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 (In Committee on Foreign affairs )  
 Duplicate York Town Pennsylvania  
 Oct<sup>6</sup><sup>th</sup> 1777

Honorable Gentlemen

Since owes to you by return of the packet from New Hampshire, and duplicates by Mr MrCreary from Maryland, we have not written: Nor have we received any of [your?] favors during the last two months except a letter of old date (Apr: 29<sup>th</sup> signed by Mr. Deane and Doct<sup>r</sup>Lee. Cap<sup>t</sup> Hammond being not yet arrived, altho he failed in April, it is too Probable that he has either fallen into the hands of the enemy or miscarried at Sea. Two reasons have prevented us from writing hitherto: — because, from your assurances we had room to expect a monthly packet, —and because, the progressive State of the war gave us reason to look daily for some more decisive events than had happened, and which might warrant the expence of a particular packet; as the casual conveyance by merchant vessels is almost intirely Stopped by the number and vigilance of the british Cruisers.

We shall now give you an accurate detail of the war in the northern and middle departments, where alone it has raged Since our last. you were before apprized of the evacuation of Tyconderoga and the retreat of our army from thence toward Albany. General Burgoine was rapid in pursuit of his successes and [progressed?] quickly on as far as Fort Edward [???] Hudson River about 20 miles above Albany. Here his progress was interrupted by the American Army which halted and was re-enforced a little below him, This circumstance I bid fair to render abortive at least the great advantages expected by our enemies from their first successes on the Lakes. The better to effect his purpose Gen<sup>l</sup>Burgoine had de- tached Gen<sup>l</sup>S<sup>h</sup>Leiger, with a body of regular troops Canadians and Indians, by the Oneida Lake and Wood Creek, to take Fort

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 Date: October 6, 1777  
 Description: Thomas Heyward, Jr. on the state of the war, Pennsylvania

Schuyler (formerly Stanwix) and to make an impression along Mohawk River. This part of the plan has been totally defeated by the bravery of Gen<sup>l</sup>. Harkimer with the Tryon County Militia, and by the gallant defence of Fort Schuyler by Col<sup>l</sup>. Gansevoort & Lt Col<sup>l</sup>. Willet. The former of these met the enemy in the fields, defeated them, and killed a great number of their Indian allies. This defeat being obtained by Militia, they dispersed as usual, and left the enemy to collect & lay siege to Fort Schuyler, which was defended with great gallantry by the two officers above mentioned, until the approach of Gen<sup>l</sup>. Arnolds with a Body of Troops occasioned the enemy to raise the siege of that fortress, and to retreat with great precipitation leaving their baggage, ammunition provisions & some artillery, which fell into our hands. Another body of troops was detached by Gen<sup>l</sup>. Burgoine under command of Lt Col<sup>l</sup>. Baum to the eastward, for the purpose of collecting horses to mount the Troopers, Provisions, and Teams for the use of the army. This detachment was met, attacked & defeated by the brave Gen<sup>l</sup>. Stark and the New Hampshire Militia, at a place called Bennington, now rendered famous by the total overthrow of 1500 regular troops (posted behind works & fortified with cannon) by 2000 Militia. The two wings of Mr. Burgoine being thus cut off, his body remained inactive until the 29<sup>th</sup> of last month when he moved on to attack Gen<sup>l</sup>. Gates who commands the northern army, and was well posted at the Heights above Behmus's. The consequences of this attack you will see related by Gen<sup>l</sup>. Gates himself among the Inclosed, as well as the account of our successes in the rear of the enemy on the Lakes George & Champlain by Col<sup>l</sup>. Brown who had been detached for the purpose by Gen<sup>l</sup>. Lincoln who is also in Gen<sup>l</sup>. Burgoine's rear with a strong body of troops. Our enemy being thus

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Surrounded on all sides, with little prospect of safe retreat, and a strong army in front growing stronger every day by reinforcements, we hope e'en long to be able to give you information of definitive success over the British army in that quarter. An aid of Gen.<sup>l</sup> Gates who brought these last accounts tells us that, by the concurring testimony of prisoners deserters and our own people who have escaped from the enemy their loss could not be less than 1000 or 1200 men in killed wounded & missing; and that Gen.<sup>l</sup> Burgoinne himself was wounded in the shoulder by a rifle ball.

