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been discussed, for explanations, he would candidly state his own views as to the policy of naval armaments by the U. S. If the U. S. should be involved unfortunately in a war with G. Britain in defence of just rights and essential interests, he had never contemplated the creation of a naval force to protect our commerce on the ocean against that nation: he thought the fruitless efforts of France, Spain and the northern powers to resist the navy of England afforded an instructive lesson to this nation, and plainly pointed out what was its policy; we should, said he, confine our efforts to objects which we could accomplish, the first of which would be to give complete protection to our ports and harbors, to points most vulnerable by the enemy, and the property of our people most accessible to his naval expeditions, and most tempting by its value to his rapacity. They should be prepared to expel the enemy the moment he touched our ground; this policy would be consistent with our resources, for it should be recollected the instant the war commenced, our revenue, derived entirely from imposts and duties, would nearly cease, and could only be supplied by internal taxes, which existing circumstances would render almost impossible to collect; because the produce of the country from which money must be raised would be of little value; a naval war with G. Britain at a time when our revenue was ruined, would at its termination leave the nation encumbered with a debt which they should sedulously avoid contracting. Mr. B. said, he felt no desire to see this country in possession of a navy sufficient to combat with that power; the whole U. S. if sold at public auction, admitting that there were bidders able to purchase, would not defray the expence of erecting and maintaining the enormous establishment; he verily believed the possession of a navy would ere this have involved us in war with England, who would have treated us as she has Denmark, and taken possession of it in an "amicable way." It was by different means, we should operate upon G. Britain and bring her to terms of justice; it would be by annoying her commerce with our privateers, expelling her from the continent, and seizing on her Canadian possessions, holding them as guarantees for indemnity, at a future pacification; by withholding provisions from her colonies in the W. Indies, and raw materials from her manufacturers in Europe, and by forbidding the consumption of her manufactures in this country, their most profitable market. He was very much misinformed if this mode of attack would not prove more effectual than contending with a navy which had baffled the world, and swept from sea the commerce and ships of every nation; if this system did not answer, he readily confessed, we were unable to cope with a nation whose naval resources were infinitely beyond those of our infant country. It would require all the patriotism of the people to sustain the privations of a war with England; he had no idea that the country would be invaded, or its safety endangered, and he therefore felt confident the nation would submit to inconveniences, though great, much less than the calamities of war waged in any other form.

Mr. B. said, gentlemen in discussing this subject had ridiculed gun boats, and relied upon large ships to protect our ports and harbors; let us suppose, said he, that there were four 44 gun ships, or a larger number, lying in the port of New York, of what avail would they be in defending the towns of the U. S.? While they were pinioned in port, what would prevent the British from laying every town on the sea coast under contribution? Any naval force the U. S. could build, would be useless so long as England could bring a greater force against it. It appeared to him that gun boats were preferable to ships of the line, for the protection of our harbors, because they might be moved, and collected without danger, at a given point, to co-operate with one another. They can always pass between the shore and the anchorage ground of a squadron, and escape to the place of destination, secure on our shallow coast so inaccessible to ships of force. Mr. B. said, all gentlemen who had spoken upon this subject seemed impressed with the propriety of using gun boats as auxiliary to land batteries in defence of our ports and harbors. The only question then was the number adequate to that object.

He was in favor of the number proposed by the bill, because some of our most skilful naval officers who had been consulted, and who had devoted much thought upon the subject, believed this number was requisite to preserve our seaport towns from conflagration, and enforce effectually the laws in our own ports. He offered this reason as an answer to the gentleman from New Hampshire, (Mr. Gardner) who had demanded why he adhered to the particular number in the bill.

As to the origin of gun-boats he could not speak with much confidence; but it was well known they had been used by all the nations in Europe. The French, Spanish, Dutch, Italians, and the barbary powers, had all found them excellent floating batteries, capable of opposing the most formidable resistance to an approaching squadron. England herself, with her present navy has at least 500 gun boats, employed for the protection of her ports and harbors. He said he was pleased with the gentleman from N. Carolina (Mr. Sawyer) who spoke yesterday, and had then shewn the particular advantages of gun boats, he would not again recapitulate them, as the House, he was convinced, had given them their just weight. Their introduction into the U. S. has been in consequence of the recommendation of Commodore Rodgers and the officers of our navy, who had served in the Mediterranean, and witnessed their efficacy as engines of defence.

