H. R. H. to Ld. Sandwich

In the present Important moment of concern, it is impossible to keep thoughts in total silence, I never allow myself to form plans in my Imagination for Exertion and Enterprize upon the Enemy, without continually meeting a compleat check or stop, from the want of the force both of Land and Sea, that is Employed in North America, but I will interfere as little as possible with that great question, It seems decided; yet I may be permitted to say the Great Land force as well as Sea force in that part, the number of Transports, of Victuallers, of Ordnance Ships and other Store Ships, Employ the largest Stock of Seamen belonging to this Country, and therefore till I can see my way in this great consideration, I must be rather silent, and content my self with the hopes, though not the certainty of being able to save the French wherever they may suddenly shew themselves, for which purpose, My first consideration and proposition would be supposing the Fleet tolerably strong, to form a plan and in great haste for a Fleet of Frigates, Cutters, and Small craft of every Sort, to be able to disappoint the French in the Attempts they may make to Land upon the Coasts of England and

Ireland

Ireland; Land Force will be wanted to receive and check bodies of the Enemies Troops, that may escape the vigilance of the English Fleets, As indeed there are many circumstances and probable situations that may render the Fleet of resistance unable to stop that of the Enemies, And now in regard to the great Fleet, the consideration of its being the Bulwark and real safety of these dominions, I cannot but think, that in every view of it it should be preserved in force superior to the Enemies if possible, and depend upon good intelligence for adopting any seperation of it, shou[illegible] the Enemy send a large detachment of its Fleet to either West or East Indies, the same force may be instantly sent from this Country, but till that is clearly understood, sending any considerable detachment from home can have little other effect than weakening our Force, and yet remaining insufficiently strong abroad to resist the Enemy, what is to be apprehended by it, is that the Enemy will be able to beat and disperse such inferiority as four or five Ships would be (that is admitting that they get out unobserved) and being so successful, the Additional force sent of four or five Ships to strengthen the others, might be defeated in their turn, those they expected to join having met

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that fate before them, some means and exertions must be thought of, to raise 8 or 9000. men for the Fleet, if the services can be carried on without disgrace, to the period of such a recruit of men, the face and appearances of things would much change, but in the present moment I must repeat, that it would be unwise to separate the great Fleet by detachment, such a measure might put the Sea force of England, in the exact state of that of the French, divided and left to the possibility of being cut off from joining. I am therefore firm in my opinion that detachment and Seperation is dangerous and risks too much if the Spaniards join the French Fleet from Toulon the Seige of Gibraltar may be their object, in that thought, all Sea Force to that place not compleatly adequate is thrown away (I don't mean that a risk, if supplies are necessary must not be run) if the destination of the Toulon Fleet can ever be Ascertained, Suppose West or East Indies, Equal force will of course be sent close upon them.

The length of time for the Great Fleet keeping the Sea is a matter of the utmost consequence to have in consideration