience have entitled them to your particular confidence, and who in every respect are so worthy of esteem. They appear to me to be sensible of the immense advantages that would arise to us from having ships stationed above the Enemy's posts. Among those

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78. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

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4. Capt. Jean Baptiste François, Comte La Villéon de la Villevaho du Fresch'clos, capitaine de pavillon sur la Ville de Paris.

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5. Capt. Guillaume Jacques Constant Liberge de Granchain de Sémerville, of the French Navy.

formerly enumerated to your Excellency, the following are not the least considerable, viz the securing General De Choisy's right Flank against the enterprises of the Enemy by a sudden descent, to which it is at present exposed. The being able to give the enemy a jealousy on the water side relative to his own posts by keeping a demonstration of transport boats constantly near the detached ships, at the same time that we prevent his procrastinating his Surrender by crossing to Gloucester. Perhaps Your Excellency may think that the operation of passing the Enemy's post is simplified by the destruction of the ship Charon.

The Marquis St. Simon finding himself incommoded by the shipping in a particular attack of an exterior work on the enemy's right, fired red-hot shot into the port, by which means the Vessel abovementioned and two transports were totally consumed. There remains no other armed Vessel of consequence but the Guadeloupe frigate of 28 Guns and I submit to your Excellency whether two frigates will not answer all the purposes of the station above York. The batteries of our first parallel incommode the transports so much that I do not think the preparation of five ships could be carried on, besides they appear by corroborating accounts to be deficient in means for constructing engines of this kind; and at all events I am persuaded the frigates may take such a position as will effectually secure them from danger. Captain Lilly is gone to designate the pilots which he thinks qualified for the service.

In the mean time the Governor has written to several pilots recommended by him to repair on board of your Excellency without loss of time. The Enemy's conduct has continued passive beyond our expectation the Batteries of our first parallel have been exercised upon them with some success and I propose this Evening to have the second parallel opened the effect of which will I flatter myself be more decisive.<sup>6</sup>

## To FRANCISCO RENDON<sup>9</sup>

Head Quarters Before York, October 12, 1781.

Sir: I was yesterday honored with your favor of the 2d. It gives me pleasure to find so good a disposition in Don Bernardo de Galves<sup>10</sup> to concert his operations in such a manner against the common enemy that the interests of His Catholic Majesty and those of ourselves and our Ally may be mutually benefitted. You must be sensible that, in the present political situation of Affairs, I cannot, with any degree of propriety, in behalf of the United States propose any joint plan of operations to Don Galvez, tho' I flatter myself that difficulty will be ere long removed.

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6. From a contemporary copy in an unidentified hand.

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9. Spanish agent to the United States. He succeeded Miralles.

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10. Spanish Governor of Louisiana.

Neither can I at this time determine whether we shall be able to act offensively against the enemy in south Carolina and Georgia. That will in a great measure depend upon the Naval assistance we shall be able to derive from our Ally. Of this you may assure Don Galvez that should any offensive plan be formed and which is to be undertaken by the Allied Arms, I will use my influence with the French Commanders to give him due notice, should I not be able to open a correspondence with him myself. In the mean time you may inform him that he cannot make a more powerful diversion in favour of the southern States, than by pushing his Arms agst East Florida.

I am obliged by the extract of Don Galvez's letter to the Count de Grasse explaining at large the necessity he was under of granting the terms of Capitulation to the Garrison of Pensacola which the Commandant required. I have no doubt, from Don Galvez's well known attachment to the cause of

America, but he would have refused the Articles which have been deemed exceptionable, had there not been very powerful reasons to have induced his acceptance of them.

We opened our first parallel on the Night of the 6th. and...<sup>11</sup>

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11. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman and David Cobb. The omitted portion is identical with that in Washington's letter to Gov. Thomas Sire Lee, Oct. 1781, q. v., excepting that the distance of the second parallel from the enemy's works is given as 350 yards.

### To CAPTAIN MARTELLI CHAUTARD<sup>24</sup>

Head Quarters Before York, October 14, 1781.

Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 25th. of September. I should with the greatest pleasure have complied with your Wishes respecting the exchange of Capt. Segond, could I have gratified them without deviating from a Rule which I have always observed, and without infringing a positive order of Congress which directs that no

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24. Capt. Joseph Jacques François de Martelli Chautard, of the French Navy. He is noted on the draft as commanding H. M. C. S. *Experiment*.

Officer shall be exchanged out of his turn.

I flatter myself that the time is not far distant when the fortune of War will put into our hands a sufficiency of prisoners, not only to liberate Capt. Segond but all those who are in the same disagreeable situation. I have the honor etc.<sup>23</sup>

### To COMTE DE GRASSE

October 16, 1781.

Sir: I have to thank Yr Excellency for the Letter which you did me the honor to write the 14th. and the communication of Mr. de St. Cosmes<sup>30</sup> report from whence it appears that every objection to the station above the enemys posts in York River is removed, except the danger of Fire Ships; and that this might be obviated by attaching to it, a sufficient number of rowingboats to guard in front, and

tow off the incendiaries in their approach. Your Excellency will see by the last letter which I had the honor to write you, that I expect under the convoy of Mr. de Camus, a great number of small-boats from the upper parts of York River, as soon as protection can be given them, by the presence of any naval detachment superior to the remains of the Enemy's vessels in York.

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23. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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30. Sainte Eulalie Saint Cosme, a lieutenant in the French Navy.

I have besides authorised Genl. Weedon to collect all the boats within his reach, in a creek, near the Army on the Gloucester Side; these last amount accordg. to Genl. de Choisy's account to upwards of twenty, so that I have not the least doubt of furnishing Yr. Excellency with a much greater number of boats and oars than will be sufficient for the service you mention; from these the Officer commanding may select such as he judges best calculated for the purpose. I presume it is yr. Excellencys intention they should be manned from the Ship appointed to the station, as their crews must be composed of experienced Seamen [and none such are at my command] I have ordered a draft of militia to be employed in bringing the boats from above, but I cannot depend upon them for any farther duty. The detail of the means which Yr. Excellency desires is confined then to the boats and Oars, of which we shall have more than can be employed exclusive of the flat-bottomed boats of the Army, which are [here] mounted on Waggons and ready to be moved down to the River, if Your Officers approve their construction.