It had been objected to gun-boats that they cost too much in building. Mr. B. said the present price of each was 5,000 dollars, a sum considerably less than their cost when first contracted for. If the House judged from the frigates which had been built they might reasonably suppose the price would be more reduced as the workmen became more experienced, and the materials, for constructing, are brought in greater abundance to market. But, it should be taken into view, that those gun-boats already constructed were larger and more costly than necessary; they were good sea-boats. It had been proper to build them fit for sea, because having only a few, it was frequently necessary to concentrate them at a particular point. The number being now augmented, and enough assigned for each harbor, the necessity for constructing them at the present price ceased. Mr. B. said he had been informed, that the gun-boats used by the Spaniards were much smaller and cheaper than those belonging to the U. S.

Another objection had been made to the expence of maintaining them in service. The sum necessary for this purpose was estimated by the Secretary of the Navy at 11,000 dollars annually, upon the supposition they should have their full complement of men on board during the whole year. Mr. B. said this sum would never be requisite, since it was well known not more than eight men would be employed except while in actual service; the expence therefore could not exceed one third of the annual estimate.

In the building and repairs of gun-boats, they would be found upon calculation precisely equal to the same number of guns, in frigates and ships of the line. The only inequality of expence was in their manning. Mr. B. said he was authorised to state that the committee were about devising a plan by which the gun-boats could be manned in the different sea ports by requisitions of the seamen and others in port, whenever their services may be required. This would obviate the necessity of their being constantly manned. If gentlemen would examine the places at which they are to be stationed, they would find, their population respectively would be quite sufficient for this purpose; at Norfolk for example there are to be 60, and certainly from a population of 12 or 14,000 inhabitants, men could at all times be procured. In the same manner at N. York and other places. Gentlemen dislike the manner in which they were stationed, and laughed at the idea of one or two boats defending a port. Mr. B. said they were not to be permanently fixed at any place, but to be removed as occasion might require, those on the Potomac for instance, though assigned to specific points, would be concentrated, to suit emergencies; and thus the whole could be used in defence of a place to which the smallest number had been assigned.

Some gentlemen who had spoken appeared to place great reliance on large ships of war, to defend our towns and harbors. Had the capture of Copenhagen been forgotten? It had been yesterday remarked that the Danish fleet did not protect it, though there were in port at the time of the assault 18 ships of the line, besides frigates and smaller vessels. In the year 1762, Mr. B. said, the British attacked the Havanna; it was taken, together with 12 sail of the line, although defended by the strongest fortress in the world. The fact was, so far from yielding protection, ships of war could only be themselves secured by the most impregnable fortifications. Yet the House was pressed to build ships of the line when it was evident they would fall into the hands of the British, increase the navy of our enemy, and serve as an inducement to commit aggressions on our country.

Mr. B. observed he had listened with astonishment to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Dana) whose speech was partly in favor, and partly against the bill. He had told the House that this was the *only* measure of defence upon which the nation was to rely for protection. Did he not know that there were bills before the House to erect fortifications, to increase the military establishment, and to arm the militia? Did he not know that 100,000 men had been put in requisition by the executive? Had the gentleman forgotten his own proposition laid on the table yesterday, which he then called a measure of defence, to enable the merchants to arm and convoy their vessels for mutual security?

Mr. B. said he would appeal to the House, if this mode of discussion was candid. But the gentleman had given them a long argument to prove that gun-boats are useless and unnecessary, notwithstanding he intended to vote for them. So far from imitating that gentleman, if he thought them unfit for the purpose of defence, Mr. B. said he would not only oppose the present bill, but he would vote against any number, which should be proposed. Mr. B. said he would conclude his remarks after noticing one observation which had been repeatedly urged to the House. It was regarding the source from which gun-boats had been recommended. It was the constitutional duty of the executive to call the attention of the legislature to this or any other mode of defence deemed necessary; he readily agreed it would be highly improper to adopt it merely because it had been thus recommended, but it would be equally so to oppose it for the same reason, without regard to the intrinsic merit of the plan, which consideration should alone influence the House who were bound to consult the public good.

