

Andrew Jackson to Unknown, February 10, 1810, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO—.1

1 Probably written to one of the Tennesseans in Washington. An expression in Jackson to Randolph, Feb. 20, 1810, *post*, suggests that it was sent to Jenkins Whiteside, U. S. senator from Tennessee. However, against this supposition is the fact that another letter from Jackson to Whiteside exists for the same date, and in it is no reference to Wilkinson. Tennessee's other Congressmen were Joseph Anderson, senator, Pleasant Miller, John Rhea, and Robert Weakley, representatives.

Hermitage, February 10, 1810

Dear Sir: Last Thursdays mail brought me an answer to the letter I informed you I had written to a gentleman of my acquaintance, in whose hands and possession I was advised, was a serious of letters which contained the communication between Genl Wilkison and his deceased brotherinlaw, which went plainly to prove, the receipt of large sums of money by Wilkison from Spain, and compleatly to shew the nature complection and tendency of that conspiracy, from which I find my information was correct as to the letters being in his hands but incorrect as to his brotherinlaw being the individual with whom Wilkison had and held the correspondence but that it was with a Michael Lacasange, the person named by Danl Clark in his affidavit and aluded to in his pamphlet. My Dear Sir I think it a duty I owe to my self and country to enclose you a coopy of this letter that you may shew it to the President of the U.N. States, that you and he may see the effects of over grown treason, treachery and corruption when cloathed with power and supported by the sm[i]les of goverment over virtuous poverty in private station. yes Sir I know the writer

Library of Congress

to be a patriott, and possessing Virtue such as every citizen ought to possess, who the god of nature has intended to live in a land of freedom and to enjoy the blessings of a goverment like ours and which alone can perpetuate to the nation of america its freedom and independance and yet with all his firmness and virtue, he dreads to meet the influence of W[ilkinson] and his powerful friends. yes Sir I know he is a man of firmness, and I once knew him before he obtained possession of these papers at Richmond in 1807, the open and avowed supporter of the Genl. View now his feelings from facts and events. at that day any virtuous patriot who had honesty and firmness to come forward and disclose facts was immediately branded with the epithet of *Traitor Burrrite* etc. and let his reputation or standing be what it might, he fell a, ruthless victim at the shrine of the lords anointed to shield this hidden but well known villain from that Just Punishment, that a fair and impartial inquiry into his conduct would have lead to. my god is it possible. that the influence of a great and Publick villain and his friends in this infant republick are such as to overawe the poor but virtuous from disclosing evidence that would when lincked with that before the Public, go to shew compleatly that our government has been heaping all their favours upon a wretch who was meditating this destruction, and the greater the strength of evidence against him, the more favours and encomiums, by goverment bestowed upon him which at once gave the lie to his accusers, and as I observed before the virtuous Patriot who had courage enough to step forward to warn the country to unmask Treason and Treachery fell a ruthless victam before the impious and thundering accusations of Wilkison untill *virtue itself* stood *apalled* and *amased* at the sight of this hardy villain Who spurns the power of truth and enquiry and riding triumphant over virtue and his accusers. These are the effects that has been produced in society, and a sufficient proof is contained in the letter a coopy of which I inclose (and the mock trial by the court of enquiry and the executive approbation so loudly proclaimed was the engine that has lead to it.)² But I hope the energy and firmness of the present chief magistrate will compell an enquiry, and I am well convinced, if ever an enquiry is had and that before a tribunal that can enforce the production of those letters which are in the handwriting of the Genl it will with other proofs before the publick *compleatly unmask* him. What my Dear Sir Just on the eve of war, and

Library of Congress

a Treator at the head of the army—a commander in chief in whom the citizens that is to fight your Battles have no confidence, that they know is every thing but a honest man and virtuous Patriot—and still with all the proofs that is before the public and in the hands of individuals still enjoying the confidence of government. What impressions is this calculated to make upon the publick mind. I can tell you what it is making—That the people begin to think there are some favorites who have been high in office in the united States whose complection would be scorched by the enquiry. I have Just to add that I inclose you a coopy of the letter with a request that you shew it to the president with the injunction that the name of writer is only to be made publick when the good of the publick requires it. as to this letter of mine you are at liberty to do with it as you please. I am reguar[d]less of the smiles or frowns of the Genl or his friends altho he may be supported by the favours and smiles of Gov. When I obtain information of Treason treachery or vilany either in Publick or private walks in church or state, regardless of smiles or frowns I will do my duty, I will make them known to the Publick, and if Possible bring them to meritted Punishment. I shall await on this occasion, an enquiry by government. Should that not take place I shall make known to the publick, The corrispondance between the Genl and Mr L. if I can obtain [it.] For Villainy has too long escaped punishment, and Virtue in the united States appears to groan under oppression, whilst treason and treachery is idolised, and hailed as the savior of our country yrs etc.

2 A line is drawn around the words in parenthesis, as though the writer doubted the propriety of using them. The letter is a much corrected draft in Jackson's handwriting.