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Prince of Wales' Correspondence with the King



30900-7

H. R. H. H. (Copy)
Addindrow

Carlton House. July 18th 1803.

Sir.

The subject on which I address You, presses so heavily, on My mind, and daily acquires such additional Importance, that notwithstanding My wish to avoid any interference, with the Dispositions, made by His Majesty's Ministers, I find it impossible to withhold or delay an explicit Statement of my Feelings, to which I would direct your most serious Consideration -

When it was Officially communicated to Parliament, that the avowed object of the Enemy, was a Descent on our Kingdom, the question became so obvious that the circumstances of the Times required the Voluntary tender of Personal Service; When Parliament in consequence of this Representation, agreed to extraordinary Measures for the Defence of these Realms alone it was evident, that the Danger was not believed dubious or remote.

Animated by the same Spirit, which pervaded the Nation at large; conscious of the Duties which I owed to His Majesty and the Country, I seized the earliest opportunity to express My desire of undertaking the Responsibility of a Military Command

I neither did, nor do presume on supposed Talents, as entitling Me to such an Appointment, I am aware, I do not possess the experience of actual Warfare, at the same time, I cannot regard Myself as totally unqualified, or deficient in Military Science, Since I have long made the Service, My particular Study, My chief pretensions were founded on a sense of those Advantages, which My example, might produce to the State, by exciting the loyal Energies of the Nation

had a right to form, as to the Personal Exertions of their Princes, at a moment like the present.

The more elevated My Situation, in so much the Efforts of Zeal, became necessarily greater, and I confess that if Duty had not been so paramount, a reflection on the Splendid Achievements of My Predecessors, would have excited in Me the Spirit of emulation, when however in addition to such Recollections, the nature of the Contest in which we are about to engage, was impressed on my Consideration, I should have indeed been devoid of every virtuous Sentiment, if I felt no reluctance in remaining a passive Spectator of Armaments, which have for their Object, the existence of the British Empire.

Thus was I influenced to make my Offer of Service, and I did imagine, that His Majesty's Ministers would have attached to it more Value, but when I find, that from some unknown cause, My Appointment seems to remain so long undetermined, when I feel myself exposed to the obloquy of being regarded by the Country as passing My time indifferent to the Events which menace, and insensible to the call of Patriotism, much more of Glory, it then behoves Me, to examine My Rights and to remind His Majesty's Ministers that the Claim, which I have advanced is strictly Constitutional, and Justified by Precedent, and that in the present situation of Europe to deny My exercising it, is fatal to My own immediate Honor and the future Interest of the Crown.

I can never forget, that I have solemn Obligations imposed on Me by my Birth, and that I should ever shew Myself as foremost in contributing

when I may prove Myself, sensible of the Duties of My Situation, and of evincing my devotion to that Sovereign who by Nature, as well as Public worth, commands My most affectionate Attachment -

I repeat that I should be sorry to embarrass the Government, at any time, most particularly at such a Crisis, but since no event in My future Life, could compensate Me, for the misfortune of not participating in the Honors and Dangers, which await the brave Men destined to oppose our invading Enemy, I cannot forego the earnest renewal of My application -

All I solicit, is a more ostensible situation than that in which I am at present placed, for situated as I am, as a mere Colonel of a Regiment, the Major General commanding the Brigade of which, such a Regiment, must form a part, would justly expect and receive, the full Credit of pre-arrangement and successful Enterprise -

I remain

Sir,

very sincerely Yours.

(signed)

G. P.

R. Hon. Henry Addington

cc. Sec. &c.

N^o. 2.

Copy of Mr Addington's answer.

