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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Fellow Citizens of the Senate,
and House of Representatives,

In the discharge of my official duty, the
task again devolves upon me of communi-
cating with a new Congress. The reflection
that the representation of the Union has
been recently renewed, and that the consti-
tutional term of its service will expire
with my own, heightens the solicitude with
which I shall attempt to lay before it the
state of our national concerns, and the de-
vout hope which I cherish, that its labors to
improve them will be crowned with success.

You are assembled at a period of profound
interest to the American patriot. The un-
exampled growth and prosperity of our
country, having given us a rank in the scale
of nations which removes all apprehension
of danger to our integrity and independence
from external foes, the career of freedom is
before us, with an earnest from the past, that,
if true to ourselves, there can be no formi-
dable obstacle in the future, to its peaceful
and uninterrupted pursuit. Yet, in propor-
tion to the disappearance of these apprehen-
sions which attended our weakness, as once
contrasted with the power of some states of
the old world, should we now be solicitous
as to those which belong to the conviction,
that it is to our own conduct we must look
for the preservation of those causes, on
which depend the excellence and the dura-
bility of our happy system of government.

In the example of other systems, founded
on the will of the people, we trace to internal
dissension the influences which have so
often blasted the hopes of the friends of
freedom. The social elements which were
strong and successful when united against
external danger, failed in the more difficult
task of properly adjusting their own inter-
nal organization, and thus gave way to the
great principle of self-government. Let us
trust that this admonition will never be
forgotten by the government or the people of
the United States; and that the testimony
which our experience thus far holds out to
the great human family of the practicability
and the blessings of free government will
be confirmed in all time to come.

We have but to look at the state of our
agriculture, manufactures, and commerce,
and the unexampled increase of our popu-
lation, to feel the magnitude of the trust com-
mitted to us. Never, in any former period
of our history, have we had greater reason
than we now have, to be thankful to Divine
Providence for the blessings of health and
general prosperity. Every branch of labor
we see crowned with the most abundant re-
wards: in every element of national resour-
ces and wealth, and of individual comfort,
we witness the most rapid and solid improve-
ments. With no interruptions to this pleas-
ing prospect at home, which will not yield
to the spirit of harmony and good will that
so strikingly pervades the mass of the peo-
ple in every quarter, amidst all the diversity
of interest and pursuits to which they are
attached: and with no cause of solicitude
in regard to our external affairs, which will
not, in its progress, dissipate before the principles
of simple justice and the forbearance that
mark our intercourse with foreign powers—
we have every reason to feel proud of our
beloved country.

The general state of our Foreign Relations
has not materially changed since my
last annual message.

In the settlement of the question of the
Northern boundary, little progress has
been made. Great Britain has declined ac-
cording to the proposition of the United
States, presented in accordance with the
resolution of the Senate, unless preliminary
conditions were admitted, which I deemed
incompatible with a satisfactory and right-
ful adjustment of the controversy. Waiting
for some distinct proposal from the govern-
ment of Great Britain, which has been invited,
I can only repeat the expression of my
confidence, that with the strong mutual dis-
position which I believe exists, to make a
just arrangement, this perplexing question
can be settled with a due regard to the well
grounded pretensions and pacific policy of
all the parties to it. Events are frequently
occurring on the Northern frontier, of a
character to impress upon all the neces-
sity of a speedy and definitive termination
of the discontent. This consideration, ad-
ded to the desire common to both, to relieve
the liberal and friendly relations so happily
existing between the two countries from all
embarrassment, will, no doubt, have its just
influence with both.

Our diplomatic intercourse with Portugal
has been renewed, and it is expected that
the claims of our citizens, partially paid,
will be fully satisfied as soon as the condi-
tion of the Queen's Government will per-
mit the proper attention to the subject from
them. The Government has, I am happy
to inform you, manifested a determination to
act upon the liberal principles which have
marked our commercial policy—the happiest
effect upon the future trade between the
United States and Portugal are anticipated
from it, and the time is not thought to be
remote when a system of perfect reciprocity
will be established.

