

John Hancock to the Convention of Maryland

Letter from the Honourable John Hancock to the Honourable Convention of Maryland.

—PHILADELPHIA, June 4th, 1776.

Gentlemen, —Our Affairs are hastening fast to a Crisis; and the approaching Campaign will, in all Probability, determine for ever the Fate of America., Such is the unrelenting Spirit which possesses the Tyrant of Britain and his Parliament, that they have left no Measure unessayed that had a Tendency to accomplish our Destruction. Not satisfied with having lined our Coasts with Ships of War, to starve us into a Surrender of our Liberties, and to prevent us from being supplied with arms and Ammunition, they are now about to pour in a Number of foreign Troops; who from their Want of Connections, and those Feelings of Sympathy which frequently bind together the different Parts of the same Empire, will be more likely to do the Business of their Masters without Remorse or Compunction.

By the best Intelligence from Canada it appears, that our Affairs in that Quarter wear a melancholy Aspect. Should the Canadians and Indians take up Arms against us (which there is too much Reason to fear) we shall then have the whole Force of that Country to contend with, joined to that of Great Britain, and all her foreign Auxiliaries. — In this Situation, what Steps must we pursue? — The Continental Troops alone, are unable to stem the Torrent; nor is it possible at this Day, to raise and discipline Men ready to take the Field by the Time they will be wanted., From the Secrecy with which the Ministry carry on their Machinations, we neither know their views, or how near our Enemies may be. — Perhaps at this Moment, they are landing on some Part of our Country., In this difficult and trying Situation of our Affairs, "the Congress" have come to the enclosed Resolves, which I have it in Command to transmit you by Express, containing Matters of the greatest Importance, and to which I beg Leave to request your Attention. You will there find, the Congress have judged it necessary to call upon the Militia at this alarming Crisis., Should the United Colonies be able to keep their Ground this Campaign, I am under no Apprehensions on Account of any future one. We have many Disadvantages at present to struggle with, which Time, and Progress in the Art of War will remove. But this Circumstance should move us to superior Exertions on the Occasion. The Militia of the United Colonies are a Body of Troops that may be depended upon. To their Virtue, their Delegates in Congress now make the most solemn Appeal — They are called upon to say, whether they will live Slaves, or die Freemen — they are requested to step forth in Defense of their Wives, their Children, their Liberty, and every Thing they hold dear. The Cause is certainly a most glorious one; and I hope every Man in the Colony of Maryland is determined to see it gloriously ended; to perish in the Ruins of it., In short, on your Exertions at this critical Period, together with those of the other Colonies in the Common Cause, the Salvation of America now evidently depends. Your Colony, I am persuaded, will not be behind hand. Exert therefore every Nerve to distinguish

yourselves. Quicken your Preparations, and stimulate the good People of your government; and there is no Danger, notwithstanding the mighty Armament with which we are threatened, but they will be lead on to Victory, to Liberty & to Happiness. I have the honor to be,, with great Respect,, gentlemen, your most obedt., and very hble servt., John Hancock Presidt, Honble John Hancock Esq., June 4t 1776, Recorded, The Honble The Convention of , Maryland.



M. Jefferson
MONTICELLO