

**Letter from Secretary of State (May 1800)**

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

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*Philadelphia May 1800*

SIR, On the 12<sup>th</sup> instant were received your letters bearing date Dec<sup>r</sup> 27. 30. & 31 & the first of January last.

Altho' it would be very desirable that the Tripoline cruisers should be restrained within the limits which you state, in respect to the boarding of American vessels to examine their passports—viz. that two men only should enter the vessel; yet you have doubtless acted prudently in submitting to the alteration in your passport required by Morad Raiz, altho' by the 9<sup>th</sup> article of our treaty our commerce is to be on the footing of that of the most favored nations—say the British and Spanish, whose treaties contain that limitation. But similar stipulations are constantly inserted in the treaties of the Christian nations of Europe—and never observed by those which are at war.

The pretences on which, as you represent them, the Tripoline cruisers capture and condemn the vessels and cargoes of nations with which they are at peace, demonstrate the extreme precariousness of any existing treaty; and that nothing can give effectual and permanent security to our commerce, but a marine force adequate to the destruction of those cruisers: and from your description of their number and qualities, any two of our frigates, with two smaller vessels, would without, much difficulty, demolish their whole force. Should the pending negotiation with France produce peace between her and the United States, it will be in the power of the U. States to send into the Mediterranean a naval force sufficient to combat and destroy the marine of all the Barbary Powers: and should the necessity of the measure occur, it is to be hoped there will be no hesitation in doing it. The efficacy and even economoy of such a measure have been incontrovertibly proved by Commodore Campbell, with his single ship of the line, in reducing the Bay of Tripoli to absolute submission; not only to make peace, but, what is perhaps without example, to *purchase* it of a Christian Power—and that power possessing so small a marine as Portugal.

The bills you mention that you had drawn payable to the order of Captain Eaton, have never been presented here.

The letters and papers which have before now been received from you, are noted below. Your communications are very acceptable, and do you credit.

[NA. SDA. CL, Algiers, Vol. 5, March—Dec. 1800.]

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