
Option 1

DEFEND RIGHTS AND HONOR THROUGH UNLIMITED WAR

The United States can no longer put up with the outrages perpetrated against it by Great Britain. Marauding Indians on the frontier, the ruthless impressment of our sailors, the seizure of our ships: Britain has pushed us too far. We must act now.

In 1776, we Americans decided we could no longer tolerate British oppression and declared independence. The ensuing conflict resulted in the recognition of America's independence in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Since that time, however, Great Britain has continually attempted to keep its newly independent colonies in a dependent position. In the 1780s and early 1790s, the British limited our access to British ports, impressed American sailors, and maintained a presence in six forts located in the Northwest Territories that they had previously ceded to the United States. While relations improved a little with the signing of the Jay Treaty and the cooperation that occurred between Britain and the United States during the state of war with France, things have only become worse since then.

The resumption of hostilities between Britain and France in 1803 has resulted in increasing tensions. The British view control of the seas as essential to their survival. In their view, there is no right to neutral shipping. Any ship heading to France is considered fair game for seizure and sale. The victors of Trafalgar think that the ocean belongs to them. It does not. They dare anyone to challenge their claims upon nature's natural highway. This interference must stop. Our nation's commerce depends on the right of neutral shipping.

Britain's insatiable need for sailors in their navy has also led them increasingly to impress Americans on the high seas. Although claiming only to be interested in capturing and returning British sailors who have fled the harsh conditions of its navy, native-born as well as naturalized Americans have also frequently been impressed. The practice of impressment has not only resulted in a violation of American rights, it has resulted in violence against Americans. The outrageous attack of the HMS *Leopard* on the *Chesapeake* in 1807 left 21 American sailors dead or wounded. We will not tolerate these insults to our nation's honor any longer.

On the western frontier, Great Britain incites the Indians to massacres of unspeakable brutality. With promises of an independent nation between the United States and Canada and an ample supply of weapons, the British have unleashed terror on the frontier through their Indian allies. Have they no shame? Where is the honor in having others massacre innocent settlers? It is time for us to claim this land as our own and to strike back against the source of British aggression on this continent—Canada.

It is time that we stop trying to speak a language of accommodation and compromise that Britain does not understand. In the 1770s, the Olive Branch Petition fell on deaf ears. In the first decade of the 19th century attempts at "peaceable coercion" are met with disdain. Force is the language of the British. To maintain its independence and preserve its honor, America must abandon negotiation and fight fire with fire.

Our forefathers triumphed less than three decades ago against the British. Their sons will rise to the occasion again. Let us make sure they did not spill their blood in vain and sacrifice lives for a short-lived experiment in constitutional government. The time for talk has passed. America's rights, honor, and credibility must be preserved. Without them, independence is just a meaningless word.

FROM THE RECORD

Felix Grundy, Congressman from Tennessee:

"What, Mr. Speaker are we now called on to decide? It is whether we will resist by force the attempt made by that government to subject our maritime rights to the arbitrary and capricious rule of her will; for my part I am not prepared to say that this country shall submit to have her commerce interdicted or regulated by any foreign nation. Sir, I prefer war to submission. Over and above these unjust pretensions of the British government, for many years past they have been in the practice of impressing our seamen from merchant vessels; this unjust and lawless invasion of personal liberty calls loudly for the interposition of this government. This war, if carried on successfully, will have its advantages. We shall drive the British from our continent—they will no longer have an opportunity of intriguing with our Indian neighbors, and setting on the ruthless savage to tomahawk our women and children."

Richard M. Johnson, Congressman from Kentucky:

"...we must now oppose the farther encroachments of Great Britain by war, or formally annul the Declaration of our Independence, and acknowledge ourselves her devoted colonies... Before we relinquish the conflict, I wish to see Great Britain renounce the piratical system of paper blockade; to liberate our captured seamen on board her ships of war; relinquish the practice of impressment on board our merchant vessels; to repeal her Orders in Council; and cease, in every other respect, to violate our neutral rights; to treat us as an independent people."

Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives:

"What are we to gain by war, has been emphatically asked? In reply, he would ask, what are we not to lose by peace? - commerce, character, a nation's best treasure, honor! If pecuniary considerations alone are to govern, there is sufficient motive for the war. Our revenue is reduced, by the operation of the belligerent edicts, to about six million of dollars, according to the Secretary of the Treasury's report. The year preceding the embargo it was sixteen...."

