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April 14, 1799.

Mr. Holt,

Last week the officers of the new corps met in Danbury, and assigned the stations for each in which to enlist soldiers as recruits. The newspapers also announce that the President has directed the additional regiments to be organized. In so serious a crisis I trust that a few remarks will not be amiss.

A question arises, where are these recruits for a standing army to be found? Among our sprightly and enterprising young farmers, who by industry and economy may grow rich, become fathers of families, or men of great respectability as husbandmen in the innumerable regions which are cultivating in the west? No. They are ready in their places to do military duty at the risk of life, in order to ward off invasion or to crush intestine tumults. But they will never give their bare backs to the smiter under Prussian military discipline, or devote their valor to promote the views of ambition, or to oppress their country and posterity with a standing army. They will never be the companions of the refuse of mankind from brothels, from Tyburn and Newgate. They will never spend their best days in arms and vice, in order, to glitter in regimentals, wear a sword, and lounge in idleness as drones, pitied and penniless. The best comment upon the recruiting service and appeals to the manly feelings of American youth, is the appointment of Alexander Hamilton to command our army, after the affair of *crim. con.* Its prelude to our President's advice to the young men of Philadelphia to study virtue and science, is an instance of human fallibility and inconsistency. Are our young officers and soldiers to learn virtue of general Hamilton? Or like their general are they to be found in the bed of adultery? This is a serious consideration for statesman for the army, for fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. Officers in recruiting services are generally successful, but soldiers are not very fit for service under seventeen or eighteen years. Such may serve John Quincy Adams, when he is Lord Protector of the United States, but cannot defend us in the present case. In actual service, especially on the frontiers and among the female Indians, officers are not always moral, or careful to provide for the fruit of their amours. This must enforce the obligation, for the sake of morality, to discourage standing armies in the nation. No men are treated with less respect and deference at this time than those who are parading in regimentals and recruiting in our country towns and cities. The people consider them as useless and burdensome, as idle and dissipated; and they are too noble to forsake honorable industry to feed upon the vitals of their country, to extend court influence, or to be allured and bribed into silence when they are not preferred in promotions.

Neglected military men generally become foes to that cause which neglects to employ them; and the enormous number who are now soliciting, if they become unfriendly to our Executive, will give an almost total change to the next election, unless commissions and pay are bestowed on them. The people see and feel this, in every part of the country. Our war advocates are therefore anxious for hostilities. The war and election being over these officers and soldiers will be sold and sacrificed, on some forlorn hope, and the country bleed at every pore, for our folly in not immediately petitioning for a stop to the further progress in raising a standing army.

General Hamilton is married to the daughter of Gen. Schuyler, of New-York sister of Mrs. Church. Mr. Church then called Carter, was co-contractor in the army with col. Wadsworth, both of whom made great fortunes by the war. And the son of Mr. C. is [was] about to marry the daughter of Mr. Bingham of Philadelphia, the federal Senator. Thus are our advocates for war cemented together.

Who are to fight these battles? The exempts in our list, whose occupations in clerical and civil capacities excuse them from service? Or those who by rancour have excited war? Some want a war that the public attention may be diverted from an examination into their proceedings—others to make fortunes upon public spoil.

Are our sons to fight battles that a certain class of men may reap the spoil, or enlarge their power and fortunes upon our destruction? Such my fellow citizens of Connecticut, are part of the facts which it is the duty of every man to present for your consideration, before you permit your sons to enter into wars which may destroy both you and them.

Scarcely recovered from the distresses of one war, burdened with taxes, paying heavy charges to support your executive, legislative, judicial, and ecclesiastical system, be upon your guard. Your prisons are crowded, lawyers are severe, and the clergy exact. Information is excluded from you by fettered presses, and you cannot be too steadfast in defence of your government and constitution which were earned with blood and secured by wisdom.