The instalments due under the con-
vention with the King of the Two Sicilies, have

been paid with that scrupulous fidelity by
which his whole conduct has been charac-
terized, and the hope is indulged, that the
adjustment of the vexed question of our
claims will be followed by a more extended
and mutually beneficial intercourse between
the two countries.

The internal contest still continues in
Spain. Distinguished as the struggle has
unhappily been, by incidents of the most
sanguinary character, the obligation of the
treaty of indemnification with us, have
been, nevertheless, faithfully executed by
the Spanish Government.

No provision having been made at the last
session of Congress for the ascertainment
of the claims to be paid, and the apporportion-
ment of funds, under the convention made
with Spain, I invite your early attention to
the subject. The public evidences of the
debt have, according to the terms of the
convention, and in the forms prescribed by
it, been placed in the possession of the United
States, and the interest as it fell due,
has been regularly paid upon them. Our
commercial intercourse with Cuba stands as
regulated by the act of Congress. No recent
information has been received as to the
disposition of the Government of Madrid on
this subject, and the lamented death of our
recently appointed Minister on his way to
Spain, with the pressure of their affairs at
home, render it scarcely probable that any
change is to be looked for during the coming
year. Further portions of the Florida Ar-
chives have been sent to the United States,
although the death of one of the Commis-
sioners, at a critical moment, embarrassed
the progress of the delivery of them. The
higher officers of the local Government, in
compliance with the orders from the parent
Government, to facilitate the selection and
delivery of all we have a right to claim.

Negotiations have been opened at Madrid
for the establishment of a lasting peace be-
tween Spain and such of the Spanish Ameri-
can Governments of this hemisphere, as
have availed themselves of the intimation
given to all of them of the disposition of
Spain to treat upon the basis of their entire
independence. It is to be regretted that
simultaneous appointments of all of our
ministers to negotiate with Spain, had not
been made; the negotiation itself would
have been amplified, and this long standing
dispute, spreading over a large portion of
the world, would have been brought to a
speedy conclusion.

Our political and commercial relations
with Austria, Prussia, Sweden and Denmark,
stand on the usual favorable basis. One of
the articles of our treaty with Russia in re-
lation to the trade on the North-west coast
of America having expired, instructions have
been given to our Minister at St. Peters-
burg to negotiate a renewal of it. The long
and unbroken amity between the two gov-
ernments gives every reason for supposing
the article will be renewed, if stronger mo-
tives do not exist to prevent it than, with
our view of the object, can be anticipated here.

I ask your attention to the message of my
predecessor at the opening of the second
session of the nineteenth Congress, relative
to our commercial intercourse with Holland,
and to the documents connected with that
subject communicated to the House of Repre-
sentatives on the 10th of January, 1825,
and 18th January, 1827. Coinciding in the
opinion of my predecessor, that Holland is
not, under the regulations of her present
system, entitled to have her vessels and
their cargoes received into the United States
on the footing of American vessels, as re-
gards duties of tonnage and impost, a respect
for his reference of it to the Legislature has
alone prevented me from arguing on the
subject. I should still have waited, without
comment, for the action of Congress, but
recently a claim has been made by the Bel-
gian subjects to admission in our ports for
their ships and cargoes, on the same footing
as American, with the allegation we could
not dispute, that our vessels received in their
port the identical treatment shown to them
in the ports of Holland, upon whose vessels
no discrimination is made in the ports of the
United States. Giving the same privileges,
the Belgians expected the same benefits—
benefits that were in fact enjoyed when Bel-
gium and Holland were united under one
government. Satisfied with the justice of
their pretension to be placed on the same
footing with Holland, I could not, neverthe-
less, without disregard to the principle of
our laws, admit their claim to be treated as
Americans; and at the same time a respect
for Congress, to whom the subject had long
since been referred, has prevented me from
producing a just legality, by taking from the
vessels of Holland privileges granted by
acts of Congress, although the condition
upon which the grant was made has, in my
judgment, failed since 1822. I recommend,
therefore, a review of the act of 1824, and
such modification of it as will produce an
equality on such terms as Congress shall
think best comport with our settled policy,
and the obligations of justice to two friendly
powers.