I requested the favor of Monsieur de Grandchain to make the inclosed translation for Your Excellency, of a letter which I have just received from Genl. Forman, his intelligence is usually very accurate but I think he is mistaken in the number of Ships at Halifax, where I imagine there is not more than [one ship of the line.] This

account agrees with that of Officers, prisoners, and deserters, that Ld Cornwallis places all his hopes in an effort on the part of Digby to relieve him; it does not appear to me however that any port south of Chesapeak wd. be chosen in this case for the debarkation of the enemys troops, on account of the natural difficulties in their march afterwards. I am rather inclined to think that the british Admiral would endeavour to engage the attention of your fleet in a distant combat, while he causes his transports to proceed under this mask to the mouth of the [Piankatank] near Gwyns Island where the troops may be debarked at the distance of Six leagues from Gloucester, and march without obstacles of rivers, or any other impediments of consequence, to force our posts on that side, and relieve the Garrison.

But the projects of the Enemy will be best penetrated by Yr. Excellency. and I am persuaded the wisdom and vigour of your measures will render them all abortive.

I take the liberty of observing that if the Mouth of James River be guarded, there will be no necessity for detaing in their present stations the Vessels that are higher up in that River.

It is with pleasure I acquaint Yr. Excellency that the first combined attack of the allied Arms has proved successful; the night before last two very important advanced redoubts on the enemys left, were carried by assault, one by a detachment of the french troops and the other by a

corps of Americans, the Baron de Viominil and the Marquis de la fayette commanded in the trenches. The possession of these two works which we have united to our second parallel gives us infinite advantages for the position of our batteries, and circumscribing the place.<sup>31</sup>

#### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters Before York, October 17, 1781.

Sir: I had yesterday Evening the honor of receiving your Excellency's favor of the same date. Sixteen Flat Boats will be ready to meet the ships whenever the Wind shall admit their ascending the River. I cannot conceive the Reason why no more Pilots have gone down to you. The Governor sent immediately to those who were recommended by Captain Lilly.

I do myself the honour to transmit your Excellency the Copy of a letter which I have just received from Lord Cornwallis. I have informed him in answer thereto, that I wish him previous to the meeting of Commiss. to send his proposals in writing to the American Lines, for which purpose a cessation of Hostilities for two Hours will be allowed.

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31. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

I should be anxious to have the honor of your Excellency's participation in the treaty, which will, according to present appearances shortly take place. I need not add how happy it will make me to welcome your Ex in the name of America on this shore, and embrace you upon an occasion so advantageous to the interests of the common cause, and on which it is so much indebted to you.

Should Naval reasons deprive me of this happiness, by requiring Yr Excellys presence on board, I entreat that you will be pleased to appoint an Officer to represent you, and take charge of the Capitulation to be signed by Yr Excellency. I have the honor etc.<sup>40</sup>

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

Head Quarters Before York, October 19, 1781.

Sir: Your Excellencys letter of the 17th. redoubles my affliction at being deprived of the happiness of embracing you on Shore, by informing me, that a violent indisposition is the cause. I entreat Yr. Excellcy. to accept the sincere and ardent vows which I make for your recovery, and the preservation of a

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40. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman and John Laurens.

"About ten o'clock the Enemy beat a parley [a British drummer appeared on the parapet of the Yorktown fortifications and, under the protection of a white flag, beat the recognized parley measure] and Lord Cornwallis proposed a cessation of Hostilities for 24 hours, that Commissioners might meet at the house of a Mr. Moore (in the rear of our first parallel) to settle terms, for the surrender of the Posts of York and Gloucester. To this he was answered, that a desire to spare the further effusion of Blood would readily incline me to treat of the surrender of the above Posts, but previous to the meeting of Commissioners I wished to have his proposals in writing and for this purpose would grant a cessation of hostilities two hours. Within which time he sent out A letter with such proposals (tho' some of them were inadmissible) as led me to believe that there would be no great difficulty in fixing the terms. Accordingly hostilities were suspended for the Night and I proposed my own terms to which if he agreed Commissioners were to meet to digest them into form."— *Washington's Diary*, Oct. 17, 1781.

Health so dear to our two Nations. I would not delay a moment to wait upon Yr Excellency, and assure you in person of all my regret upon this occasion; if the definitive Signature of the Capitulation which I expect will take place today, did not deprive me of the power.

I have read with attention the intelligence which has been transmitted to Your Excelly thro the Channels of Genl. Heath and Govr Lee; at the same time that I approve the precaution of those Gentlemen in communicating every intelligence that relates to the Enemy's movements; I beg leave to assure Yr Excellcy, that I have not the least disquiet on the subject, knowing by experience how

doubtful such relations generally are.<sup>45</sup> It appears to me above all improbable that an expedition in the Jerseys shd. be undertaken concomitantly with the pretended one against Yr. Excellencys fleet.

Mr de Grandchain assisted yesterday in digesting the Articles of Capitulation;<sup>46</sup> as soon as this business is terminated I propose to do myself the honour of waiting upon Yr Excellency on board.<sup>47</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>48</sup>

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45. The real situation was disclosed in Col. Sylvanus Seely's letter to Washington (October 18), which did not of course reach the Commander in Chief until some days after the surrender: "The Fleet I mentioned in mine of the 14th. Consisting of 24 Ships of the line two 50 and a number Frigates, sail from the Hook Yesterday about Ten in the Morning ... they have undoubtedly taken between two and three thousand of their best Troops on board their Ships of War." Seely's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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46. The American commissioners for digesting the Articles of Capitulation were Lieut. Col. John Laurens and the Vicomte de Noailles, brother-in-law of Lafayette. The British commissioners were Lieut. Col. Thomas Dundas, of the Eightieth Foot, and Major Alexander Ross, aide to Cornwallis. "The business was so procrastinated by those on their side...that Colo. Laurens and the Viscount...could do no more than make the rough draft of the Articles which were submitted for Lord Cornwallis. consideration."— *Washington's Diary*, Oct. 18, 1781.

"In the Morning early I had them copied and sent word to Lord Cornwallis that I expected to have them signed at 11 o'clock and that the Garrison would March out at two o'clock, both of which were accordingly done."— *Washington's Diary*, Oct. 19, 1781.

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47. According to his "Diary," Washington visited De Grasse on October 21.

