

Ld. Sandwich

Fortescue 3404

4299

Admiralty Sept: 4<sup>th</sup> 1781

Lord Sandwich has the honour to inform your Majesty, that the Comptroller of the Navy confirms the opinion he presumed to give to your Majesty that the attendance of a Commodore either at Portsmouth or Plymouth could not be of the least service; at Sheerness possibly some good may be done by a ship of that kind, Mr Hunt is therefore gone there to see whether his presence can in any degree forward the business in hand.

Your Majesty may be assured that every human exertion shall be used towards the immediate reinforcement of Mr Darby's fleet, but Lord Sandwich begs most humbly to submit to your Majesty, that he hopes the Cabinet will receive your special commands to meet and advise your Majesty what orders shall be given to Admiral Darby; as this is a matter of too much magnitude to be decided by any single person.

1d.

Your Majesty will find herewith the latest letters received from Commodore Stewart, by which it will appear that the greatest part of his Squadron will be sailed on Thursday, unless they are delayed for want of their guns: he is to take the Tartitude with him, & to leave the Sceptre to join Admiral Darby.

as the Victory is Admiral Parkers ship & has all his officers on board, Lord Sandwich thought he would have had great reason to complain if he had not been asked whether he chose to go out second in command, which however he declines; but appears to be in perfect good humour & sensible of the attention that has been shewn him.

It seems advisable that Admiral Kempenfelt should at all events go out with this fleet, Lord Sandwich has therefore, after consulting the Comptroller who answers for Mr Kempenfelts entire acquiescence, written to Mr Darby to know whether he wishes he

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should serve in his former capacity, or hoist his flag as junior Rear Admiral on one of the ships of the fleet.

The letters received this morning from Admiral Darby are sent herewith, by which it will appear that nothing proper to be done has been omitted on his part; and every measure is taking at this office to cover the sea with small vessels from all parts to apprise the homeward bound convoys of their danger.

Your Majesty will find in the box the intelligence received from Captain Taylor, which Lord Stormont, who is now here, is dispatching by a messenger to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Lord Sandwich also encloses a letter he has received from L<sup>d</sup> North; the postscript relates to a flying report that L<sup>d</sup> Macartney has been taken by the French, & carried into the Cape of Good Hope.

Your Majesty will certainly <sup>now</sup> observed by the  
account from Captain Caldwell, which is  
the most authentick information of the  
strength of the enemy, that they were  
from 44 to 47 sail of the line, & that  
therefore no detachment had then been  
made.

4 Sept