

Secret  
Sir

Burthen at Sea Oct<sup>r</sup> 21<sup>h</sup> 1781

When Sir Henry Clintons & Rear Admiral Graves's  
dispatches by Express to the West Indies representing  
the state of things in North America together with  
their apprehensions from the united forces of  
France and America, reached my hands  
I did not hesitate one moment, in hastening  
to their relief, with every Line of Battle ship  
under my command, having no more  
difficulties in deciding then, what appeared  
to my mind most proper to be done, than I  
have now, and was upon the coast before  
the enemy's fleet. Had Rear Admiral Graves  
have kept all his ships collected together  
and ready to have joined me, upon my  
appearance off New York, as he promised  
to do, he might have been upon De Grasse's  
heels

keels, at the time he was putting his Troops on  
Shore, and with five Ships more than he had  
on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Sept<sup>r</sup>. including the Warwick, Chatham,  
and Assurance. But as the present advanced  
Season has removed all further danger from  
the French Fleet, from this Coast, to the West India  
Islands; it is but reciprocal, and what in  
my humble opinion the Kings Service, most  
properly, and immediately requires, that every  
Line of Battle Ship you can possibly spare, should  
attend me to the Leeward Islands, during the  
winter months

with your assistance in aid  
to the present force under my command, I shall  
be put in a very respectable state, for acting  
offensively against the Enemy, but without it  
I must be upon the defensive only, and possibly  
shall not be able to prevent mischief

I can only Sir most humbly suggest & solicit,  
which is what my Duty calls upon me to do, in the  
most pressing manner, and it must rest with  
you to decide. If I cannot do as I would,  
I must be content to do as I can — a man  
can work only with the Tools he has — but I  
cannot help repeating that not a moment is to  
be lost, in taking your Resolutions either way  
as I think it necessary I should return to  
my Station at the Seeward Islands, so soon  
as the Troops, & my Provisions &c are disembarked  
unless you have commands for me to the  
contrary.

I trust you will have the goodness  
to forgive my entering so largely upon the very  
serious subject of my letter, as my only motive  
for having done so, arises from my Zeal for His  
Majesty's Service. I have the honor to be with  
most perfect Sentiments of regard & esteem

Yours  
Rear Admiral Digby  
Commander in Chief  
se se se

Jamr Hood

Copy of a letter to the  
Admiral Dribby  
31<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1781