Copy of 39905

Downing Street July 20th 1803

Sir,

I have been honor'd with Your Royal Highness's Letter, and will not fail, to lay it immediately before The King - It is my earnest Hope, that I shall not incur the imputation of Presumption, if I venture to assure Your Royal Highness of the strong Impression made upon My mind, by the Sentiments, which Your Royal Highness, has so forcibly expressed, and which must command, Respect and Admiration, wherever they are known

with the utmost Deference I remain

Sir

Your Royal Highness's
faithful & devoted Serv^t

(Signed) Henry Addington

July 26 1803 -

A week has now elapsed, since The Prince of Wales, transmitted, to Mr Addington a Letter on a Subject of the highest Importance - Tho' he can't anticipate a Refusal to so reasonable a request, He must still express some surprize, that a communication of such a Nature should have remained so long unanswered -

When the Prince of Wales, desired to be placed in a situation, which might enable him, to show to the People of England, The example of Zeal, Fidelity and Devotion to His Sovereign, he naturally thought, that He was only fulfilling, his appropriate Duty, as the first Subject of the Realm, in which, as it has pleased Providence, to cause him to have been born, so he is determined to maintain himself by all those Honorable exertions, which the exigences of these Critical times, peculiarly demand, The motives of His conduct, cannot be misconceived or misrepresented, He has, at a moment, when every Thing is at Stake, that is dear & sacred to Him & to the Nation, asked to be, advanced in Military Rank, because He may have His Birth-right to fight for; The Throne of His Father, to defend; The Glory of the People of England to uphold, Which is dearer to Him than Life, which has yet remained, unshaken, under the Princes of The House of Brunswick, and which He trusts, will be transmitted pure & uncontaminated to the latest Generations. Animated by such sentiments

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where He can Act, according to the feelings of His
Heart, and the dictates of Conscience.

In making the Offer, in again repeating
it, The Prince of Wales, considers, that He has
only performed his Duty to himself, to the State
to the King, to Europe, whose fate may be involved
in the issue of this Contest; if this Tender of His
services is rejected, he shall ever lament, that all
His efforts, have been fruitless, and that He has
been deprived of making those exertions, which
the circumstances of the Empire, His own inclination
and His early and long attention to Military affairs
would have rendered so peculiarly grateful to
Himself & He trusts not entirely useless to the Public.

Downing Street. July 27. 1803.

Upon receiving the Letter, with which Mr. Addington was last week honor'd by the Prince of Wales, he assured His Royal Highness, that it should be immediately laid before the King - This was accordingly done, and the Letter is still in His Majesty's possession. A communication was afterwards made, to His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, in a mode thro' a Channel which Mr. Addington humbly hoped, His Royal Highness, would approve - Mr. Addington however now finds it to be incumbent upon Him, in consequence of the Expectation, which has been express'd, by His Royal Highness, to state, that His Majesty on being inform'd of the Sentiments and wishes of The Prince of Wales, applauded in the strongest manner, the feelings by which His Royal Highness is actuated; but referred nevertheless to the answer, which His Majesty had judg'd it necessary, to return, to similar representations, which in obedience to the Commands of His Royal Highness, had been laid before His Majesty upon former occasions.

N^o 5.

Copy of 39915

Carlton House. July 28th 1803.

The Prince of Wales has received, Mr. Addington's written Communication of the last Night. The Prince of Wales has only to observe, that He requires Mr. Addington to submit to His Majesty his last note Dated the 26th of this month

N^o 6.

Copy of 39916

Downing Street. July 28th 1803
1/2 past 11

Mr. Addington is just honor'd with the Commands of The Prince of Wales, and will not fail to lay His Royal Highness's letter, dated the 26th of this Month, before, The King -

Copy of 39921

No. 7.

Downing Street Aug: 1. 1803.

Sir,

In obedience to the commands of your Royal Highness, I laid before His Majesty the Letter, dated the 26. of July, with which your Royal Highness, had honored Me, and I have it in command from His Majesty, to acquaint, Your Royal Highness that "The King had referred Mr Addington, to the orders He had before given Him, with the addition that, The King's opinion being fixed, He desired that no further mention, should be made to Him upon the Subject". I have the Honor to be with every sentiment of Respect and Deference

Sir

Your Royal Highness's
most humble S^{rv}.

(Signed)

Henry Addington

N^o 8.

