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of our Affairs, and best conduce to the Happiness and Safety of the People of New-Jersey.

That you, Gentlemen, may join in Sentiments and Opinion with us on the present Occasion, and strenuously adhere to, maintain, and assert our present Mode of Government as founded on the British Constitution, and established and confirm'd by the Laws of the Land, is the sincere and hearty Prayer of, &c.

3 Elias Boudinot, "Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs"

[Andre de Coppet Collection, 105, Firestone Library, Princeton University.]

Even the staunchest supporters of resistance to the imperial policies of Great Britain feared the military and political repercussions of independence. Of immediate concern were the monumental military effort that would be required in a contest with the greatest military power in the world and the terrible ravages that would accompany the civil war that was certain to erupt in America. Of greater concern for the long run was the viability of republican government—was such a mode of government feasible in America or would it result in the ruination of the country and the destruction of political liberties? Elias Boudinot, a strong Whig but ever the voice of moderation and reason, attempted to answer these and other important questions as he weighed the issue of independence. He eventually overcame his pessimism and served as a member of the Confederation Congress (1777-1778, 1781-1784), president of the Congress (1782-1783), and member of the United States House of Representatives (1789-1795).

June 11, 1776

Soon as we Declare for Independancy, every prospect of Peace must Vanish. Ruthless War, with all it's aggravated horrors, will Ravage our Once happy Land; our Sea Coasts & Ports will be Ruined & our Ships taken as Pyrates; Torrints of Blood be Spilt, & thousands reduc'd to beggery & wretchedness. This Melancholy Contest wou'd [torn] till one Side Conquered. Supposing Britton Victorious; however high my opinion of Brittish Generosity, I shou'd be exceeding Sorry to Receive terms from her, in the haughty tone of A Conquerer—Or—Supposing Such A failure of her manufacturies, *Comerce* & Strength, that Victory shou'd incline to the Side of America, yet who Can Say in that Case what extremities her Sense of Resentment & self Preservation will Drive G. B. to? For my part I shou'd not in the least be Surpris'd if on Such A prospect, as the Independancy of America, She wou'd parcel out this Continent to the Dif[feren]t European Powers. Canada might be Restor'd to

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france, Florida to Spain, with additions to each. Other States might also Come in for Aportion. Let no [torn] think this empty or improbable, the Ind[epende]ncy of America wou'd be so fatal to Brittons, that She wou'd leave Nothing in her Power to prevent it. I believe as firmly as I do my own existence that if every other Method fail'd, She wou'd try Some Such expedient as this, to Disconcert our Scheme of Ind[epende]nce and let any Man figure for himself the Situation of these Brittish Colonies, if only Canada were Restor'd to France.

But Supposing once more that we were able to Cut off[f] every Regiment that Brittain Can Spare, or hire, & to Dstroy every Ship she Can send; that we Cou'd Beat off[f] any other European Power, that wou'd presume to intrude upon the Cont[ine]nt. Yet A Republican form of Government wou'd neither Suit the Genius of the People nor the Extent of America.

In nothing is the Wisdom of the Legislator more Conspicuous than in adapting his form of Government to the Genius, Manners, Dispositions & other Circumstances of the People with whom he is Concerned. If this important [torn] is overlook'd, Confusion will insue, his System will Sink into Neglect & Ruin; what Checks or Barriers may be interpos'd, Nature will always Surmount them, & finally Prevail. The Americans are properly Brittons, they have the manners, habits, & Ideas of Brittons, & have been Accustomed to A Similar form of Governm[en]t. But Brittons Cou'd never bear the extreams, either of Monarchy or Republicanism. Some of their Kings have Aim'd at Despotism, but always failed. Repeated Efforts have Been made towards Democracy, and they equally failed. Once indeed Republicanism Triumphed over the Constitution,¹ the Dispotism of One person ensued;² both were finally expel'd. The inhabitants of Great Brittain were equally Anxious for the Restoration of Royalty in the year 1660,³ as they were for its expulsion in 1642.⁴ If we may Judge future events by former Transactions, in Similar Circumstances, this wou'd most probably be the Case of America, were A Republican form of Government adopted in our present ferment. After much Blood was Shed, those Confusions wou'd Terminate in the Despotism of some one Successful adventurer, and Shou'd the Americans be so fortunate as to emancipate themselves from that Thraldom, perhaps the whole wou'd end in A Limited Monarchy, after Shedding Torrents of Blood.