With the Sublime Porte, and all govern-
ments on the coast of Barbary, our relations
continue to be friendly. The proper steps
have been taken to renew our treaty with
Morocco.

The Argentine Republic has again prom-
ised to send within the current year, a Min-
ister to the United States.
A convention with Mexico for extending
the time for the appointment of commis-
sioners to run the boundary line has been
concluded, and will be submitted to the Senate.
Recent events in this country has awakened
the liveliest solicitude in the United States.
Aware of the strong temptations existing,
and powerful inducements held out to the
citizens of the United States, to mingle in
the dissensions of our immediate neighbors,
instructions have been given to the district

attorneys of the United States, where indi-
cations warranted it, to prosecute, without
respect to persons, all who might attempt to
violate the obligations of our neutrality;
while, at the same time, it has been thought
necessary to apprise the Government of
Mexico that we should require the integrity
of our territory to be scrupulously respected
by both parties.

From our diplomatic agents in Brazil,
Chili, Peru, Central America, Venezuela,
and New Grenada, constant assurances are
received of the continued good understand-
ing with the Governments to which they are
severally accredited. With these govern-
ments upon which our citizens have valid
and accumulating claims, scarcely an ad-
vance towards a settlement of them is made,
owing mainly to their distracted state, or to
the pressure of imperative domestic ques-
tions. Our patience has been, and will
probably be still further severely tried; but
our fellow-citizens whose interests are in-
volved, may confide in the determination of
the Government to obtain for them, eventu-
ally, ample retribution.

Unfortunately, many of the nations of this
hemisphere are self-tormented by domestic
dissensions. Revolution succeeds revolution,
injuries are committed upon foreigners
engaged in lawful pursuits, much time elap-
ses before a Government sufficiently stable
is erected to justify expectations of redress.
Ministers are sent and received, and before
the discussions of past injuries are fairly
begun, fresh troubles arise; but too frequently
new injuries are added to the old, to be
discussed together, with the existing Govern-
ment, after it has proved its ability to
sustain the assaults made upon it, or with
its successor, if overthrown. If this un-
happy condition of things continues much
longer, other nations will be under the pain-
ful necessity of deciding whether justice to
their suffering citizens does not require a
prompt redress of injuries by their own
power, without waiting for the establishment
of a Government competent and enduring
enough to discuss and to make satisfaction
for them.

Since the last session of Congress, the
validity of our claims upon France, as li-
quidated by the treaty of 1834, has been ac-
knowledged by both branches of her Legis-
lature, and the money has been appropri-
ated for their discharge; but the payment is,
I regret to inform you, still withheld.

A brief recapitulation of the most impor-
tant incidents in this protracted contro-
versy, will show how utterly untenable are
the grounds upon which this course is at-
tempted to be justified.

On entering upon the duties of my station
I found the United States an unsuccessful
applicant to the justice of France, for the
satisfaction of claims, the validity of which
was never questionable, and has now been
most solemnly admitted by France herself.
The antiquity of these claims, their high
justice, and the aggravating circumstances
out of which they arose, are too familiar to
the American people to require description.
It is sufficient to say that, for a period of
ten years and upwards, our commerce was, with
but little interruption, the subject of constant
aggressions on the part of France—agres-
sions, the ordinary features of which were
condemnation of vessels and cargoes un-
der arbitrary decrees, adopted in contraven-
tion, as well of the laws of nations as of
treaty stipulations, burnings on the high
seas, and seizures and confiscations, under
special imperial rescripts, in the ports of
other nations occupied by the armies, or
under the control of France. Such, is now
conceded, is the character of the wrongs we
suffered—wrong, in many cases, so flagrant,
that even their authors never denied our
right to reparation. Of the extent of these
injuries, some conception may be formed
from the fact, that after the burning of a
large amount at sea, and the necessary de-
terioration, in other cases, by long deten-
tion, the American property so seized and
sacrificed at forced sales, excluding what
was adjudged to privateers, before or with-
out condemnation, brought into the French
treasury upwards of twenty-four millions
of francs, besides large custom-house duties.