Mr. UPHAM said, since so great a number was necessary for effectual defence he should vote for it; he should rather too large a number should be built, than a number that would prove too small. He was of opinion with the gentleman from Connecticut, that, as these had been recommended by the executive, they should be authorized. He was also in favor of this bill on another ground; because he hoped that gentlemen who were in favor of gun-boats would be liberal in their appropriation for fortifications and batteries, when they came under consideration; and because many gentlemen, while in favor of gun-boats had given the House to understand, and others had insinuated that when the subject came properly before the House, they should vote for frigates. He hoped, at this perilous crisis, when the nation was on the eve of a war, that they should seriously prepare for it, and agree to combine a certain number of gun-boats with sufficient fortifications for effectual protection. How much money was in the treasury Mr. U. did not know, but he hoped they would now magnanimously prepare for war; there was money in the country and men too; he was not desirous of critically enquiring how many dollars could be spent at this time without too much exhausting the treasury; and as gentlemen appeared to be disposed to make war speeches, he hoped, when they heard the small still voice of the question for a liberal sum of money for defensive operations, they would vote affirmatively on it without hesitation.

Mr. U. thought, before this could become a great nation at home or abroad, that they should have a large navy; there could be no such thing as taking a commanding ground without a navy. It might not be necessary while our vessels continued within our own shoal waters; but the moment they left our rivers a navy was necessary. What signified the safety of an individual within his own house, if when he left it, he was at the mercy of any one who chose to assault him? The U. S. had as much right to travel over the globe as any other nation; but they were not independent till they had a navy to defend themselves wherever they choose to go. This nation must depend upon itself; an individual might as well in civil society depend upon the ties of moral law upon individuals, as one nation could depend upon the justice and forbearance of another; he believed "the original sin and depravity of our nature" required every nation to erect a defense of this kind; one nation would receive respect from another so long as she could command it and no longer. Perhaps this was not the time suddenly to erect such a navy; but they might proceed gradually, from year to year, till a navy sufficiently large was erected.

However, as he proposed when he began not to take up much of their time, he would not trespass upon it farther.—He should vote for this bill, not because he was in love with this particular species of defence, though it might be a necessary part of a system; but as they might have no other, and it was necessary to have some, upon the whole view of the subject, he should vote for the bill.

Mr. VAN DYKE should not have risen on this occasion, had not the yeas and nays been called; but he felt it his duty to state the reasons on which he should give his vote. He had listened with much attention to acquire that correct information on the subject which would have enabled him to discharge the duty which he owed to his constituents; but he found that he should at last be compelled to give his vote without that information which he was solicitous to obtain. He had not been able to ascertain whether it was the wish of the Executive decidedly expressed that such a bill as this should be passed: he had perused with much attention the message of the President of the U. S. delivered to Congress, submitted to the House before he took his seat on the floor, and when he examined that part of it relative to gun-boats, he could not find a decided opinion on this subject expressed.

It might not be improper for him here to remark that dispatches from abroad had now been received; and he had hoped, before they should have been called upon to give their vote upon this bill, that they should have been able to ascertain what was the opinon of the executive. It was probable that some gentlemen in the House, to whom the avenues of executive information were more open than to him, might be able to say what that opinion was; but searching as did, he had not been able to discover it. Perhaps he should not be wrong in voting for this as an executive measure, because he saw an honorable gentleman acting so strenuously on this occasion, to whom he had been told gentlemen might look up for information of the executive wishes. His own opinion originally had been, and now was, that such a system of defence should be adopted as the state of the nation should require.

The House had been told by some gentlemen that the nation was actually in a state of war; by others, that if not in a state of war, in such a situation that war was inevitable. The single question therefore now before the House was what was to be done in such a situation! Should they sit still there till it pleased the Executive department to come forward and tell them what they should do, or should they do that which they believed to be right. He was inclined to the latter course, to the discharge of his duty to the best of his ability: he knew that some mode of defence must be resorted to. He observed that there were on the files of the House several propositions for various defensive measures. But it was the opinion of gentlemen who had more opportunities than himself for acquiring correct information, that this was the most expeditious mode of defence; he should therefore consider it as an auxiliary mode of defence, and which the Executive thought most proper now to be adopted.

