

Gentlemen

Algiers, 25th May 1795

I arrived here on the 17th Inst for a passage of 38 days, anchored in Gibraltar the 28th day. There is no field for adventures or speculations in this Country, as the whole commerce is transacted by the Jews, & almost by one House Baeri & Co who are bankers for the Dey of Algiers, be assured the Jews of Algiers, are not more honest than merchants in other Countries —

This is a more despotic Government than you can form an idea of, costs the United ^{States} preserving our peace far beyond any calculation, to be made by the Treaty. In fact the Dey of this regency, regards the Treaty as far as it is his pleasure and violates it when ever he sees proper. No faith can bind these Infidels. — It is surprising to see so weak & defenceless a nation, as I find them to be, bid defiance to the great Republic of France, & the powerful British Fleet, & looks with Contempt on the other Christian Powers. — The information I have received respecting this regency is too lengthy to give a detail in full, The following part of this letter, will give you an idea of the capitation he pays to Treaty —

The 14th Article of our Treaty is,
"Should the Dey want to freight any American Vessel
"that may be in the regency or Turkey said vessel not being
"engaged, in consequence of the friendship, subsisting between

He expects to have the preference given him
on his paying the same freight of ^{goods} by any other nation."

The Dey of Algiers has requested I appear to insist on
the United States Ship of War George Washington, carrying
his present to the Grand Signior of Constantinople, the
value of which, will be 6 or 7 hundred thousand dollars
and upwards of 200 Turks passengers, these will be
sent on board the United States vessel, causing her to
deviate from the orders of the Government, & will by this
regency be considered at the risk of the United States
and her arrival in Constantinople, at the said vessel
was compelled to take it in, murders are made known to
him of the impropriety of ~~the~~ said orders has been
stated, yet this obdurate Dey, I am afraid will persist
in his requisition, a non acquiescence would be the
detention of the Frigate, & captures of American vessels
and if I am compelled to go, I fall in with Portuguese,
Neapolitan, or any other power at war with Barbary
a superior force to my self, the Dey's property no doubt
would fall a sacrifice. In this event, his Cruisers
would have orders to bring in American vessels as
hostages until the United States made him, reparation
for his loss, & in case they refused, which I have no

doubt but they would, war would be instantly ^{declared} &
the loss of property occur, & slavery for our Citizens.

If I refuse to go
war is certain, if I go & accidents happen, which is probable
the ultimatum will be war, in case of my making resis-
tance for the preservation of the Dey's property, & to save the
United States from war with this regency, would not those
powers, with whom I should thus act, & with whom the
United States are at peace, consider it a sufficient
breach of neutrality to justify a war on their part?

And how would the Government from whom I have
the honor of holding my Commission sanction such conduct
not authorized by their orders? — If I go, it will take a period
of 6 mos. & for that space of time I shall be in the world of
purgatories, having two hundred infidels on board, being
in a country where the United States are not known,
no person to ^{call} on in cases of emergency, & not able to speak
the language in a land where the plague ravages, & at the
mercy of Devils.

You can my friends judge how unpleasantly
I am situated, & nothing will relieve me but the arrival of
a Swedish Frigate, who is expected, the Dey has promised
to take her if she comes — So I am in hopes after the gale,
I shall have pleasant breezes. — It is highly necessary to
have a marine force in this sea, to show these pirates

that we are a Maritime nation, should in my opinion
have a good tendency to check their Capricious demands,
if not they would be on the spot in case of any emergencies or
event of war, to operate, & save our Commerce which otherwise
would fall a sacrifice to the Corsairs of these States,
before our vessels of war could arrive from America, It is
the conduct of all nations who are at peace with them
except the United States, they do not depend altogether
on the articles of their treaty, but keep constantly some
floating batteries on the seas of those Sea robbers —
You may be assured the people know the unprotected
State of our Commerce, & the easy prey it would be to
their Cruisers — I shall tire your patience —

Present my most respectful Compliments to
your good Ladies —

I am determined never voluntarily
to visit Algiers again with a tribute except it be
that thro' the mouth of a Cannon —

Yours always sincerely

Wm Pitt Rivers

Miss Louisa Clark
Philadelphia

P. S. Dont make this public, for it may alarm our Commerce
I hope all will be well, we have a proper person at the
helm of affairs here at present, but no man can count on
security without force —

MS

New Bainbridge
Sept 25th 1800

Messrs Innes & Clarke
Merchants
Philadelphia

1800

Algiers, 25 September 1800.