In the middle department the war has been less favorable to us, as you will see by what follows. About the middle of August the British fleet appeared in Chesapeake Bay, and landed Gen.<sup>l</sup> Howes army at the head of Elk, about 50 miles from Philadelphia. Gen.<sup>l</sup> Washington's army, which had crossed the Delaware on the embarkation of the British troops and the appearance of the fleet off the capes of that river, now proceeded to meet the enemy, and came up with them near Willmington. After various skirmishes and manoeuvres, a general engagement took place at Chad's Ford over the Brandywine on the 11.<sup>th</sup> of Sep.<sup>r</sup> last. This battle terminated in leaving the enemy in possession of the field with nine pieces of our artillery. Our loss in killed wounded & missing did not exceed 600; That of the enemy, as far as we have been able to get information was near 2000. An orderly book taken from them since the battle makes it 1900. Gen.<sup>l</sup> Washington retreated across the Schuylkill, and having refreshed his army, recrossed that river in two days after the battle, with design to attack the enemy who had remained close by the field of action

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until he came up with them again. To be the better prepared for battle, and to be guarded against the consequences of a defeat, our army marched without baggage, and left their Tents behind. In this Situation, and just in the moment of beginning an attack upon the enemy, an heavy long-continued & cold rain with high wind came on and prevented it. The ammunition in the cartridge boxes was all rendered unfit for use, the arms were injured, and the troops a good deal hurt & dispirited. In these circumstances it became necessary to retire from before the enemy to a place of safety, in order to clean their arms replace their cartridges and refresh the men. The enemy were also without tents; but they have good blankets, are better clothed than our men, and have tin receptacles to keep dry their cartridges. Gen.<sup>l</sup> Howe judging of our situation, put his army in motion, and endeavored to harass & distress us by marches countermarches and frequent shows of designing to give battle. After a variety of manoeuvres, the enemy crossed Schuylkill below our troops, and, marching to Philadelphia, have possessed themselves of that City. Gen.<sup>l</sup> Washington having rested & refreshed his troops, and being reinforced, is now moving towards the enemy. This unfavorable rain has injured our affairs considerably by having thrown a number of our men into hospitals, and by the distress and harassment of our army consequent thereupon. However, they are recovering again, and we hope can long to give Gen.<sup>l</sup> Howe reason to regret his possession of Philadelphia. The real injury to America

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from the loss of that City is not so great as some are apt at first view to imagine; unless the report and misconceptions of this matter in Europe should too much dispirit our friends and inspirith our enemies. But we rely on your careful & just representation of it to prevent the ill impressions it may otherwise make. When this contest first began, we foresaw the probability of losing our great Towns on the water, and so expressly told our enemies in the address of the first Congress: but, we are blest with an extensive sea coast, by which we can convey & receive benefits independent of any particular Spot. And it is far from being clear to us that the enemy will be able to hold Philadelphia, as we are yet masters of the Delaware below, and have hopes of keeping it, so as to prevent the British fleet from getting up to the City. Should this be the case, Gen. Howe's visit cannot be of long duration.

You say that "the vessels of the United States will be received at the Havannah as those of France the most favored nation". We wish to be exactly informed whether all North American products may be carried thither, or prizes taken to and disposed of in that port or any other of his Catholic Majesty in America. You likewise mention a late draught of the Mississippi, taken for the government of G<sup>r</sup> Britain. We are desirous of being furnished with a copy.

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will be greatly wanted. As the degree  
of success the enemy have met with this year will  
probably support the hopes of a vindictive court,  
and occasion the straining of every nerve for the  
accomplishment of its tyrannic views, we doubt  
not your most strenuous exertions to prevent Gr  
Britain from obtaining Russian or German Auxili-  
aries for the next campaign; and we think with  
you that it is an object of great importance to  
cultivate & secure the friendship of his Prussian  
Majesty, as well for preventing that evil as for  
obtaining <sup>his public recognition of our independence and</sup> leave of his ports for the purposes  
of commerce & disposal of prizes. The  
original papers, which you mention in a  
triplicate to have sent, never came to hand;  
so that we are able only to conjecture the dispo-  
sition of that Monarch. The marine  
force of the enemy is so considerable in these  
seas and so over proportionate to our infant Navy  
that it seems necessary & wise to send our ships  
to distress the commerce of our enemies in other  
parts of the world. For this purpose, the marine  
Committee have already ordered some vessels to  
France under your direction as to their future  
operations, and we expect more will be sent.  
But our Frigates are not capable of carrying  
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 where the commodities wanted are to be obtained.  
 The reciprocal benefits of commerce cannot flow  
 from on to America until some maritime Pow  
 er in Europe will aid our cause with marine  
 strength. And this circumstance gives us pain  
 least it should be judged unwillingness on our part  
 to pay our debts, when the truth is we have the  
 greatest desire of doing so, have materials in  
 abundance but not the power of conveying them.  
 This leads us to reflect on the great advantages  
 that must unavoidably accrue to all parties  
 if France & Spain were to afford effectual aid  
 on the sea by loan or sale of ships of war,  
 according to the former propositions of Congress,  
 or, if the Farmers General could be prevailed  
 upon to receive in America the Tobacco or  
 other products of this northern continent, which  
 France may want.