If he erred in sanctioning this measure by his vote, he should err on the right side, because it was a measure intended to place his country in a state of defence. He was not convinced that this would ever alone be that efficient defence which the country would require; he therefore had thought fit to express the grounds on which he voted.

Mr. RANDOLH said that before this question was taken he begged to be indulged with stating as succinctly as he could the reasons which did not *induce*, but *compelled* him to vote against it. He was sorry that his colleague (Mr. Burwell) who had undertaken to answer the question propounded by him had totally mistaken its meaning and object. He thought an explicit answer to it of material importance to a correct decision of that before the House. He had asked to what extent the appropriation proposed to be made for these boats would diminish the expence of the regular naval establishment?

[Mr. BLOUNT explained, that the committee of aggressions were appointed to consider on the means for the protection of our ports and harbors, and did not enquire into the propriety of an augmentation of the naval force, or even the employment of that which the U. S. now possessed. They had considered gun-boats and batteries as necessary for the defence of our ports and harbors, and had reported accordingly, without enquiring into the diminution or increase of the present naval expences. That subject had been referred to another committee; and if gentlemen would turn to the report of the committee of aggressions, they would see that the measure at present contemplated was a part of a system. He could assure the gentleman from Virginia that the committee went into no enquiry to ascertain whether gun-boats would diminish the ordinary expences of the navy department or not; it was not their duty, neither were they at liberty to do it.]

Mr. R. regretted that he should be called upon to give his vote upon a measure concerning which in itself, and as affecting the establishment with which it was necessarily connected, of which it was an appendage, he was totally in the dark. This was not dumb legislation, but it was worse, it was *blind* legislation. Instead of having before them something like an exposition of the nature of this armament, some history or demonstration of its effects, some responsible person to take upon himself the consequences if it should fail, and fail he feared it would—they were called upon to vote in a state of profound ignorance by those, whose information upon this subject at least, was equally confined with their own. If the U. S. were in a situation different from that in which he deemed them to be—he might be induced to give up his opposition to this measure, and venture upon it merely by way of experiment, provided that he had something like a connected account of the machinery of this system. But this was no time to make ducks and drakes of their dollars, to waste them in mill-pond projects of childish amusement. It was a time when every spare shilling should be applied to objects of undisputed utility, and not to matters of mere speculation. And it was because he wished to see the sinews of war—arms & money—in possession of the U. S. and to retain them there, that he was unwilling to join in the call to pipe all hands upon deck to start the whole treasury of the U. S. into the holds of these frail and perishable barks. He did, upon his soul, believe that if the bill upon their table passed, they might whistle for the arming of the militia and might give up all thought of seeing the country placed in a respectable posture of defence, within and without, from danger of whatsoever kind. It was for this, and he trusted in God there was in that House but one sentiment—to save the Republic—that he should vote against the measure. He should despise himself if he could vote against it from any other motive than a conviction of its public inutility. He wished to see the nation armed, protected by a competent force—not so precarious and perishable in its nature—not a provision of sugar and salt, but of men and iron.

The chief argument of his colleague (Mr. Burwell) who supported the bill was that the estimates of the expence of these boats were overcharged. He thought the experience of that gentleman in public life, though not so long as that of some others in the House, nor so long as Mr. R. hoped it would be, had yet been long enough to convince him that no reliance could be placed in the expectation of finding a naval estimate overcharged. If they were guided by past, and he might almost say uniform experience, they ought to calculate upon an excess of actual expence of fifty or sixty per cent. at least, beyond the estimate.

The same gentleman had said, if Mr. R. understood him correctly, if not he wished to be corrected, that gun boats had been tried in Europe and found a sufficient defence for ports and harbors there. But would any man compare the basons of Boulogne or Havre, scooped out by human hands, not bigger than an egg shell in comparison, with the capacious bays and broad estuaries of this great continent? Did the gentleman know that the boats of which he spoke were first chained to each other and then chained to the shore, and that but for these fastenings the enemy would long since have carried them all off? Was this the sort of protection now contemplated? Was it proposed to haul the gun boats up into the Albany slip at New York, or at the county wharf at Norfolk, and chain them to the land? Why not plant the cannon on the wharf at once and save the expence of the boats?