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48. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

## To DUC DE CHOISY

Head Quarters, October 19, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor with many congratulations to inform you, that One OClock this afternoon is appointed for the delivery of two of the Enemys Redoubts on the Gloucester Side, one to a detachment of french the other to a detachment of American Troops. The Garrison is to march out

at three O'Clock with shouldered Arms, Drums beating a british or German March, the Cavalry with their Swords drawn, and the Colours of the whole cased; to a place which you will be so good as to appoint, in front of the posts, where they will ground their Arms and afterwards return to their encampment.

You will be so good as to communicate this to Genl. Weedon and to make the necessary arrangements, and desire him to take every precaution to prevent the loss or embezzlement of the Arms, &c. I am &c.<sup>49</sup>

**\*To DUC DE CHOISY**

Camp before York, October 19, 1781.

Sir: Late this Evening I was honoured with your

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49. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

fav. of this date; without delay, and in much haste I inclose you a copy of such Articles of the Capitulation as are immediately and essentially necessary for your Government. With much esteem etc.

**To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, October 20, 1781.

Sir: The surrender of York from which so much glory and advantage are derived to the Allies, and the honor of which belongs to Yr. Excellency, has greatly anticipated our most sanguine expectations. Certain of this event under your auspices tho' unable to determine the time, I solicited Your Excellys attention in the first conference with which you honored me, to ulterior objects, of decisive importance to the common cause. Although your Excellencys answer on that occasion was unfavorable to my wishes, the unexpected promptness with which our operations here have been conducted to their final success, havg gained us time, the defect of which was one of Your Excellys principal objections, a perspective of the most extensive and happy consequences, engage me to renew my representations.

Charles Town the principal Maritime port of the british in the southern parts of the Continent, the Grand Deposit and point of Support for the present Theatre of the War, is open to a combined attack, and might be carried with as much certainty, as the place which has just surrendered.

This capture wd. destroy the last hope which induces the Enemy to continue the war; for havg experienced the impracticability of recovering the populous northern States, has determined to confine himself to the defensive in that quarter, and prosecute a most vigorous offensive southward, with a View of reconquering States whose sparse population and natural disadvantages render them infinitely less susceptible of defence, altho their productions render them the most valuable in a commercial view. This general naval Superiority previous to Yr Excellys arrival gave him decisive advantages in the rapid transport of his troops and Supplies, while the immense land marches of our succours too tardive [ sic ] and expensive in every point of view, subjected us to be beat in detail.

It will depend upon Yr Excellly. therefore to terminate the War, and enable the Allies to dictate the Law in a Treaty. A Campaign so glorious and so fertile in consequences, ed. be reserved only for the Count de Grasse.

It rarely happens, that such a combination of means, as are in our hands at present, can be seasonably obtained by the most strenuous of human exertions.

A decisively superior fleet, the Fortune and talents of whose Commander overawe all the naval force that the most incredible efforts of the enemy have been able to collect. An Army flushed with success and demanding only to be conducted to new attacks, and the very season which is proper for operating against the points in question.

If upon entering into the detail of this Expedition Your Excellly should still determine it impracticable, there is an Object, which tho' subordinate to that above mentioned, is of capital importance to our southern operations and may be effected at infinitely less expence, I mean the Enemys post of Wilmington in North Carolina. Circumstances require that I shd. at this period reinforce the southern Army under General Greene. This reinforcement transported by Sea under Your Excellly's convoy wd enable us to carry the post in question with very little difficulty, and wd. wrest from the british a point of Support in No Carolina, which is attended with the most dangerous consequences to us,<sup>58</sup> and liberate another State. This object wd require nothg more than the convoy of Yr. Excellly to the point of operation, and the protection of the debarkation.

I entreat Your Excellency's attention to the points which I have the honor of laying before You, and to be pleased at the same time to inform me what are your dispositions for a Maritime force to be left on the American

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58. At this point the draft has the following crossed out: "As it gives countenance and protection to a numerous Settlement of disaffected persons, who being at the devotion [*sic*] of the Enemy, and amply furnished with means by them spread rapine and."

station.<sup>59</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>60</sup>

### To COMTE DE GRASSE

October 20, 1781.

Sir: I lose not an instant to transmit Your Excellency two intercepted letters from Sir Henry Clinton to Lord Cornwallis; they were inclosed to me by the president of Congress,<sup>56</sup> whose letter dated the 14th. assures me the British fleet had not then sailed from New York. Count de Barras is so good as to take charge of this, I should have had the honor of accompanying him, but some indispensable arrangements detain me 'till this afternoon, when I shall embark with General Rochambeau, and hasten to renew the most grateful acknowledgements, in the name of America, for the glorious event for which she is indebted to you, and the assurances of those sentiments of respect and attachment, with which etc.<sup>57</sup>

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59. De Grasse's answer was a note handed to Lafayette (October 23), who remained on board the *Ville de Paris* after Washington's visit on October 21. The marquis was to have commanded the Wilmington detachment. The original of De Grasse's note is in the *Washington Papers*. A translation by John Laurens is as follows: "The Count de Grasse would be happy to be able to make the expedition of Charles Town all the advantages of which he feels; but the orders of his court, ulterior projects, and his engagements with the Spaniards render it impossible to remain here the necessary time for this operation. His desire to serve the United States is such that he desires to enter into engagements for a cooperation, during the next Campaign as far as the plans of the Court will permit. The expedition of Wilmington requiring less time, the Count de Grasse would undertake to conduct to that place, the detachment of two thousand Americans. as to the manner of operating, it must be determined according to the particular informations that we are going to collect. It wd be necessary immediately to have pilots and persons well acquainted with the Country, with whom the

Count de Grasse would desire to converse as soon as possible, in order to give his word definitively. The American Troops must be furnished with their own provisions, the Naval Army having none to spare. The Count de Grasse gives us leave to make use of the Vessels in York River; The Loyalist, the Queen Charlotte, the Cormorant have been sold to the State of Virginia, but the Count de Grasse does not think he will be able to embark the American troops on board of his Ships of the Line; How then shall we provide Sailors to man the other Vessels. The Count, has 15 American sailors, there are some small armed vessels; if after having seen the persons acquainted with the Coast, the Count de Grasse thinks he will be able to take the troops on board of his Line of battle Ships, and debark them without danger, then it will be useless to take the transports. If frigates can run into a convenient place then the troops will be embarked on board of frigates. The day of departure, the first of November, and if possible sooner." (See Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Oct. 27, 1781, *post.*)

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60. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

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56. The President also wrote to De Grasse on October 14 [14?], forwarding copies of these same intercepted letters.

