

## Letter from Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Knox, February 4, 1789

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Paris February the 4<sup>th</sup> 1789

My dear friend

You Certainly Expect Much from me in the present political period – But I Must Candidly tell you that European Affairs are still too Much Entangled together for me to Give You an Exact description of them – The ottoman Empire, Under the influence of Great Britain Have Madly Ran their Heads Against the two imperial powers Who are preparing forces sufficient to Expel them from Europe in One Campaign – Russia will send probably a fleet into the Mediterranean a Circumstance Which Neither france or England will think proper to Oppose – The King of prussia seems to Repent for His late Conduct, and Endeavors to strengthen the Confederacy of the German princes, some of whom Have Been taken into British pay – But it is Not thought He Will Make War – England is a little [*illegible text*] for the prospect of An alliance Between the Imperial Court, france and Spain, which, However Slowly it Works, Appears to have a tolerable degree of probability – the Horrid Conduct of the state Holderians Has kept up a fermentation in Holland – france Wants peace above Every Thing – Her Deranged finances – the spirit of popular Opposition that is prevailing, are to Many Reasons for Her ministers to keep Clear of a War, and of Any Measure Leading that Way – But should she Be obliged to fight, Her immense resources, and the Readiness of Her Citizens should soon place Her Much Above the idea Which Her Rivals Now Entertain – and in Case she Chose to take a High tone, England would soon lower Her [*illegible text*], those Cabinet Being Equally Averse to Come to Blows – But the late Affair in Holland is a Blot Which it will Be difficult to Work out – Because perfidy in other Nations is Not a Sufficient Apology, and those Who Cheat in politics Have a Right to laugh as those Who Have Been Cheated Untill they are able to take a Revenge such is, My dear sir, the Account I can get for you of the Affairs in the old World

The Edic giving a Civil Estate to the Non Catholic subject Has Been Registered – it is only a Beginning of Relligious tollerance – More May Be done as the time of a National Assembly, an Count Which is promised Before 1782, But Will, I Hope, take place sooner – I

Have sent to You a letter from Mr de Bouille Who Has Been Much pleased With His Admission in the Society

We are Anxiously Waiting for the Results of the State Conventions – the New Constitution is An Admirable Work, altho' I take the liberty to wish for some Amendments – But the point is to Have it first adopted By nine states – and then You May get the dissenters By Means of some improvement Which Mr jefferson, Common sense, and Myself are debating in a Convention of our own as Earnestly as if we were to decide upon it – I Have No doubt of the General's Been chosen the first president – and He Must By all Means Accept, as it is the Best Way to Carry to perfection a Work Nearer to it than Any of the kind that Ever Was framed, altho' it is Not in My opinion free of a few objections that Have been perhaps By this time Removed

My Most affectionate Respect Wait on Mrs knox and family – Remember me to our friend Hamilton and show Him this letter – My Best Compliments Wait on Your Brother and all friends – pray let me know What is genl greene's son and family doing – Adieu, My dear friend, Most Affectionately

Yours

Lafayette

Transcript Source: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History