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(Circular) Head Quarters Kings Ferry 21 Aug. 1781

Sir

I feel myself unhappy in being obliged to inform you, that the circumstances in which I find myself at this late Period, have induced me to make an Alteration of the main Object which was at first adopted, & has hitherto been held in View, for the Operations of this Campaign. — It gives me pain to say that the Delay in the several States to comply with my Requisitions of the 24th of May last, on which in a great Measure depended the Hopes of our Success in that Attempt, has been one great & operative Reason to lead to this Alteration. — Other Circumstances, it is true, have had their Weight in this Determination. — It may, in the Course of Events, prove happy to the States, that this Deviation from our main Design, has been adopted. —

The Fleet of the Count de Grasse, with a Body of French Troops on Board, will make its first Appearance in the Chesapeake — which, should the Time of the Fleet's Arrival prove favorable, and should the Enemy under Lord Cornwallis hold their present Position in Virginia, will give us the fairest Opportunity to reduce the whole British

Force

Force in the South, & to ruin their boasted Expectations
in that Quarter:—to effect this desirable Object, it has
been judged expedient, taking into Consideration our own
present Circumstances, with the Situation of the Enemy in
New York & at the Southward, to abandon the Siege of the
former, and to march a Body of Troops, consisting of a Detach-
ment from the American Army, with the whole of the French
Troops, immediately to Virginia. — With this Detachment,
which will be very considerable, I have determined to march
myself. — The American Troops are already on the West Side of
the Hudson, & the French Army will arrive at Kings Ferry this
Day — When the whole are crossed, our March will be con-
tinued with as much Dispatch as Circumstances will
admit. —

The American Army which will remain
in this Department, excepting two light Companies & some few
Detachments, consists of the two New Hampshire Regiments —
Ten of Massachusetts & five of Connecticut Infantry — with
Sheldons Legion, Grants Artillery — the State Troops & Militia,
which, with proper Sections of the States, will it is expected,
be sufficient to hold the Enemy in Check at New York, & prevent
their Ravages on the Frontiers. — The Command, during my Absence
is given to Major General Heath, who will have the Honor to
communicate with the States, on every Occasion which may re-
quire their Attention. —

As the Enemy's Force in New York
has

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has been for some Time past very considerable, & it is
reported with a good Degree of certainty, that they have
lately received a very respectable Reinforcement of Ger-
man Recruits from Europe, it will be necessary still
to send forward a great Part, if not the whole of the Mi-
litia requested from your State, in the same Manner as
tho no Alteration had taken Place in our Measures. —
you will therefore continue to send on at least 400. Men
from your State to the Orders of Gen^l Heath, with as much
Dispatch as possible, unless you should be informed from
him that this Number need not to be completed. —

On this Occasion, I cannot omit to repeat
to you my Opinion, of the absolute Importance of filling
your Continental Battalions to their compleat Numbers,
for the War, or three Years. — Not only our past Experience
for a Course of Years, but our present Situation should strongly
impose the Necessity of this Measure. — Every Campaign
teaches us the increasing Difficulty & Expence of procuring
short-termed Levies, and their decreasing Utility in the Field.
The large Reinforcements which the Enemy have this Cam-
paign sent to America, strongly indicates their Expectations
of the Continuance of the War. — Should that be the Case,
the best Way to meet them is certainly with a permanent
Force. — but, should the War be drawing towards a Close,
a permanent & respectable Army will give us the happiest
Prospects of a favorable Peace. — In every View, a perma-
nent

From the Secretary General
Washington of the 21 August
1781. Received Sunday night
9 Sept 1781.
Militia called for

Army, should be the great Object of the States to obtain,
as they regard sound Policy, Prudence or Economy

I have the Honor to be

With very great Regard & Respects

for
Your most Obedient

and humble servant,

G. Washington

P.S. 24th Aug^r 1781.

By your Letter of 13th inst. which is just come to
hand, it seems that mine of the 15th June last,
has not reached you; - from that Letter, had it
come to your hand, you would have been
acquainted with the time of the March of
your Militia to camp, - ^{with my Regt for} and an additional
number of 250 Men, requested as your Quota, to
supply the Deficiency from the State of Penn-
sylvania - their Militia being order'd to
go Southward.

The Hon^{ble} Meshech Weare Esq^r