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57. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

### **To MARQUIS DE CHOISY**

Head Quarters, October 20, 1781.

Sir: I have received the Letter which you did me the Honor to write this Mornng. and am much indebted to you for the Arrangements which you were so good as to make relative to the surrendering Troops.

I have ordered a Continental Officer to go and take charge of the Arms &c. and the persons of the several Departments will receive the Effects that Regard them. I have the Honor etc.<sup>61</sup>

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters near York, October 22, 1781.

Sir: I take the Chance of sendg by the Frigate which carries the Duke de Lauzun to France the three Dispatches which Colo Humphry, one of My Aides De Camp, will have the Honor to deliver, with this Letter, to your Excellency: And beg the Favor that you will cause them to be conveyed to the Care of the Duke. Should the Frigate be sailed before the Dispatches arrive to your Hand, I beg that your

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61. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

Excellency will have the Goodness to see them forwarded by the next Opportunity. I have the Honour etc.<sup>64</sup>

### **To MARQUIS DE CHOISY**

October 22, 1781.

Sir: The Quarter Master General is authorised by me, to take charge of all the horses Captured at Gloucester, as part of the public property which falls under this department. I request that you will be pleased to give positive orders to prevent the exchange or release of any of them; and in case any horses have been inadvertently removed by either means, that you will be so good as to direct how they may be most easily recovered. I ask your pardon for this trouble, and am with great esteem &c.<sup>65</sup>

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

October 23, 1781.

Sir: Lord Cornwallis claims with great earnestness

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64. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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65. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

the accomplishment of the article of the Capitulation which engages to provide Transports for conveying the General and Staff Officers to New York.

Mr de Grandchain was of opinion that Yr. Excellcy. would probably destine to this service two of the Vessels surrendered to the Marine; but that there would be a difficulty in manning them.

In these circumstances I take the liberty of proposing to Yr Excellency that the Crews might be furnished from the british marine prisoners; an equal number of french sailors to be returned for them, or in case there are no french sailors in the possession of the enemy, that you will be pleased to suffer the exchange to be made for an equal number of American seamen. This unhappy Class of men are now languishing under every species of inhumanity in the prison Ships of the british, who pursue this conduct with a view of forcing the men to enter their service, in which purpose by a perseverance in cruelty they too frequently succeed, and make an acquisition of seamen which otherwise wd not happen. The Vessels in this case wd be returned at the port to the person that Your Excellcy. shall direct.

This arrangement, if it does not interfere with any made by Yr Excellcy. wd. prevent the necessity of sendg Ld Cornwallis and the other officers by land, which wd be attended with political inconveniences, and relieve

some of the suffering individuals above mentioned; for which an equal number of Seamen, or other prisoners would be returned, upon the first occasion.

I am sorry to trouble Yr Excellcy with this detail; but am happy in the opportunity of renewing the sincerest assurances of respectful attachment with which etc.<sup>71</sup>

### **To MARQUIS DE ST. SIMON**

[Camp near York, October 24, 1781.]

Sir: I cannot suffer you to leave this Country, without testifying my sense of the distinguished services which you have rendered the Allies during your stay.

The Division which you command animated by your orders and deriving every advantage from your dispositions, executed their debarkation and junction with the American troops, with a promptness and security which were essential to that interesting operation.

The military ardour and perfect discipline for which they have been conspicuous in the seperate Attack and during the other operations of the Siege, and your measures, as

71. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

judicious as vigorous on all occasions, have secured you the esteem of this country; they will at all times claim my particular applause, and I entreat you to accept my warmest acknowledgements.

I request you will be pleased to be the interpreter of my sentiments to your Officers and Soldiers, and to express my thanks to the Baron de St. Simon, for the well concerted and spirited attack which he made upon the Enemy at the commencement of the investment; and the important service he rendered by dislodging the Enemy from their advanced posts.

If any of the horses delivered to you for the Campaign, will be acceptable to you for your [own riding] in the Islands, I request you will do me the honor to accept [two of] them.

I should be happy to be able to mark more particularly the sentiments of esteem and attachment, with which, etc.<sup>77</sup>

#### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, October 25, 1781.

Sir: I have to thank your Excellency for the Letter which

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77. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

you did me the honor to write by the Viscount de Montguyot<sup>92</sup> and two others which I have received since; it will make me happy to do every thing in my power to render that Officer's present station agreeable, and to facilitate as much as possible his accomplishment of the objects of it.

I accept with thankfulness the offer that your Excellency is so good as to make of boats for the use of the Army; your attention to us amid your extensive and important concerns, is a new claim to our gratitude.

I thought it my duty to transmit, without loss of time, the reports of the British Naval preparations, though I must confess they did not occasion me any anxiety. The prisoners of that Nation here, are a great incumbrance, and for political reasons, as I have already had the honour of mentioning to your Excellency, I am extremely desirous to see the departure of their Officers. Lord Cornwallis on his part

is exceedingly pressing to be sent away; I have told him, that I expected the final arrangement of your Excellency.

I entreat your Excellency to accept the sincere vows of Friendship, and the inviolable attachment with which I have etc.<sup>93</sup>

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92. Vicomte de Montguyot, a lieutenant in the French Navy and aide to De Grasse, had been sent to Yorktown to handle the embarkation of the troops destined for Wilmington.

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93. The draft is in the writing of David Cobb.

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, October 25, 1781.

Sir: I have the Honor to transmit to Your Excellency the inclosed Letter from Lord Cornwallis to the Marquis, with one from the latter to me, on the Subject of the Cartels detained by your Excellency. As the Circumstances of those Vessels have been fully explained to you, I submit the final Determination to Your Excellency.

I take the Liberty also to transmit to you, a Letter Handed to me by One of the Aides De Camp of the Marquis, from the Trade of No Carolina; if it is in your power to comply to the Wishes of those Gentlemen in grantg the Relief they request, it will add to those Obligations which these States are already under to your Excellencys Goodness, and be particularly agreeable to me.<sup>94</sup> I have the Honor etc.<sup>95</sup>

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

Head Quarters, October 27, 1781.

Sir: I take the Liberty to submit the inclosed Letter

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94. The inclosures mentioned are not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

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95. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

to the Inspection of your Excellency. It is from Mr. Morris of Philadelphia, who is sending two of his young Sons to France for their Education, and is takg the Opportunity of one of your Frigates for their passage. Mr. Morris, exclusive of being my particular friend, is a most valuable and important Member of the United States, and their financier General, in which Capacity he has particularly signalized his Character, where his further Exertions promise the most eminent Services to the States.

