

munication of the Ohio, so that is no longer practicable for the Traders. Whilst at the same time they are endeavouring to form a more strict alliance than ever for purposes that are but too obvious, seeming only to wait the success of their negotiations for the commencement of hostilities, and altho' upon these occasions they use much caution & secrecy, yet some part of their late conduct does not exactly agree with it, but shews an extraordinary degree of confidence from some quarter, of which the answer herewith inclosed to the speech of L<sup>t</sup> Col Wilkins commanding at Illinois furnishes some instances, to illustrate which I have annexed some notes, I have received a copy of the Speech of Mons<sup>r</sup> Verchere (formerly a French officer) to the Indians of Lake Erie, as now delivered by them, this speech was made known to me by some spies I have who with many others since positively affirms that he gave them a present in the name of the French King, and desired them to hold themselves in readiness, but on my communicating it to the General, who wrote concerning it to Canada, the Indians who esteem *Ver Chere* came to the Commandant at Detroit delivered up *Ver Cheres* belt & also the speech in the manner sent me which was evidently altered to prevent his meeting with punishment, nevertheless tho they have certainly suppressed much of what he said to them, enough remains, which to a man conversant in their idiom would be convincing proof without any thing farther. In short as I suspected and frequently represented would be the case, none but Frenchmen can go into their country to the Westward, & the Indians positively & publickly declare to all people that they will suffer no others into their country, I was informed that the French were at the bottom of the representations artfully prepared to get the general liberty for trading at large in the Indian country which I then observed was calculated for them to engross all.