(Copy)

Copy of 42365

Letter to the King

Sir

A Correspondence has taken place between
 M^r Addington & Myself, on a subject which deeply involves
 my Honor & Character, The answers which I have received
 from that Gentleman, The communication, which He has
 made to the House of Commons, leave Me, no Hope, but
 in an appeal, to the Justice of your Majesty. I make
 that appeal with confidence, because, I feel that you are
 my natural Advocate, and with the sanguine Hope, that
 the Ears of an affectionate Father, may still be open'd
 to the supplications of a Dutiful Son

I ask to be allowed to display the best energies
 of my Character; to shed the last drop of My Blood, in
 support of your Majesty's Person, Crown & Dignity; for this
 is not a War for Empire, Glory or Dominion, but for Existence.
 In this Contest the lowest & humblest of your Majesty's
 Subjects, have been called on, It would therefore little
 become Me, who am the First, and who stand, at the very
 Footstool of the Throne, to remain at home, an idle a lifeless
 Spectator, of the Mischiefs, which threaten Us, unconscious of
 the Dangers, which surround, and indifferent to the Consequences
 which may follow. Hanover is lost, England is menaced with
 Invasion, Ireland is in Rebellion, Europe is at the Foot
 of France, At such a moment, The Prince of Wales, yielding
 to none of your servants in Zeal & Devotion, to none of Your
 Subjects in Duty, to none of your Children in tenderness and
 affection, presumes to approach You, and again to repeat
 the ^{same} ^{offers} ^{which} ^{He} ^{has} ^{already} ^{made} ^{through} ^{you}

Majesty's Ministers. A feeling of honest ambition, a
 sense of what I owe to myself, and to my Family, and above
 all, the fear of sinking in the estimation of that Gallant Army
 which may be the support of your Majesty's Crown, and My
 best Hope, hereafter, Command Me to persevere, and to assure
 Your Majesty, with all Humility & Respect, that conscious
 of the Justice of my claim, no human Power, can ever induce
 Me to relinquish it -

Allow Me to say, Sir, that I am bound to adopt
 this Line of Conduct, by every motive dear to Me as a Man &
 sacred to Me as a Prince. Ought I not to come forward
 in a moment of unexampled Difficulty & Danger. Ought
 I not to share in the Glory of Victory, when I have every
 thing to lose by defeat. The highest Places in your Majesty's
 Service, are filled by the younger Branches of the Royal Family
 to Me alone, no Place is assign'd, I am not thought worthy
 to be even the Junior Major General of your Army. If I
 could submit in silent Submission, to such Indignities, I
 should indeed deserve such treatment, and prove to the
 satisfaction of your Enemies, and my own, that I am
 entirely incapable of those exertions, which My Birth, &
 the Circumstances of the Times, peculiarly call for. Standing
 so near the Throne, when I am debas'd, the cause of
 Royalty is wounded; I cannot sink in the Public Opinion
 without the participation of your Majesty in My Degradation.
 Therefore every motive of private Feeling, and of Public Duty
 induce Me to implore Your Majesty, to review your decision,
 and to place Me in that situation, which my Birth, the
 Duties of my Station, the Example of my Predecessors,
 and the expectations of the People of England intitle Me
 to claim -

I should be disappointed in the latter

Justice of My Sovereign, and the Affection of My Father
fail of success; I shall lament in silent Submission His
Determination, but Europe, the World and Posterity, must
Judge between us.

I have done My duty, my Conscience
acquits Me, my Reason tells Me, that I was perfectly Justified
in the request, which I have made, because no reasonable
arguments, have ever been adduced in answer to my
Protections; The Precedents in our History are in My favor
but if they were not, the Times in which We live, and
especially the exigences of the present Moment require
us to become an Example to our Posterity.

No other cause of refusal has, or can
be assigned except, that it was the Will of Your
Majesty. To that Will and Pleasure, I bow with every
degree of Humility and Resignation, but I can never
Cease to complain of the Severity which has been
exercised against Me, and of the Injustice, which
I have suffer'd till I cease to exist.

I have the Honor to subscribe myself
with all possible Devotion -

Your Majesty's
most dutiful & affectionate

Son and Subject

(Sign'd)

G. P.

Brighthelmston

Aug 6th 1803.

Copy of 39922

No 9

Copy
Letter from the King

My dear Son.

Though I applaud your Zeal and Spirit of which I trust, no one can suppose any of my Family wanting. Yet considering the repeated declarations I have made of my determination on your former applications to the same purpose, I had flatter'd myself to have heard no farther on the Subject.