Permit me to interest myself in Behalf of the Young Gentlemen who will be presented to you, and to Expect that your Excellency will shew them every patronage in your Power to fulfil their Wishes and the Views of their Parents. In doing which, I can promise you the most grateful Acknowledgements of Mr. Morris and Lady; at the same Time that I assure your Excellency that you will do a most acceptable Act to me.

Mr. Ridley the Gentleman who will have the Honor to present this to your Excellency, is the Person mentioned in the Letter of Mr Morris, to whose care the two young Gentlemen are committed, and whom, as a Gentleman of Character and Reputation, I take the Liberty to recommend to your Excellency's Notice and Attention. I have the Honor etc.<sup>3</sup>

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3. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

October 28, 1781.

Sir: Your Excellency did me the honour to mention in one of your letters and subsequently in the note transmitted by the M. de la fayette, that from a desire to serve the U.S. You wd enter into engagements for such cooperation the next campaign, as shd not be incompatible with the orders of your Court. This offer is too essential to the interests of the common cause, not to be embraced by me with the greatest eagerness, while it claims my warmest acknowledgements for the continuance of Yr Excellency's friendly disposition towards America. As it is impossible this distance of time, to determine whether it will be most advantageous for the Allies to open the Campaign with the Siege of New York, and thence proceed to that of Chs Town, or make Charles Town the leading operation, I take the liberty of proposing to Your Excellency the following general disposition as equally applicable to either, viz that Yr Excell. wd assemble a decisive naval superiority in the bay of Chesapeake toward the latter end of May, from which central position we might easily transport ourselves for a reunion

of our means against whichever of the maritime points above mentioned circumstances shd render it most advisable to

attack first. With Yr Excellcy. I need not insist either upon the indispensable necessity of a maritime force capable of giving you an absolute ascendancy in these Seas, nor enlarge upon the advantages which must be derived from anticipating the British in opening the Campaign; next to the immediate prosecution of our present Successes with the union of Superior means now in our power and which wd infallibly terminate the war at one Stroke. The plan which I have the honor to submit to Your Excellcy is that which appears to me most likely to accomplish the great objects of the Alliance. Yr Excellcy will have observed that whatever efforts are made by the Land Armies the Navy must have the casting vote in the present contest.

The Ct of France are convinced of it, and have declared their resolution to give this indispensable succour the triumphant manner in which Yr. Excellcy has maintained the mastery of the American Seas, and the Glory of the french Flag, leads both nations to look to you as the Arbiter of the War. Public and private motives make me most ardently wish that the next campaign may be calculated to crown all your former Victories. I entreat your Excellcy to be persuaded of my attachment to Yr Glory, and the sincere friendship with which I shall invariably continue, My Dear General &c.<sup>23</sup>

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23. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

### **To COMTE DE GRASSE**

October 28, 1781.

I have had the honor to receive Your Excellencys two letters of the 26th. and one of the 27th. inst: I will not conceal from You, My dear General, that the answer relative to the expedition against Wilmington was received with as much concern as disappointment. We cannot but deeply regret that the engagements of the fleet in another quarter are so positive, as to deprive us of the obvious and decisive advantages which wd. result from farther cooperations.

Every motive public and private makes me part with Your Excellcy with extreme reluctance; but I flatter myself that you will compensate us as early as possible in the Spring; for the present my dear General give me leave to represent to you that the situation of our affairs requires your protection even here a few days longer; the quantity of Stores, and the number of troops which we have to transport by Water to the Head of Elke will be open to the enterprises of the enemy, the moment

your Excellency leaves the Bay; and that the sudden departure of the fleet wd expose us to the greatest confusion and most irreparable Loss.

Our means of Water transportation are inadequate, and we have demands for them on all sides.

Our new acquisition of Artillery &c augments our embarrassments and we have not only our own sick and wounded, but those of the Enemy to dispose of. I take the Liberty of entreating Yr Excellency's attention to these matters.

With respect to the Flags it remains with Yr Excellency to determine what ought to be done, and whatever you decide will be right.

The Signals Yr Excellency is so good as to send me will be transmitted as you direct and I am much obliged by the communication of them.

I cannot hope that the British have such an affection for the interests of the Allies and Yr Excellency's glory, as to commit their affairs to the issue of a desperate naval combat as they pretend. It is conjectured by some that they will reinforce Charles Town, which they necessarily consider in imminent danger.

I will not take a final leave of you my dear General, because I hope that I shall have the satisfaction of hearing from you several times before Your Departure. I am much afflicted at hearing the continuance of Yr indisposition; my ardent vows are repeated for your speedy reestablishment. I entreat You to give me intelligence as soon as possible of it and to accept the sincere assurances of the friendship with which I have the honor etc.<sup>24</sup>

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24. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

## **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Near York, October 29, 1781.

Sir: The Count de Grasse having been so good as to submit the Inclosed Signals to my Sight and Improvement; agreeable to his Desire, I take this first Opportunity to return them to your Excellency by a Safe Conveyance, and hope they may be of signal Advantage to the Commanders of his Most Christian Majesty's Naval Armies. I have the Honor etc.<sup>31</sup>

## To BENOÎT JOSEPH DE TARLÉ

Head Quarters, October 31, 1781.

Sir: Impressed with a sense of your important services in the department over which you preside, and the critical aid which your foresight and resources have enabled you to give on particular occasions to the American Army, I embrace the opportunity of an Order which I am giving for a return of the Supplies with which you assisted us, to express to you my warmest thanks [for those Seasonable Succours,] and the great esteem with which I have the honor etc.<sup>53</sup>

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31. In the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Does., E. U.*, vol. 6.

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53. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

November 5, 1781.

Having made my dispositions for retiring into winter-quarters, and being on the point of departure from this place, I am much concerned my dear General that circumstances deprive me of the satisfaction of renewing in person the sincere expression of those sentiments which are inspired by Your Excellencys illustrious services in the common cause, and by my acquaintance with your character and virtues; these have produced too powerful a desire of cultivating your friendship, for me not to entreat Your Excellency in the most earnest terms to preserve me a share in your memory, and to console me in some degree for this Separation by the hope of a correspondence with your Excellency, and the prospect of your returning to decide the War on these Coasts.

