

either bank of the narrow Sheet of water, which marks the territorial limits of the two nations & while countenance & protection is held forth to the most infamous of the human race, by vicious & interested Individuals.

My sense of the occasion, & the conduct which I shall steadily pursue, are fully testified by the enclosed extract from my general Orders; to which I will take leave to add the sentiment, that the public functionary who refuses his aid, to restrain practices tending directly to enfeeble the reins of Government, & to endanger the public Interests, neglects his duty, & offends against the power which he is bound to serve.

The desertions from the Troops of the United States, have of late sensibly increased, & what at first originated probably in the wicked propensities of Individuals, I have good cause to believe has now become a subject of political Speculation: By desertion two ends are proposed, the dismemberment of the military force & the dispersion of a desperate band of Villains among these settlements, ripe for revolution, & ready to ride on any tempest which may be excited.

That dangerous designs are pointed to this Quarter, needs no proof, because the fact is as unquestionable, as that the Duke of Orleans, has very recently reconnoitred Fort Erie & the Settlements in that vicinity.

In this eventful posture of Affairs, it becomes my duty, to maintain the force subject to my orders, in the best condition for offence or defence; to this end the prevention of desertion becomes a primary object, & by your coöperation it is readily attained, but without it, the evil is incurable & the consequences must follow. You are not to be informed Gentlemen, of the fundamental maxim in British Jurisprudence, that a Subject cannot dissolve his allegiance at his will, nor need you be told, that the Government of the United States has, in the 21st article of the Treaty of Amity Commerce & Navigation so far acquiesced in the principle, as to subject its Citizens taken in Arms against Great Britain to be treated as Pirates. Why then Gentlemen are the Citizens of the United States, deserters from its colours, permitted so soon as they pass the Strait to swear allegiance to His Majesty and to call themselves British Subjects? is