The subject had already been an affair of
twenty years' uninterrupted negotiation,
except for a short time, when France was
overwhelmed by the military power of united
Europe. During this period, whilst other
nations were extorting from her payment
of the claims at the point of the bayonet,
the United States intermitted their demand,
for justice, out of respect to the oppressed
condition of a gallant people, to whom they
felt under obligations for fraternal assistance
in their own days of suffering and of peril.

The bad effects of these protracted and
unavailing discussions, as well upon our
relations with France as upon our national
character, were obvious; and the line of duty
was to my mind equally so. This was either
to insist upon the adjustment of our claims
within a reasonable period, or to abandon
them altogether. I could not doubt, that
by this course, the interests and honour of
both countries would be best consulted.—
Instructions were therefore given in this
spirit to the Minister sent out once more to
demand reparation. Upon the meeting of
Congress, in December, 1829, I felt it my
duty to speak of these claims, and the delays
of France in terms calculated to call the
serious attention of both countries to the
subject. The then French Ministry took
exception to the message, on the ground of its
containing a menace, under which it was
not agreeable to the French government to
negotiate. The American Minister, of his
own accord refused the construction which
was attempted to be put upon the mes-
sage, and, at the same time, called, to the
recollection of the French Ministry, that
the President's Message was a communica-
tion addressed, not to foreign Govern-
ments, but to the Congress of the United

States, in which it was enjoined upon him
by the constitution to lay before that body
information of the state of the Union, com-
prehending its foreign as well as domestic
relations; and that, in the discharge of
this duty, he felt it incumbent upon him to
summon the attention of Congress, in due
time, to what might be the possible conse-
quences of existing difficulties with any
foreign Government, he might fairly be sup-
posed to do so, under a sense of what was
due from him in a frank communication with
another branch of his own Government,
and not from any intention of holding a men-
ace over a foreign power. The views taken
by him received my approbation, and the
French Government was satisfied, and the
negotiation was continued. It terminated
in the treaty of July 4, 1831, recognizing
the justice of our claims, in part, and prom-
ising payment to the amount of twenty-five
millions of francs, in six annual instalments.

The ratification of this treaty were ex-
changed at Washington, on the 23d of Feb-
ruary, 1832, and in five days thereafter it
was before Congress, who immediately
passed a bill to ratify it, and to amend the
act to enforce the commercial advan-
tages conceded to her in the compact. The
treaty had previously been solemnly ratified
by the King of the French, in a form which
are certainly not mere matters of form,
and of which the translation is as follows:

"We, approving of the above convention,
in all and each of its stipulations which are
contained in it, do declare for ourselves, as
well as by our heirs and successors, and it
is accepted, approved, ratified, and confirm-
ed, and by these present, signed by our
hand, we do accept, approve, ratify, and con-
firm it; promising on the faith and word of a
King, to observe it, and to cause it to be ob-
served inviolably, without ever contravening
it, or suffering it to be contravened directly
or indirectly, for any cause, or under any
pretence whatever."

Official information of the exchange of
ratifications of the United States reached Par-
is whilst the Chambers were in session.—
The extraordinary, and to us injurious de-
lays of the French Government, in their
action upon the subject of its fulfilment,
have been heretofore stated in Congress,
and I have no disposition to enlarge upon
them here. It is sufficient to observe that
the then pending session was allowed to
expire without even an effort to obtain the
necessary appropriations; that the two suc-
ceeding ones were likewise suffered to
pass without any thing like a serious at-
tempt to obtain a decision upon the subject;
and that it was not until the fourth session,
almost three years after the conclusion of
the treaty, and more than two years after
the exchange of ratifications, that the bill for
the execution of the treaty was presented to
a vote and rejected.