The Chevalier De Mollevrier<sup>93</sup> is so good as to take charge of two horses, with their provision of forage. I flattered myself with the hope of sending Your Excellency two of a much more conspicuous figure; but I have been exceedingly disappointed.

The Enemy in their ravages of this Country which was celebrated for its race of horses, did not spare that useful accessory in war; and it has been impossible to recover such as I should have wished to present to Your Excellency. Such as

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93. He is given in *Les Combattants Française de la Guerre Americaine, 1778–1783*, as a lieutenant on *Le Serpent* and also as an ensign on *Le Conquerant*.

these are I entreat you my dear General to accept them, and my excuse for their not being equal to my wishes.

The british fleet as I expected declined giving Your Excellency an opportunity for combat; they have been seen standing Southerly and will probably confine their attention to reinforcing and supplying their most interesting maritime posts. Your continued presence here has given a security to our movements, which is an additional obligation to us.

I entreat your Excellency to accept my ardent vows for the speedy and perfect reestablishment of your health, and the sentiments of sincere friendship with which I shall ever remain. Your etc.

P.S. Five Flags with Ld Cornwallis and his Officers bound to N York are ready to proceed from York and will probably fall down to your Fleet this Day.<sup>94</sup>

## To COMTE DE GRASSE

November 5, 1781.

Your Excellency was so good as to write in one of your late letters that there were several persons detained as british prisoners, who alledge that they are Americans,<sup>95</sup> and

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94. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

The draft of the passports for the 5 flag vessels, in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr., is in the *Washington Papers* (Nov. 4, 1781). The names of the vessels, etc., were: The ship *Cockran*, 247 tons, Captain Bolton; crew of 46 British seamen, prisoners to the French; passengers. *Earl Cornwallis*, with 26 officers and 42 soldiers, prisoners to the United States of America. The *Lord Mulgrave*, 320 tons, Andrew Eastery, master, 5 seamen, 103 officers, 125 soldiers, servants. The ship *Andrew*, 250 tons, Francis Todridge, master; 44 seamen, 101 officers, 118 soldiers, servants. The sloop *Delight*, 40 tons,

John Kerr, master; 3 American seamen, 5 commissaries, 1 commissary of prisoners (not a prisoner), 13 merchants. Sloop *Molly*, 40 tons, Samuel Hicks, master, 5 seamen, 3 officers, 13 merchants. The last two were to go to New York and Rhode Island, the others to New York "and Return with an equal Number of healthy French or American Seamen in Exchange for the present Crews."

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95. No list of names of these alleged Americans is found in the *Washington Papers*.

that as their cases were doubtful you would have them delivered up for examination. I have received repeated petitions from several of these people who claim their liberation as Citizens of these States; some of them add that they have Families which depend intirely on their labour for Support. It will be an effect of that humanity which characterizes Yr Excellency to restore these unhappy individuals to their Country and friends if they can be discriminated. I avoided answering particular applications as I thought the matter would be generally decided upon. Whatever measures Yr Excellency may be pleased to adopt for this purpose will be gratefully accepted by Your &c.<sup>94</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Philadelphia, December 2, 1781.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's Fav. of the 10th ulto. and am much obliged by your kind Condolence on the very heavy Loss which Mrs Washington and myself have suffered in the Death of the amiable youth Mr Custis.

I arrived in this Town on the 27th. ulto.<sup>41</sup> where, at the Request of Congress, I expect to remain some Weeks.

I am glad to find that your Troops begin to find

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94. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

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13 merchants. Sloop *Molly*, 40 tons, Samuel Hicks, master, 5 seamen, 3 officers, 13 merchants. The last two were to go to New York and Rhode Island, the others to New York "and Return with an equal Number of healthy French or American Seamen in Exchange for the present Crews."

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41. *The Pennsylvania Journal* for Nov. 28, 1781, states that Washington arrived in Philadelphia the afternoon of November 26.

themselves accommodated, and hope that your Winter Quarters will prove very agreeable to yourself and the Gentlemen of your Army. With very great Regard etc.<sup>42</sup>

### To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Philadelphia, December 10, 1781.

Sir: I am informed by Admiral Digby that the Ship *New Blessing* Captain Thomas Craven will be dispatched as a Cartel from New York to Virginia with American prisoners and with Stores, Medicines and Cloathing, for the British seamen in Hospital at Gloucester or elsewhere. Your Excellency or the Commanding Officer of his Most Christian Majesty's ships of War will be pleased to point out the most convenient and proper places for the ship to come to, upon her arrival and permit the Stores, &c. to be landed. I inclose an Inventory of the Cargo as transmitted to me by the Admiral.

By an agreement entered into with the British Merchants at York and Gloucester, the Tobacco in which they were to be paid for the Goods purchased from them on public Account was to be transported to New York under the sanction of a Flag, and I have accordingly granted passports<sup>62</sup> for the

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42. The draft is in the writing of Jonathan Trumbull, jr.

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62. A draft of the passport granted by Washington, dated December 10, and in the writing of Tilghman, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is made out to the brigantine *Potomack*, to proceed from Virginia "to New York, laden with Eighty five Hhds of Tobacco which have been paid by the Commissioner of Trade for the State of Virginia to the British Merchants of York and Gloucester for goods purchased from them on public account... The passengers whose names are hereunto annexed prisoners of War upon parole by the Capitulation of York and Gloucester are permitted to go to New York in the vessel above mentioned." Washington inclosed the passport in a short note

(December 10) to William Hunter, jr., at Alexandria, requesting him to forward it, along with the letters of December 10 to Rochambeau and David Ross. This note is in the *Washington Papers*.

first Cargo that has been shipped.<sup>63</sup> But as applications to me at this distance will be attended with delay and inconvenience I must request the favor of your Excellency to grant passports to any Vessel in future provided you have a Certificate from David Ross Esq. Commissioner of Trade for the State of Virginia that such Vessel is actually laden with Tobacco of the description before mentioned.

I shall be happy to hear from you and to know that your Winter Cantonments are perfectly satisfactory. I have the honor etc.<sup>64</sup>

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Philadelphia, December 16, 1781.

Sir: My last to your Excellency was on the 10th. Inst. since that time nothing material has occurred.

