

**Letter from James L. Cathcart (May 1800)**

To Secretary of State from James L. Cathcart, U.S. Consul, Tripoli,

TRIPOLI  
May 27<sup>th</sup> 1800

SIR Since the date of the enclosed dispatch I heard nothing from the Bashaw until the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> inst when Siddi Mohammed Daguize sent me the original in Arabic of which the enclosed is a literal translation. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the Bashaws proceedings is that he wants a present, & if he does not get one, he will forge pretences to commit depredations on the property of our fellow Citizens; His letter to the President will be the means of keeping him quiet until he receives an answer provided no unnecessary delay is made, as he will expect to reap a benefit therefrom? should government think proper to make him a present, it will have the desired effect probably for one year; but not longer, I therefore can see no alternative, but to station some of our Frigates in the Mediterranean, otherwise we will be continually subject to the same insults which the Imperials Danes Sweeds & Ragusians have already suffer'd, & will still continue to suffer, if they do not keep a sufficient Naval force in this Sea to protect their trade; notwithstanding the Danes & Sweeds have promis'd to pay this Regency fifteen thousand doll<sup>s</sup> each every three years either in cash or Naval stores at the option of the Bashaw—

It would no doubt be a desirable object for government to be inform'd whether cash or stores would be most acceptable & what might be the amount of the Bashaws expectations, but I think it would be a very imprudent question for me to ask, lest he should extend them beyond the probability of their being complied with, it is therefore in my opinion much better to let it remain as it is at the option of the President, for the truth is, both cash & stores by way of present, would be equally acceptable for the value of which by conjecture I refer you to my letter in Cypher.

Farfara informs me that the Bashaw expects to receive an answer from the President himself, as he always receives the same token of respect from the chiefs of every Nation with whom he corresponds? He likewise has hinted that al'tho he had it not in his power to be of any service to the United States on my arrival at Tripoli, that he has it now, & will always use his influence in favor of the United States, the fact is he has it in his power to do us much harm, & it is prudent to be on the best terms with him, for which *Il faut l'argent*.

I have filed the original letter from the Bashaw in this office in order to have it to produce if necessary, I will endeavor to procure a copy, but a bark sails to day for Tunis which obliges me to close my dispatches immediately presuming that they may arrive in time to be forwarded by the Ship *Hero*—

[SDA. CL, Tripoli, Vol. 1, Part II, Jan. 1800-May 1801.]

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