Limited Monarchy is the form of Government which is most favourable to Liberty, which is best adapted to the Genius & Temper of Brittons; altho here & there amoungst us, A Crack Brain Zealot for Democracy or Absolute Monarchy may be Sometimes found.⁵ America is too unwieldly for the Feeble Dilatory Administration of Democracy. Rome had the most extensive Dominions of any Ancient Republic, but it Shou'd be Remember'd that very Soon after the [illegible] Conquest, Carry'd the Romans beyond the Ancient Limits that were proportion'd to their Constitution, they fell under A Despotic yoke. A very few years had elaps'd from the time of their Conquering Greece, & first entering Asia, till the Battle of Pharsallia,⁶ where Julius Cesar put an end to the Liberties of his Country. And Depend upon it America will not be long without A Julius Cesar, and Consider what Deluges of Blood must fix A Julius Cesar in America.

Holland is the most Considerable Republic in Europe at Present yet the Small Kingdom of Ireland is more than twice as Large as the Seven United Provinces. Holland indeed has Considerable Colonies in the East & West Indies, but they are under as Rigid and Arbitrary Administration, as any Colonies of France & Spain.

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Holland is mention'd by our warm advocates for Independance as A pattern for us to follow, as if that were the only Land of Liberty, Crowned with every Blessing, and exempt from every evil. But, hear an Undeniable truth: the National Debt of Holland is much greater in proportion than that of England, the Taxes in Holland exceed not only those in England but even those in France, inasmuch I Scarcely know anything they have which has Escaped Taxation, except the Air they Breathe. Nay more the People at Large have no Voice in Chusing the Members of their Several Senates, as We have in Chusing Representatives; the Members of each Senate upon any Vacancy, Elect new Members and the Deputies from those Senates Constitute the States General, So that in fact the People have no Share in the Government, as with us. They have nothing to do but pay and Grumble. Yet this is the Country held up for imitation, and if we were to follow it, I have no Doubt, we shou'd soon Resemble them in paying Taxes too great to be born, as well as in every other matter.

In Short let us imagine for A Moment that an American Republic is formed, every Obstacle Surmounted; A Very Serious article yet Remains to be inquired into, VIZ: Expence Necessary to Support it. It behooves those who have any property to think of this part of the Business. It wou'd be impossible to Ascertain with any kind of Accuracy the expence that wou'd be Necessary for the Support of this New Republic. It wou'd be very great Undoubtedly; it wou'd appear intolerable to the Americans who have hitherto paid so few Taxes. I think on A Moderate Computation it wou'd amount in Ships, Building, Rigging, Ammunitions, Men & Provisions, & a Land Army, with the Necessaries thereto, will amount to perhaps Two Millions, Five Hundred Thousand Pounds, the Interest of which must be Sunk Anually, and According to the best acc[oun]ts of the Number of People grown to Maturity on the Continent 'twill amount to A Tax of 30 £ Sterling A head. A very Respectable Sum only the anual Interest, but if the Principal is ever to be Sunk Must be Greater. With the expence the Continent has already been at, and the paper Money now outstanding in provincial Currency, the Anual Tax on heads Cannot be less than 50.0£ Sterling on each head, And we are to Consider how few heads pay the Burdon of the Taxes. I don't think I have Rated this expence too high, and were the Tryal made, I verily believe the expence wou'd be much greater. And where the Money is to Come from that is to Defray this enormous expence, I know not, Unless Some of our Warm ones for independancy, have Discover'd the Philosophers Stone,⁷ by which Iron & other Base Mettals, May be Transmuted into Gold. Certain I am that our Commerce & Agriculture the two principal Sources of our Wealth, will not Support Such an expence. But here it may be Said, that all the evils above Specified, are more tolerable than Slavery. With this Sentiment I Sincerely agree. Any hardships however great are preferable to Slavery. But then I ask, is there no other Alternative in the present Case? Is there no Choice left us but Slavery, or those evils? I am Confidant there is, & that both may be equally avoided. Let us only Shew A Disposition to Treat, or Negotiate in Earnest, and if once properly Began, there is A Moral Certainty, that this Unhappy Dispute will be Settled to the Mutual Satisfisfaction and Interest of both Country's. For my part I have not the least Doubt of it, Provided we Steer Clear in every Shape of an Independency and Shew A Disposition for Peace.