In the mean time, the Government of the
United States, having full confidence that a
treaty entered into and so solemnly ratified
by the French King, would be executed in
good faith, and not doubting that provision
would be made for the first instalment, which
was to become due on the second day of Feb-
ruary, 1833, negotiated a draft for the
amount through the Bank of the United
States. When this draft was presented by
the holder, with the credentials required by
the treaty to authorize him to receive the
money, the Government of France allowed it
to be protested. In addition to the injury
in the non-payment of the money by France
conformably to her engagement, the United
States were exposed to a heavy claim on
the part of the Bank, under the pretence of
damages in satisfaction of which that insti-
tution seized upon, and still retains, an equal
amount of the public moneys. Congress
was in session when the decision of the
chambers reached Washington—and an im-
mediate communication of this apparently
final decision of France not to fulfill the
stipulations of the treaty, was the course nat-
urally to be expected from the president.
The deep tone of dissatisfaction which pre-
vailed the public mind, and the correspond-
ent excitement produced in Congress by
only a general knowledge of the result, ren-
dered it more than probable, that a resort
to immediate measures of redress would be
the consequence of calling the attention of that
body to the subject. Sincerely desirous of
preserving the pacific relations which had
so long existed between the two countries,
I was anxious to avoid this course, if I could
be satisfied that by doing so, neither the
interest nor the honor of my country would
be compromised. Without the fullest as-
surances upon that point I could not hope to
acquit myself of the responsibility to be in-
curred, in suffering Congress to adjourn
without having the subject before them.
Those received by me were believed to be
of that character.

That the feelings produced in the United
States by the news of the rejection of the
appropriation, would be such as I have de-
scribed them to have been, was foreseen by
the French Government, and prompt meas-
ures were taken by it to prevent the conse-
quences. The King, in person, expressed
through our Minister at Paris his profound
regret at the decision of the Chambers, and
promised to send, forthwith, a national ship,
with despatches to his Minister here, author-
izing him to give such assurances as would
satisfy the Government and People of the
United States, that the treaty would yet be
faithfully executed by France. The national
ship arrived, and the Minister received his
instructions. Claiming to act under the
authority derived from them, he gave to this
Government, in the name of his most
sovereign, assurances, that as soon after the
elections as the charter would permit, the
French Chambers would be convened, and
the attempt to procure the necessary appro-
priations renewed; that all the constitu-
tional powers of the King and his Ministers
should be put in requisition to accomplish

the object; and he was understood, and so
expressly informed by this government at the
time, to engage, that the question should
be pressed to a decision at a period sufficiently
early to permit information of the result to
be communicated to Congress at the com-
mencement of their next session. Relying
upon these assurances, I incurred the re-
sponsibility, great as I regarded it to be,
of suffering Congress to separate without com-
municating with them upon the subject.

The expectations justly founded upon the
promises thus solemnly made to this Gov-
ernment by that of France, were not reali-
zed.

The French Chambers met on the 31st
of July 1831, soon after the election; and
although our Minister in Paris urged the
French Ministry to bring the subject before
them, they declined doing so. He next in-
sisted that the Chambers if prorogued with-
out acting on the subject, should be reas-
sembled at a period so early that their ac-
tion on the treaty might be known in Wash-
ington prior to the meeting of Congress.

This reasonable request was not only de-
clined, but the Chambers were prorogued
to the 29th of December, a day so late that
their decision, however urgently pressed,
could not in all probability, be obtained in
time to reach Washington before the neces-
sary adjournment of Congress by the Con-
stitution. The reasons given by the Min-
istry for refusing to convene the Chambers
at an earlier period, were afterwards shown
not to be insuperable, by their actual con-
vocation on the 1st of December, under a
special call, for domestic purposes—which
fact however, did not become known to this
Government until after the commencement
of the last session of Congress.