It is with pleasure I inform you that Congress shew every disposition to make the most vigorous preparations for the next Campaign, which I sincerely hope may prove as honorable to the Allied Arms as the past. I have the honor etc.<sup>89</sup>

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63. At this point the following is crossed off in the draft: "Congress having required my attendance in this City to assist in some arrangements which are now upon the Carpet, it will be some time before I leave it."

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64. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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89. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Philadelphia, December 31, 1781.

Sir: My last to your Excellency was on the 16th. inst. I have since that recd. information that an embarkation has taken place at New York. It is said to consist of three British Regiments and a detachment of the Hessian Grenadiers. They may probably have sailed by this time, but of this I have

no certain accounts. They are to be convoyed by two ships of the Line and two or three Frigates. It is conjectured they are destined to south Carolina.

I have just recd. your Excellency's favr. of the<sup>31</sup> which I will take the pleasure of acknowledging more particularly in my next. I have the honor etc.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Of December 18, which is in the *Washington Papers*.

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32. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

Head Quarters, Orange Town, August 16, 1780.

Sir: I have the honor to enclose Your Excellency a letter which came under cover to me from the Count De Rochambeau. I think the plan of engaging the German Deserters will answer a good purpose.

The Chevalier De Ternay has applied to me to have a Vessel loaded with flour now in the Delaware convoyed by the Continental Frigates to Boston and the Sloop Saratoga sent to the West Indies with his last dispatches to the Count De Guichen. I have written to the Board of admiralty urging their compliance with these requests on your application. I have the honor &c.<sup>29</sup>

### **To CHEVALIER DE TERNAY**

Head Quarters, Bergen County, September 16, 1780, 10 oClock A.M.

Sir: I have this moment recd. a letter of which the inclosed is a Copy.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this may be the Fleet of Admiral Arbuthnot, and that the person who discovered them may have mistaken his larger Frigates for ships of the line; but

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29. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aft. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

2. General Forman's letter to Washington, dated Sept. 14, 1780. (See note to Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Sept. 15, 1780, *ante*.)

of this you will be able to form a judgment by the time this letter reaches you. I will communicate any further intelligence which I may receive. I thought the present of too much importance to delay. I have the honor etc.<sup>3</sup>

### **CONFERENCE AT HARTFORD ANSWERS TO QUERIES OF COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU AND THE CHEVALIER DE TERNAY<sup>21</sup>**

[Hartford, September 22, 1780.]

1st. That there can be no decisive enterprise against the maritime establishments of the English in this country, without a constant naval superiority.

2d. That of all the enterprises which may be undertaken, the most important and decisive is the reduction of New York, which is the centre and focus of all the British forces.

3. That under whatever point of view we consider the establish

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3. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

On September 16 Washington sent the following note (in the writing of an aide) to Brig. Gen. William Irvine: "Genl. Washington presents his compliments to Genl. Irvine, is sorry that a prior engagement will prevent him the pleasure of Dining with him on Monday." The original of this note was in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1892.

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21. A record of the "Sundry matters proposed...to Genl. Washington for Considerat, on," in French and in the writing of Lafayette, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is in two columns, Rochambeau's and Ternay's queries on the left and Washington's answers on the right. The above text is Alexander Hamilton's translation of Washington's answers. The queries are sufficiently indicated by the answers.

ment. which the English have made since five years at New York and with a garrison of fifteen thousand men, that place requires extensive means to make the seige of it. That with a decided maritime superiority to block sandy Hook, and fight at sea all the succours which may come from

without during the course of the expedition, there must be also a land army of thirty thousand men, which may form two attacks on the works on New York and Long Island; and that we must calculate on an army of fifteen thousand men being able to make sorties, with Six or 8 thousand men; that therefore each attack must be defended and *garnished* in proportion. That if we should be reduced to have no more than 24000 men, then we must content ourselves with a

single attack, which however renders the operation less expeditious, more uncertain.

4 That every enterprise whether to the Southward or Northward, exacts the same superiority by land an sea; since the troops which at present occupy the different posts may be reinforced by the fleet and army at New York, in proportion to the detachments which might be sent to attack them.

5 That we ought therefore to prefer the attack of New York to every other so soon as the King by his succours shall have enabled his allies to undertake it.

6 That in the state of the French fleet and army hitherto since their arrival, they have been obliged to remain on the strictest defensive and consider it as a happiness to have suffered no check.

7 That there results from all

these considerations an indispensable necessity to reinforce the fleet and army here with ships, troops, and money.

8 That the number of ships for obtaining the naval superiority cannot possibly be fixed, since it must depend on the secrecy and the point from which they set out; but that the only means of having that superiority, seeing that the English can detach from Europe in proportion to the French, is to detach from the Islands in the month of April a fleet to reinforce the one here, and give it a superiority. The Court of France can alone determine the number of vessels to be detached from Europe and from the Islands, as it cannot be known in America what number of vessels the enemy will be able to send here.

9 That in the circumstances in which General Washington finds

himself, not having yet been able to combine with Congress the force of his army for the commencement of the next campaign and not having yet received from Congress an answer concerning the means they propose to take to replace that part of his army whose times of service expire in January; he should fear to hazard a specification of the number of which the Congress will compose his army for the next spring; but that he thinks it very necessary, that His Christian Majesty

be pleased to complete his army here to fifteen thousand, and that he hopes the states, by a new effort will be able to supply the rest.

10 That independent of the funds destined for the army of fifteen thousand men, which will be insufficient, if they are combined on the same scale by which the speculation for

five thousand men was regulated, without having foreseen the extraordinary expense attending a war in this country, where each individual neither gives his house nor his field to incamp in without being paid for it in hand; it is indispensable to add extra funds to supply the contingencies which cannot be foreseen in order not to be stopped in the midst of an expedition once commenced.<sup>22</sup>

**CONFERENCE AT HARTFORD SUMMARY OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN HIS EXCELLENCY  
GENERAL WASHINGTON, THE COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU, AND THE CHEVALIER DE TERNAY;  
EXCLUSIVE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PAPER DATED AT HARTFORD THE 22 D SEPT. 1780  
SIGNED BY THE PARTIES.<sup>23</sup>**

Hartford, September 22, 1780.

It was agreed, that if the Count De Guichen

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22. The translation, in the writing of Alexander Hamilton, was indorsed by Washington as quoted in footnote 24, p. 81. The original, in French, as previously stated, is signed by Washington, Rochambeau, and Ternay.

