

Adml. A. Keppel. Memorandum

Mar. 16 1778

2820

The Approaching nearness of a war with  
france and Lord Sandwich having Informed  
me of the probability, that your Majesty  
might soon require me to Hoist my flag,  
with I hope Sufficiency, under the feet I had  
pleas'd my Conduct in the letter I wrote his  
Lordship Yesterday,

I hope your Majesty has understood it  
favourably

Admiral A. Keppel. Memorandum

Mar. 16 1778

2820 (2)

favourably for be assured Sir nothing contained in that letter was meant to be understood as declining the Situation you should please to call me to in the Command of your fleet at Home, At the same time that I would be thought ready to Obey, I ought to expect the clearest & most positive directions for my proceedings,

I do not presume to express an opinion upon the State of your Fleet, I know it must be Employ'd for your Majesty's honor & the Safety of your dominions, & therefore my View in presuming to speak before your Majesty I most solemnly declare, flows from the Zeal

I have for your service, for the honor of your flag & security of your Kingdom and I should Sir, think my silence where I am at present a crime to myself that I should never forgive.

The Number of your Majesty's Fleet at Home, the good condition of them & their fitness for Immediate Action I am unable to speak upon, but the measure of calling the force together, will soon bring an exact State of them, to a full discussion, & enable your Majesty's Ministers to determine the different services they shall be Employ'd upon.

The particular Service of the Safety of your Majesty's Home dominions, is alone more

then sufficient to employ every moment  
of my poor thoughts, and therefore Sir I  
must confine myself to that most important  
and first consideration, and which from various  
circumstances is become a more difficult task  
than has ever offered itself since my services  
in your Royal Navy, I mean Sir, guarding  
effectually against the Enemies Landing in  
England or Ireland, the precautions prudent,  
necessary, for defeating Attempts, (certainly depend  
among the first, that your Grand Fleet should  
be so formidable as to expect success in battle  
if the Enemy offered it, but Sir without an  
Innumerable number of frigates, other precautions

precautions become Imperfect, & this at present  
certain defequency at Home, Obliges me which  
I do with the most Humble Submission  
to your Majesty express in the Strongest  
terms, the Absolute necessity there is for the  
greatest number of your frigates being immediately  
call'd from the North American service, but  
directed with the utmost Secrecy, without  
such reinforcement of frigates, bold in the person  
that advises the defence of your Majesty's Home  
dominions without that additional Aid,  
Lord Hawke was enabled to cruise before  
Brest in the Year 1759. but which he could  
not have performed, If the great Number

of his Ships, had not permitted a constant  
relief, & the Morning he first discover'd the  
Fleet of France, his Force was exactly one Ship  
more than that of the Enemy, in the course  
of the day many other Cruisers joined,

I ought to be silent upon the Situation  
of your Majesty's American Fleet & would be  
so if it was not immediately connected with  
Object of security to these your Majesty's Home  
dominions, It is to be wish'd that Lord Howe  
collected his force to a point, what direction  
may be judg'd wise to give him Afterward  
is far beyond my presumption, I do most  
truly hope for your Majesty's forgiveness

2821 (2)

for what I have ventured to say, and have  
only to add that however difficult & dangerous  
the business may prove, nothing that I have  
utter'd is Intended to be consider'd as an excuse  
from receiving your Majesty's Orders:

For Support and protection. I may I trust  
Expect from Majesty, and However my desire  
for favour & Honor my Ambition may lead  
me to hope, My Obedience now to your Majesty's  
Commands, I cannot wil to be accompanied  
with the Smallest Selfish thought;

Received  
at the  
Secretary's  
Office  
the 10th  
of  
June  
1758

*[Faint, illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

Delivered by  
Admiral Sir...  
Monday March 16<sup>th</sup> 1778