We are  
 Gentlemen

Your very humble Serv<sup>ts</sup>

John Witherspoon

Benj<sup>n</sup> Harrison

Richard Henry Lee

James Lovell

Tho<sup>s</sup> Heyward Jun<sup>r</sup>

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mess<sup>rs</sup> Franklin Deane & Lee

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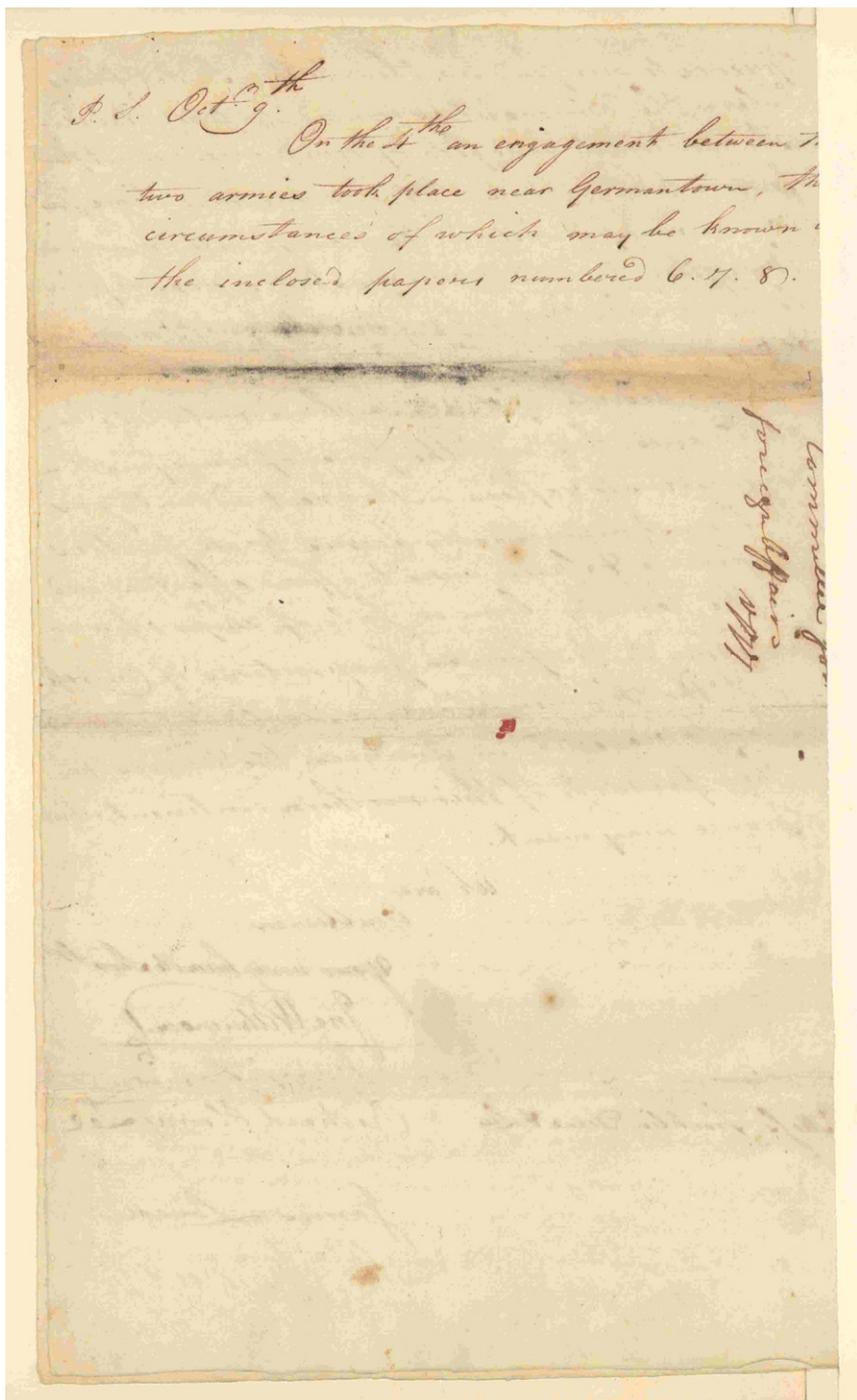
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P. S. Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>  
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Commence  
for  
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