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23. So headed by Hamilton.

should arrive by the beginning of October and a naval engagement should immediately take place in which by a fortunate issue, the french fleet should gain possession of the Port of New York; in that case, New York should become the object of the combined operations.

That if the Count De Guichen should arrive after that period, or arriving should not be able to gain possession of the port of New York, or if by a reinforcement from Europe, or by any other method a naval superiority should be acquired in these seas in the remainder of the fall, or early in the Winter, in this case an expedition should be made against the enemy in the Southern states.

That for this purpose the fleet should remain on the coast during the expedition, to protect the supplies for the combined forces and prevent succours going to the enemy.

That with the present force of the enemy to the Southward, an American corps should be added to the French corps, which with the regular troops to the Southward should compose an army of ten, or if practicable of twelve thousand men. But that if the enemy should reinforce their Southern army, we should endeavour to encrease our force, so as to have double their number in the operation.

General Washington proposed to the French General and Admiral, if an opportunity should offer to do it with safety, to separate the land from the sea forces; to march

the former to the Vicinity of the American army and to send the latter round to Boston. The reasons assigned for this disposition were, that by a junction of the allied armies, the enemy would be held in respect at New York and prevented from detaching to prosecute their success in the Southern states. that if they should make any detachment, we might have it in our power to take advantage of their weakness, or to detach, in proportion to the support of the part attacked. It was observed by the way that this junction would be the more desirable, as the term of service for which a large part of the American army was engaged would expire in December, so that if the men who left us, were not replaced by the same period, there would be a crisis in which we should be weaker than were to be wished.

The French General and Admiral declined the separation proposed observing that they had pointed instructions from their Court for the Fleet and army to support each other; also for keeping their troops as much as possible on Islands, as well for the better preservation of discipline, as for avoiding all differences with the inhabitants which might arise from too intimate a commerce of manners, so unlike each other as those of the French soldiers and the American citizens.

General Washington remarked, that the instructions of the Court must of course decide the point; but that he hoped the inconveniences apprehended from an intercourse with the inhabitants would not be found on experience, and thought

they could not happen more from a commerce with the people on the Continent than with those on an Island, whose genius, tempers and habits were the same.

Intimations were given by General Washington in the course of the conference respecting a Winter expedition into Canada. The French General declined concerting any thing on this subject 'till a

consultation had been had with the Minister of France, as he imagined there might be some political objections to the measure?<sup>24</sup>

### **\*CONFERENCE WITH COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU<sup>62</sup>**

Wethersfield, May 23, 1781.

Rochambeau : The project to transport the entire French army to Chesapeake Bay in Barras' squadron.

1st. Washington : However desirable such an event might have been, the reasons now assigned by the Count de Barras are sufficient to prove its impracticability.

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24. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton. Indorsed by Tilghman: "Substance of Conference..."; and by Washington: "Result of a Conference...."

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62. Comte de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Chastellux arrived at Wethersfield on May 21 about noon. The conference was held the next day. Rochambeau submitted a series of five "Propositions" he had made to Barras. These are in the writing of De Sibille, with a P.S. added to the fifth proposition in the writing of Chevalier de Chastellux. Washington's "Observations" on these "Propositions" are in his own hand in a parallel column. They are dated by Washington, May 23, on which day the copy of them seems to have been made. Rochambeau's "propositions" are given above in skeletonized form while Washington's "Observations" thereon are printed in full. Ford prints this under May 22.

Rochambeau : Should the French army march to the North River what position should Barras' squadron take?

2d. Washington : It is Genl Washington's opinion that the Plan of Campaign will render it necessary for the French Army to march from Newport towards the North River as soon as possible and that consequently it will be advisable for the Count de Barras (agreeable to his instructions in that case provided) to seek the first favorable moment of removing the Squadron under his command to Boston.

Rochambeau : in such case, what arrangements are to be made to hold Rhode Island?

3d. Washington : as the harbor of Rhode Island may be useful to the Fleets of his most Christian Majesty, it is Genl. Washington's opinion, that a force should be left for the security of Newport, but as the Enemy will not be in condition from the present circumstances of their affairs, to detach any considerable body of Men to re-possess the Island, it has been agreed upon between His Excellency Count de Rochambeau and Genl. Washington, that 500 Militia, under a good Officer, will be sufficient for the Guards for the Works. but in case of an enterprize against them, a

greater force should be called for their defence.

Rochambeau : If Rhode Island be evacuated what disposition should be made of the heavy artillery and stores that are too heavy to move easily?

4th. Washington : In the former communications between His Excellency Count de Rochambeau and Genl. Washington, it was understood that the French Fleet was to have remained in the harbor of Newport after the removal of the Army, and therefore, Providence was fixed upon as a safe and proper deposit of the heavy Artillery and Spare Stores. It now being determined that the Fleet shall embrace the first opportunity of going round to the Harbour of Boston it is to be wished that the heavy Artillery and spare Stores should be sent round also. But Genl Washington being informed by His Excellency Count de Rochambeau that they have been already deposited at Providence, and that it will be impossible under the present

circumstances of the Fleet and want of Transportation to remove them to Boston he is of opinion that they may safely remain there under the Guard of 200 French Troops, who will be aided by the Militia of the Country in case of Need. The possession of Newport will add to their security.

Rochambeau : In event of a French naval reenforcement from the West Indies, what operations will be undertaken by the combined allied forces ?

5th. Washington : The Enemy by several detachments from New York having reduced their force at that Post to less than one half of the number

which they had at the time of the former conference at Hartford in September last; it is thought advisable to form a junction of the French and American Armies upon the North River as soon as possible, and move down to the vicinity of New York to be ready to take advantage of any opportunity which the weakness of the enemy may afford. Should the West India Fleet arrive upon the Coast; the force thus combined may either proceed in the operation against New Yk. or may be directed against the enemy in some other quarter, as circumstances shall dictate. The great waste of Men (which we have found from experience) in the long Marches to the Southern

States; the advanced season now, to commence these in, and the difficulties and expence of Land transportation thither, with other considerations too

well known to His Excellency Count de Rochambeau to need detailing, point out the preference which an operation against New York seems to have, in present circumstances, to attempt sending a force to the Southward.

Answer to the P.S. The observation upon the 4th. head sufficiently answers this, as the 500 Militia proposed to be Stationed at Newport may be disposed of in any manner which His Excellency Count de Rochambeau may think proper.<sup>63</sup>

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63. Washington's copy is signed by Rochambeau.