I Shall further observe, tho' it may be of Dangerous Consequences, that the Continental Congress were not Delegated by the People with any View to alter the

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present Constitution, nor Declare, nor even to Recommend A Separation from G. B. I have ever held that unlimited Power will end in Tyranny, and from the first of this unhappy Dispute, Blam'd the people for Establishing A Set of men to Rule over us With unlimited Power. On Such A plan is the Continental Congress Establis'd, and their Authority so great, and the People have foolishly made it high Treason, to Speak any thing Contrary to the order of Congress. Yet I am Determin'd to oppose any Arbitrary Measure that Shall be attempted to be laid on us, Whether by Monarchy, or Democracy. I may perhaps Suffer for my freedom of Speech. But let me tell you, any Infringment on the Liberty of an Individual, is in Effect A Violation of the Liberty of the Whole Community. Therefore I Sincerely Wish every Member of Society wou'd Stand forth in the Defence of his Liberty, against every invader thereof, and not Consent to the Congress's Declaration of Independancy, Untill the General Voice of the People Can be taken, without which they have no more Right to Declare it, than they have to Establish the Pretender to the Crown of Great Brittain, absolute Monarch of America.

I Declare these to be my Sentiments and am humbly of Opinion nothing I have offer'd but what Breathes the true Spirit of Liberty. If any Member here or any other person, has anything to offer ag[ains]t what I have advanc'd, he has my Liberty freely to Declare it, and if they are more in favour of Liberty than What I have offer'd, Shall Stand Convicted, and Cheerfully Subscribe to his Sentiments.⁸

My most ardent Wish next to future happiness, is to See Tranquility Restor'd to America, our Liberty's, Properties, & Trade Settled on A Firm, Generous, & Constitutional plan, so that Neither of the Former shou'd be invaded, nor the latter impolitcly or unjustly Restrained, that in Consequence of this A perfect Reconciliation With G. Brittain Established & Union formed, by which both Countries, Supporting & Supported by Each other, might Rise to emminence & Glory, And be the Admiration of Mankind, till time be no more.

In Such A Plan the Real Interest of America is Undubitably to be Sought, And Cou'd my influence avail, there wou'd not be A Dissenting Voice in the Colonies. All wou'd Unite as One Man and use every Effort to have Such A plan Speedily Settld.

1. The republican Commonwealth, 1649-1660.
2. The Protectorate, in which Oliver Cromwell imposed a military dictatorship on England from 1653 to 1658.
3. The restoration of Charles II.
4. The English Civil War, which pitted the forces of Parliament against those of King Charles I, commenced in 1642 and concluded in 1649 with the trial and execution of the monarch.
5. The prevailing western political philosophy in the eighteenth century held that each of the principal forms of government—monarchy (rule by one), oligarchy (rule by the few), and democracy (rule by the majority)—was inherently evil since they all led to tyranny. Democracy was perhaps most feared because it would lead to anarchy, from which there was little recourse. The ideal form of government was considered to be a mixture of the best qualities of the three varieties; Great Britain, with its polity consisting of king (monarchy), Lords (oligarchy), and Commons (democracy), was considered the archetype of "mixed government."

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6. The battle of Pharsalus in 48 B. C. where Caesar defeated Pompey.
7. The philosopher's stone was an imaginary substance thought to transform base metals into gold.
8. This statement suggests that the document is a copy of a speech delivered before some deliberative body, but Boudinot was not a member of either the Provincial or the Continental Congress at the time. The manuscript is in Boudinot's hand and expresses his views on independence, but the purpose and origin of the piece are unknown.

4 The Provincial Congress Orders the Arrest of Governor William Franklin

[*PCCS Minutes*, pp. 454-58.]

Following his near arrest in January 1776, Governor William Franklin voluntarily remained in seclusion at his home in Perth Amboy for fear of engendering the wrath of the rebels. But the attempt of the Continental Congress to overthrow imperial authority in America through its famous resolve of May 15 prompted Franklin to make a last-ditch effort to prevent the demise of royal government in New Jersey. Certain that the upcoming Provincial Congress would implement the continental directive, Franklin on May 30 summoned the General Assembly to convene in Perth Amboy on June 20 to discuss "Matters of great Importance." The rebels could not permit a confrontation between the royal and popular assemblies and thus ordered Franklin taken into custody. When Franklin refused to sign the parole tendered by Colonel Nathaniel Heard on June 17, he was interrogated by the Provincial Congress and subsequently ordered imprisoned in Connecticut by the Continental Congress. (see Sec. VIII, Doc. 7). Eventually exchanged, he served as president of the Associated Board of Loyalists in New York City before entering permanent exile in England.

June 14-15, 1776¹

1. Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Congress, the Proclamation of William Franklin, Esquire, late Governor of New Jersey, bearing date on the thirtieth day of May last in the name of the King of Great Britain, appointing a meeting of the General Assembly, to be held on the twentieth day of this instant June, ought not to be obeyed.

2. Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Congress, the said William Franklin, Esquire, by such proclamation, has acted in direct contempt and violation of the resolve of the Continental Congress of the fifteenth day of May last.