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John De Witt V

Boston *American Herald*, 3 December 1787 (excerpt)

To the FREE CITIZENS of the COMMONWEALTH of MASSACHUSETTS.

. . . It is very true, that the celebrated Mr. Wilson, a member of the Convention, and who we may suppose breathes, in some measure, the spirit of that body, tells you, it is for the purpose of forming cantonments upon your frontiers, and for the dignity and safety of your country, as it respects foreign nations. No man that loves his country could object to their being raised for the first of these causes, but for the last it cannot be necessary. GOD has so separated us by an extensive ocean from the rest of mankind, he hath so liberally endowed us with privileges, and so abundantly taught us to esteem them precious, it would be impossible, while we retain our integrity and advert to first principles, for any nation whatever to subdue us. We have succeeded in an opposition to the most powerful people upon the globe; and the wound that America received in the struggle, where is it? As speedily healed as the track in the ocean is buried by the succeeding wave. It has scarcely stopped her progress, and our private dissensions only at this moment, tarnish the lustre of the most illustrious infant nation under Heaven.

You cannot help suspecting this gentleman, when he goes on to tell you, “that standing armies in time of peace, have always been a topic of *popular declamation*, but Europe hath found them necessary to maintain the appearance of strength in a season of the most profound tranquility.”—This shews you his opinion, and that he as one of the Convention, was for unequivocally establishing them in time of peace; and to object to them is mere popular declamation. But I will not, my countrymen, I cannot believe you to be of the same sentiment. . . .

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