

**James Madison, December 7, 1813. Notes, Russian Mediation. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.**

**SPECIAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.**

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

The tendency of our commercial and navigation laws, in their present state, to favor the enemy, and thereby prolong the war, is more and more developed by experience. Supplies of the most essential kinds find their way, not only to British ports and British armies at a distance, but the armies in our neighborhood, with which our own are contending, derive from our ports and outlets a subsistence attainable with difficulty, if at all, from other sources. Even the fleets and troops infesting our coasts and waters are, by like supplies, accommodated and encouraged in their predatory and incursive warfare.

Abuses, having a like tendency, take place in our import trade. British fabrics and products find their way into our ports, under the name and from the ports of other countries; and often in British vessels, disguised as neutrals, by false colors and papers.

To these abuses it may be added, that illegal importations are openly made, with advantage to the violators of the law, produced by undervaluations, or other circumstances involved in the course of the judicial proceedings against them.

It is found, also, that the practice of ransoming is a cover for collusive captures, and a channel for intelligence advantageous to the enemy.

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To remedy, as much as possible, these evils, I recommend:

That an effectual embargo on exports be immediately enacted.

That all articles, known to be derived, either not at all, or in any immaterial degree only, from the productions of any other country than Great Britain, and particularly the extensive articles made of wool and cotton materials, and ardent spirits made from the cane, be expressly and absolutely prohibited, from whatever port or place, or in whatever vessels, the same may be brought into the United States; and that all violations of the non-importation act be subjected to adequate penalties.

That, among the proofs of the neutral and national character of foreign vessels, it be required that the masters and supercargoes, and three-fourths at least of the crews, be citizens or subjects of the country under whose flag the vessels sail.

That all persons concerned in collusive captures by the enemy, or in ransoming vessels or their cargoes from the enemy, be subjected to adequate penalties.

To shorten, as much as possible, the duration of the war, it is indispensable that the enemy should feel all the pressure that can

be given to it; and the restraints having that tendency, will be borne with the greater cheerfulness by all good citizens; as the restraints will affect those most, who are most ready to sacrifice the interest of their country in pursuit of their own.

December 9, 1813.