Thus disappointed in our just expectations
it became my imperative duty to consult
with Congress in regard to the expediency
of a resort to retaliatory measures, in case
the stipulations of the treaty should not be
speedily complied with; and to recommend
such as, in my judgment, the occasion cal-
led for. To this end, an unreserved com-
munication of the case, in all its aspects,
became indispensable. To have shrunk,
in making it, from saying all that was neces-
sary to its correct understanding, and that
the truth would justify fear of giving off-
ence to others, would have been unworthy
of us. To have gone, on the other hand,
a single step further, for the purpose of woun-
ding the pride of a Government and People
with whom we had so many motives for cul-
tivating relations of amity and reciprocal
advantage, would have been unwise and
improper. Admonished by the past of the
difficulty of making even the simplest state-
ment of our wrongs without disturbing the
sensibilities of those who had, by their posi-
tion, become responsible for their redress,
I earnestly desirous of preventing further
obstacles from that source, I went out of my
way to preclude a construction of the mes-
sage, by which the recommendation that
was made to Congress might be regarded as
a menace to France, in not only disavowing
such a design, but in declaring that her
pride and her power were too well known
to expect any thing from her fears. The
message did not reach Paris until more than
a month after the Chambers had been in
session; and such was the insensibility of
the Ministry to our rightful claims and just
expectations, that our Minister had been
informed that the matter, when introduced,
would not be pressed as a cabinet measure.

Although the message was not officially
communicated to the French Government,
and notwithstanding the declaration to the
contrary which contained, the French Min-
istry decided to consider the conditional
recommendation of reprisals, a menace and
an insult, which the honor of the nation
made it incumbent on them to resent. The
measures resorted to by them to evince their
sense of the supposed indignity were the
immediate recall of their Minister at Wash-
ington, the offer of passports to the Ameri-
can Minister at Paris, and a public notice
to the Legislative Chambers that all diplo-
matic intercourse with the United States
had been suspended.

Having in this manner vindicated the
dignity of France, they next proceeded to il-
lustrate her justice. To this end, a bill was
immediately introduced into the Chamber
of Deputies, proposing to make the appro-
priations necessary to carry into effect the
treaty. As this bill subsequently passed
into a law, the provision of which now con-
stitute the main subject of difficulty between
the two nations, it became my duty, in or-
der to place the subject before you in a clear
light, to trace the history of its passage, and
to refer with some particularity, to the pro-
ceedings and discussions in regard to it.
The Minister of Finance, in his opening
speech, alluded to the measures which
had been adopted to resent the supposed in-
dignity, and recommended the execution of
the treaty as a measure required for the
honor and justice of France. He, as the
organ of the Ministry, declared the mes-
sage, so long as it had not received the sanction
of Congress, a mere expression of the personal
opinion of the President for which neither
the Government nor the People of the
United States were responsible, and that an
engagement had been entered into, for the
fulfillment of which the honor of France was
pledged. Entertaining these views, the
single condition which the French Ministry
proposed to annex to the payment of the
money, was, that it should not be made until
it was ascertained that the Government
of the United States had done nothing to in-
jure the interests of France; or, in other
words, that no steps had been authorized by
Congress of a hostile character towards
France.

What the disposition or action of Congress
might be, was then unknown to the French
cabinet. But, on the 14th of January, the
Senate resolved that it was, at that time, in-
expedient to adopt any legislative measures
in regard to the state of affairs between the
United States and France, and no action
on the subject had occurred in the House
of Representatives. These facts were known
in Paris prior to the 28th of March, 1835,
when the committee, to whom the bill of in-
demnification had been referred, reported it
to the Chambers of Deputies. That com-
mittee substantially re-echoed the senti-
ments of the Ministry, declared that Con-
gress had set aside the proposition of the
President, and recommended the passage of
the bill without any other restriction than
that originally proposed. Thus was it known
to the French Ministry and Chambers, that
if the position assumed by them, and which
had been so frequently and solemnly an-
nounced as the only one compatible with the
honor of France, was maintained, and the
bill passed as originally proposed, the money
would be paid, and there would be an
end of this unfortunate controversy.