Should the implacable Enemy so far succeed as to Land, you will have an opportunity of shewing your Zeal, at the Head of your Regiment, it will be the Duty of every Man, to stand forward on such an occasion, and I shall certainly think it Mine, to set an Example in defence of every thing that is dear to Me, and to my People,

I ever remain

My dear Son

Your most affectionate Father

(Signed)

George R.

Windsor
August 7th 1803.

Draft in 39944-5
Copy of 42371-2

No 10

Copy

Letter to the King.

Brightelmattone Aug^{27th} 23rd 1803 -

Sir.

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I have delayed thus long, an Answer to the Letter, which your Majesty, did me the Honor to write, from a wish to refer to a former Correspondence, which took place between us in the year 1798. Those Letters were mislaid, and some days elaps'd before I could discover them. They have since been found, allow Me then, Sir, to recall to your recollection, the expressions You were graciously pleas'd to use, & which I once before took the liberty of reminding You of. When I solicited Foreign Service, upon My first coming into the Army; They were Sir, that Your Majesty did not then see the opportunity for it, but if any thing was to arise at home, I ought to be, "First and Foremost". There cannot be a stronger expression in the English Language, or one more consonant to the feelings, which animate my Heart. In this, I agree most perfectly with your Majesty, I ought to be First and Foremost. It is the place which My Birth assigns Me, which Europe, which the English Nation expect Me to fill; and which the former assurances of Your Majesty, might naturally have led Me to hope I should occupy. After such a Declaration, I could hardly expect to be told, that my Place, was at the Head of a Regiment of Dragoons -

I understand, from your Majesty, that it is Your intention, Sir, in pursuance of that Noble example, which your late Majesty, dying the, courage of your

your Reign, to place Yourself at the Head of the People of England. My next Brother, The Duke of York, commands the Army, The younger Branches of my Family are, either Generals or Lieut. Generals, and I who am Prince of Wales am to remain, Colonel of Dragoons. There is something so humiliating in the Contrast, that those who are at a distance would either, doubt the reality, or suppose that, to be My fault which is only My Misfortune -

Who' could imagine, that I, who am the oldest Colonel in the Service, had ask'd for the Rank of a General Officer, in the Army of the King my Father, and that it had been refused Me -

I am sorry, much more than sorry, to be obliged, to break in upon your Leisure, and to trespass thus a second time, on the attention of your Majesty, but I have Sir, an Interest in My Character, more valuable to Me than the Throne, and dearer, far dearer to Me than Life. I am call'd upon by that Interest to persevere, & I pledge myself never to desist, till I receive that Satisfaction, which the Justice of my Claim, leads Me to expect.

In these unhappy times, The World, Sir, examines the Conduct of Princes, with a jealous, a scrutinizing, a malignant Eye; No Man is more aware than I am, of the existence of such a Disposition and no Man is therefore, more determined, to place himself above all Suspicion -

In desiring to be placed in a forward Situation, I have performed One duty to the People of England, I must now perform another, and humbly supplicate your Majesty, to assign those reasons, which have induc'd You, to ^{refuse a request which appears to me,} refuse a request which appears to me,

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I must again repeat my concern, that I am obliged, to continue a correspondence, which I fear is not so grateful to your Majesty, as I could wish, I have examined my own Heart, I am convinced of the Justice of My cause, of the Purity of my Motives; Reason and Honor, forbid Me to yield, where no reason is alledged I am justified in the conclusion, that none can be given -

In this candid exposition of the feelings which have agitated & depressed my wounded Mind; I hope no expression has escap'd Me, which can be construed to mean the slightest disrespect to Your Majesty, I most solemnly disavow any such Intention; but the circumstances of the times, the Danger of Invasion; The appeal which has been made to all your Subjects oblige me to recollect, what I owe to my own Honor, & to my own Character, and to state to Your Majesty, with plainness, truth and candour, but with all the submission of a Subject, and the duty of an Affectionate Son, the Injuries under which I labor, which it is in the Power of your Majesty alone, at one moment to redress - It is with the Sentiments of the profoundest Veneration & respect that

First.

I have the Honor to subscribe myself

Correspondence upon
His Royal Highness's
Rank in the Army

Your Majesty's
most Dutiful & most Affectionate
Son and Subject,

(Signed)

G. P.

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