Governor James Bowdoin Orders to Benjamin Lincoln Boston, 19 January 1787

Sir,

You will take the command of the Militia detached in obedience to my Orders of the fourth instant. The great objects to be effected are to protect the Judicial Courts, particularly those next to be holden in the County of Worcester, if the Justices of said Courts should request your aid; to assist the civil Magistrates in executing the Laws, and in repelling or apprehending all and every such person and persons as shall in a hostile manner attempt or enterprize, the destruction detriment or annoyance of this Commonwealth: and also to aid them in apprehending the disturbers of the public peace, as well as all such persons as may be named in the State Warrants, that have been, or shall be committed to any civil Officer or Officers, or to any other person to execute.

If to these important ends the Militia already ordered out should in your opinion be incompetent, you will call on the Major Generals for further and effectual aid. If you can rely on their attachment to Government, you will in the first instance call on the Militia in the neighbourhood of your Camp.

I cannot minutely point out to you the particular line you shall pursue in executing these Orders: but would observe in general, that if to answer the aforesaid valuable purposes you shall judge it necessary to march a respectable force through the Western Counties, you will in that case do it. This would give confidence to the well affected; would aid and protect the civil Officers in executing their duty, and would convince the misguided of the abilities of Government, and its determination to pursue every legal and constitutional measure for restoring peace and order to the Commonwealth.

You are to consider yourself in all your military offensive operations constantly as under the direction of the civil Officer, saving where any armed force shall appear and oppose your marching to execute these Orders.

That I may be fully acquainted with all the proceedings of the armed force under your command, and with all matters that respect the great objects to be effected, you will please to give me regular information by every post; and for immediate and necessary intelligence, you will order the Quarter Master General to provide the necessary expences.

On these attempts to restore system and order, I wish the smiles of Heaven; and that you may have an agreeable command, the most perfect success, and a speedy and safe return; and am with much esteem, Sir, Your most obedient Servant James Bowdoin.

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