But this cheering prospect was soon de-
stroyed by an amendment introduced into
the bill at the moment of its passage, provid-
ing that the money should not be paid until
the French Government had received satisfac-
tory explanations of the President's message
of the 2d December, 1834; and what is still
more extraordinary, the President of the
Council of Ministers, adopted this amend-
ment, and consented to its incorporation in
the bill. In regard to a supposed insult
which had been formerly resented by the
recall of their Minister, and the offer of
passports to ours, they now, for the first time,
proposed to ask explanations. Sentiments
and propositions, which they had declared
could not justly be imputed to the Govern-
ment or People of the United States, are set
up as obstacles to the performance of an act
of conceded justice to that Government and
People. They had declared that the honor
of France required the fulfillment of the en-
gagement into which the King had entered,
unless Congress adopted the recommenda-
tions of the message. They ascertained
that Congress did not adopt them, and yet
their fulfillment is refused, unless they first
obtain from the President explanations of
an opinion characterized by themselves as
personal and imperative.

The conception that it was my intention
to menace or insult the Government of
France, is as unfounded as the attempt to
extort from the fears of that nation what
sense of justice may deny would be vain
and ridiculous. But the Constitution of
the United States imposes on the President
the duty of laying before Congress the condition
of the country, in its foreign and domestic
relations, and of recommending such mea-
sures, as may, in his opinion, be required
by its interests. From the performance
of this duty he cannot be deterred by fear
of wounding the sensibilities of the Govern-
ment of whom it may become necessary to
speak; and the American People are inca-
pable of submitting to an interference by
any Government on earth, however powerful,
with the free performance of the domes-
tic duties which the Constitution has im-
posed upon their public functionaries. The
discussions which intervene between the
several departments of our Government,
belong to ourselves; and for any thing said
in them, our public servants are only re-
sponsible to their own constituents, and to
each other. If, in the course of their con-
sultations, facts are erroneously stated, or
unjust deductions are made, they require no
other inducement to correct them, however
informed of their error, than their love of
justice, and what is due to their own char-
acter; but they can never submit to be in-
terrogated upon the subject as a matter of
right, by a foreign power. When our dis-
cussions terminate in acts, our responsibility
to foreign power commences, not as indi-
viduals, but as a nation. The principle
which calls in question the President for the
language of his message, would equally
justify a foreign power in demanding expla-
nation of the language used in the report of
a committee, or by a member in a debate.

This is not the first time that the Govern-
ment of France has taken exception to the
message of the Presidents. President Adams,
in the performance of their duties to the
American people fell under the animadver-
sion of the French Directory. The objection
taken by the Ministry of Charles X, and re-
moved by the explanations made by our
Minister upon the spot, has already been
adverted to. When it was understood that
the Ministry of the present King took ex-
ception to my message of last year, putting
a construction upon it which was disavowed
on its face, our late Minister at Paris, in
answer to the note which first announced
dissatisfaction with the language used in the
message, made a communication to the
French Government, under date of the 28th
of January, 1835, calculated to remove all
impressions which an unreasonable suscep-
tibility had created. He repeated, and cal-
led the attention of the French Government
to the disavowal contained in the message
itself, of any intention to intimidate by men-
ace—he declared that it contained, and was
intended to contain, no charge of ill faith
against the King of the French, and properly
distinguished between the right to complain,
in inexceptionable terms, of the omission
to execute an agreement, and an accusation
of bad motives in withholding such execu-
tion—and demonstrated, that the necessary
use of that right ought not to be considered
as an offensive imputation. Although this
communication was made without instruc-
tions, and entirely on the Minister's own
responsibility, yet it was afterwards made
the act of this Government by my full
approbation, and that approbation was
officially made known on the 20th of April,
1835, to the French Government. It, how-
ever, failed to have any effect. The law,
after this friendly explanation, passed with

the object; and he was understood, and so
expressly informed by this government at the
time, to engage, that the question should
be pressed to a decision at a period sufficiently
early to permit information of the result to
be communicated to Congress at the com-
mencement of their next session. Relying
upon these assurances, I incurred the re-
sponsibility, great as I regarded it to be,
of suffering Congress to separate without com-
municating with them upon the subject.