John C. Calhoun, Congressman from North Carolina:

"I believe that in four weeks from the time a declaration of war is heard on our frontier, the whole

of Upper Canada and a part of Lower Canada will be in our power."

John Rhea, Congressman from Tennessee:

"Not long after the Treaty of Peace, England began her course of inimical depredations, and increasing them in number and in magnitude, in proportion from the time of their beginning, has steadily persevered in the execution of them to the present day; and all that time the United States have persevered in their endeavors, by negotiation, to obtain an amicable settlement of differences. Yes, they have persevered, in a manner bordering too near to humiliation, to avoid war and to live at peace; but every friendly proposition has been rejected, and it seems as if nothing but the reduction of this nation to a servile state of colonial existence, can satiate the appetite of voracious England. If, then, war shall be, let England look to it—human blood, in the event, will be poured out, and will flow to increase that ocean of blood that loudly calls for retribution. In relation to the issue of a war, the United States have nothing to fear; for on this side is arrayed eternal justice, unfurling her flaming standard and conducting to victory."

Andrew Jackson, Volunteers to Arms:

"For what are we going to fight? To satisfy the revenge or ambition of a corrupt and infatuated ministry? To place another and another diadem on the head of an apostate republican general? To settle the balance of power among an assassin tribe of kings and emperors? Or to preserve to the prince of Blood, and the grand dignitaries of the empire their overgrown wealth and privileges? No. Such splendid achievements as these can form no part of the objects of an America war. But we are going to fight for the reestablishment of our national character, misunderstood and vilified at home and abroad; for the protection of our maritime citizens, impressed on board British ships of war and compelled to fight the battles of our enemies against ourselves; to vindicate our right to free trade, and open a market for the productions of our soil, now perishing on our hands because the mistress of the ocean has forbid us to carry them to any foreign nation; in fine, to seek some indemnity for past injuries, some security against future aggressions, by the conquest of all the British dominions upon the continent of north

America. Here then is the true and noble principle on which the energies of the nation should be brought into action: a free people compelled to reclaim by power of their arms the right which God has bestowed upon them, and which an infatuated King has said they shall not enjoy."

John C. Calhoun's report to the House of Representatives from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

"But the period has now arrived, when the United States must support their character and station among the nations of the earth, or submit to the most shameful degradation. Forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. War on the one side, and peace on the other, is a situation as ruinous as it is disgraceful. The mad ambition, the lust of power, and commercial avarice of Great Britain, arrogating to herself the complete dominion of the ocean, and exercising over it an unbounded and lawless tyranny, have left to neutral nations an alternative only between the base surrender of their rights,

and a manly vindication of them. Happily for the United States, their destiny, under the aid of Heaven, is in their own hands. The crisis is formidable only by their love of peace... Your committee, believing that the free-born sons of America are worthy to enjoy the liberty which their fathers purchased at the price of so much blood and treasure, and seeing in the measures adopted by Great Britain, a course commenced and persisted in, which must lead to a loss of national character and independence, feel no hesitation in advising resistance by force; in which the Americans of the present day will prove to the enemy and to the world, that we have not only inherited that liberty which our fathers gave us, but also the will and power to maintain it. Relying on the patriotism of the nation, and confidently trusting that the Lord of Hosts will go with us to battle in a righteous cause, and crown our efforts with success, your committee recommends an immediate appeal to arms."

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING OPTION 1

1. The honor and pride of the United States are at stake. The United States can not suffer under the monarchical tyranny of Great Britain ever again.
2. The United States should have the right to trade with any nation as it sees fit.
3. Force is the only message that Great Britain will understand.
4. The land on the frontiers and in possession of the Indians as well as the British colonial possession of Canada ultimately should belong to the United States.

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS FOR OPTION 1

1. Great Britain has ignored our good-faith efforts to negotiate solutions. They have refused to honor their treaty obligations to abandon their forts in the Northwest and they have incited Indians on the frontier. Their impressment of seamen and limitations on our trade shows that they are treating us like we are still their colonies. Force was what forced them to accede to our demands during the War of Independence. Force is what will stop them now.
2. Expansion to the west will bring valuable land to our farmers, offer more opportunities for trade, and quell the troublesome Indians. Declaring war will allow us to take these lands.
3. Britain's Orders in Council have stifled our economic growth. We have not been able to trade with France or with other European nations as is our right. We must insist on our rights as an independent nation.