Gentlemen:

I arrived here on the 17th inst. after a passage of thirty eight days, anchored in Gibraltar on the twenty eighth day. There is no field for adventure or speculations in this country as the whole commerce is transacted by the Jews and almost by one house - Bacri & Co. who are brokers for the Dey of Algiers; Be assured the Jews of Algiers are not more honest than Levites in other countries.

There is a more despotic government than you can form an idea of, costs the United States preserving our peace far beyond any calculations to be made by the Treaty. In fact the Dey of this Regency regards the Treaty as far as it is his pleasure, and violates it whenever he sees proper. No faith can bind these Infidels. It is surprising to see so weak and defenseless a nation as I find them to be bid defiance to the great Republic of France, and the powerful British fleet and looks with contempt on the other Christian powers. The information I have received respecting the Regency is too lengthy to give a detail in full. The following part of this letter will give you an idea of the respect he pays to Treaty.

The Fourteenth Article of our Treaty is -

"Should the Dey want to freight any American vessel that may be in the Regency of Turkey, said vessel not being engaged, in consequence of the friendship subsisting between the two nations, he expects to have the preference given him on his paying the same freight offered by any other nation."

The Dey of Algiers has requested and appears to insist on the United States' ship of War George Washington carrying his present to the Grand Signior of Constantinople, the value of which will be 6 or 7 hundred thousand dollars, also upwards of two hundred Turks, passengers, these will be forced to board the United States vessel, causing her to deviate from the orders of the government, and will by this Regency be considered at the risque of the United States until its arrival in Constantinople, although said vessel was compelled to take it in, my orders are made known to him and the impropriety of changing said orders has been stated, yet this obdurate Dey, I am afraid will persist in his requisition . A non-acquiescence would be the detention of the frigate, and captures of American vessels, and if I am compelled to go and fall in with Portugese, Neapolitan or any other power at war with Barbary, a superior force to myself, the Dey's property no doubt would fall a sacrifice. In this event, his cruisers would have orders to bring in American vessels as hostages until the United States made him resititution for his loss, and in case they refused, which I have no doubt but they would, war would be instantly declared, and the loss of property occur and slavery for our citizens.

If I refuse to go war is certain. If I go and accidents happen, which is probable, the ultimatum will be war, in case of my making resistance for the preservations of the Dey's property, and to save the United States from war with the Regency, would not those powers, with whom the United States are at peace, consider it a sufficient breach of neutrality to justify a war on their part.

And how would the government from whom I have the honor

of holding my commission sanction such conduct not authorized by their orders.

If I go it will take a period of six months and for that space of time I shall be in the worst of purgatories, having two hundred infidels on board, being in a country where the United States are not known, no person to call on in cases of emergency and not able to speak the language in a land where the plague ravages, and at the mercy of Devils.

You can, my friends, judge how unpleasantly I am situated, and nothing will relieve me but the arrival of a Swedish frigate who is expected. The Dey has promised to take her if she comes. So I am in hopes after the gale, I shall have pleasant breezes.

It is highly necessary to have a marine force in this sea, to show these pirates that we are a maritime nation, and would in my opinion have a good tendency to check their capricious demands, if not they would be on the spot in case of any emergencies or event of war, to operate, and save our commerce which otherwise would fall a sacrifice to the Corsairs of these states before our vessels of war could arrive from America. It is the conduct of all nations who are at peace with them, except the United States, they do not depend altogether on the articles of their treaty, but keep constantly some floating batteries in the seas of those Sea Robbers.

You may be assured these people know the unprotected state of our commerce, and the easy prey it would be to their cruisers. I shall tire your patience.

Present my most respectful compliments to your good ladies.

I am determined never voluntarily to visit Algiers with a tribute except it be that through the mouth of the cannon.

Yours always sincerely,

Wm. M. Bainbridge

Messrs. Jones and Clarke,
Philadelphia.

p.s. Don't make this public, for it may alarm our commerce. I hope all will be well, we have a proper person at the helm of affairs here, O'Brien, but no man can count on security without force.

W.B.