The expectations justly founded upon the
promises thus solemnly made to this Gov-
ernment by that of France, were not reali-
zed.

The French Chambers met on the 31st
of July 1831, soon after the election; and
although our Minister in Paris urged the
French Ministry to bring the subject before
them, they declined doing so. He next in-
sisted that the Chambers if prorogued with-
out acting on the subject, should be reas-
sembled at a period so early that their ac-
tion on the treaty might be known in Wash-
ington prior to the meeting of Congress.

This reasonable request was not only de-
clined, but the Chambers were prorogued
to the 29th of December, a day so late that
their decision, however urgently pressed,
could not in all probability, be obtained in
time to reach Washington before the neces-
sary adjournment of Congress by the Con-
stitution. The reasons given by the Min-
istry for refusing to convene the Chambers
at an earlier period, were afterwards shown
not to be insuperable, by their actual con-
vocation on the 1st of December, under a
special call, for domestic purposes—which
fact however, did not become known to this
Government until after the commencement
of the last session of Congress.

Thus disappointed in our just expectations
it became my imperative duty to consult
with Congress in regard to the expediency
of a resort to retaliatory measures, in case
the stipulations of the treaty should not be
speedily complied with; and to recommend
such as, in my judgment, the occasion cal-
led for. To this end, an unreserved com-
munication of the case, in all its aspects,
became indispensable. To have shrunk,
in making it, from saying all that was neces-
sary to its correct understanding, and that
the truth would justify fear of giving off-
ence to others, would have been unworthy
of us. To have gone, on the other hand,
a single step further, for the purpose of woun-
ding the pride of a Government and People
with whom we had so many motives for cul-
tivating relations of amity and reciprocal
advantage, would have been unwise and
improper. Admonished by the past of the
difficulty of making even the simplest state-
ment of our wrongs without disturbing the
sensibilities of those who had, by their posi-
tion, become responsible for their redress,
I earnestly desirous of preventing further
obstacles from that source, I went out of my
way to preclude a construction of the mes-
sage, by which the recommendation that
was made to Congress might be regarded as
a menace to France, in not only disavowing
such a design, but in declaring that her
pride and her power were too well known
to expect any thing from her fears. The
message did not reach Paris until more than
a month after the Chambers had been in
session; and such was the insensibility of
the Ministry to our rightful claims and just
expectations, that our Minister had been
informed that the matter, when introduced,
would not be pressed as a cabinet measure.

Although the message was not officially
communicated to the French Government,
and notwithstanding the declaration to the
contrary which contained, the French Min-
istry decided to consider the conditional
recommendation of reprisals, a menace and
an insult, which the honor of the nation
made it incumbent on them to resent. The
measures resorted to by them to evince their
sense of the supposed indignity were the
immediate recall of their Minister at Wash-
ington, the offer of passports to the Ameri-
can Minister at Paris, and a public notice
to the Legislative Chambers that all diplo-
matic intercourse with the United States
had been suspended.

Having in this manner vindicated the
dignity of France, they next proceeded to il-
lustrate her justice. To this end, a bill was
immediately introduced into the Chamber
of Deputies, proposing to make the appro-
priations necessary to carry into effect the
treaty. As this bill subsequently passed
into a law, the provision of which now con-
stitute the main subject of difficulty between
the two nations, it became my duty, in or-
der to place the subject before you in a clear
light, to trace the history of its passage, and
to refer with some particularity, to the pro-
ceedings and discussions in regard to it.
The Minister of Finance, in his opening
speech, alluded to the measures which
had been adopted to resent the supposed in-
dignity, and recommended the execution of
the treaty as a measure required for the
honor and justice of France. He, as the
organ of the Ministry, declared the mes-
sage, so long as it had not received the sanction
of Congress, a mere expression of the personal
opinion