Mr. R. said, there was a case which stared them in the face, and which, to his surprize, no gentleman had appeared to notice in the manner it deserved. This was the precise case of Algesiras, about which they had heard so much. Would any man contend that the passage of the Gut of Gibraltar was more easy than that of the Capes of Virginia—that it was wider? Or that the Chesapeake itself was less fitted for the action of ships of war than the straits? And yet had they ever heard of an attempt made by these gun boats to stop a single British ship of war passing in or out of those straits? And why had they not? Because they were incompetent to the object. During this long and bloody war the gun boats of Algesiras had never dared to contest the passage of the straits with the enemy's ships of the line. He wished therefore to know whether this force was to protect the Chesapeake, the Hudson and other great waters of the U. S. or whether they were to be drawn up above Craney Island. Gentlemen had said that they wished to put the government in possession of a force which would enable it to expel from our waters the ships of a foreign nation, which might contumaciously refuse obedience to our proclamations and laws. Have we not now, said Mr. R. a case precisely in point, demonstrating the insufficiency of gun boats to accomplish such an object. We had now seventy of these boats. A small British squadron had anchored within our waters—a proclamation had been issued commanding them to retire. In defiance of its authority they persisted in remaining within our jurisdiction. And yet these seventy gun boats together with the whole naval force of the union, even with *Decatur* at their head, were deemed insufficient to enforce the proclamation—and these ships yet rode triumphant. It was found that with all the navy of the U. S. and all their gun boats into the bargain they could not maintain their authority within their own jurisdiction, and yet they were called upon to build more—something in the style of the physician in the comedy, who prescribes bleeding, and although at every operation the patient is visibly worse, has no resourse but in a repetition of it. Sir, if 70 gun-boats are insufficient to expel the squadron now lying in Lynn Haven bay, it is not 700 that will afford a shadow of defence for the long line of your sea coast. Mr. R. said that if, as appeared to be the case, the old navy of the U. S. was to be abandoned (he did not mention this as an objection) why not convert them into gun-boats, or block ships mentioned by a gentleman from New York. But in answer to this he supposed his colleague (Mr. Burwell) would tell him (and he would listen to him with pleasure) of the famous attack upon the Havannah, in which the strongest fortress perhaps in the world, and 12 ships of the line, was unable to cope with the forces under lord Albemarle. If the gentleman's case proved any thing, it proved that all systems of defence were good for nothing. If a narrow passage, such as that leading into the Havanna, protected by the tremendous batteries of the Moro castle and a powerful fleet, could not be defended against the British navy, how could they expect to shut up a great bay, 21 miles across with a few gun-boats, or even to guard the narrows at New York. At the Havanna and at Carthagena, the Bocca Chica, as it was emphatically called, permitted but a single ship to pass at a time, and yet the entrance into both places had been forced and the first captured. His friend from Virginia would find it not less idle to attempt to contest the Chesapeake with these boats against ships of the line, than to extend naval protection to our commerce in the Indian ocean, which he had justly derided as a chimera.

Mr. R. recollected, not verbatim, but substantially, an expression of that minister, whose character as a man and as a politician he held in higher reverence than any other upon record—the first, the great William Pitt. In the memorable war which he had directed against the whole house of Bourbon, with a glory that never has been equalled and never can be surpassed, that wonderful man with a modesty peculiar to real greatness ascribed the success of his enterprizes, not to his own merit, but to the circumstance, that France, instead of confining herself to the continent of Europe, where her strength lay, had attempted the attack or defence of distant possessions—thus giving her enemy a prise upon her, of which otherwise she could not have availed herself. In meeting Great Britain upon the ocean France laid bare her only vulnerable point, and was vanquished not more by the sagacity and prowess of her enemy, than by her own want of foresight. She had since seen her error—and what was the consequence? Abandoning her old system, and maintaining herself on her own element, the natural theatre of her power, she had become mistress of continental Europe, and perhaps whilst he was then speaking

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