

Philadelphia
May 12th 63

My dear Admiral,

I arrived here last evening from Hampton Roads, where as I told you I was sent to book up Admt Lee on the Iron Clads, and to discuss with him the feasibility of an attack on Wilmington (this between ourselves of course) I found him most loth to undertake the operation, and as you may well understand, did not leave him in a better frame of mind, so that I doubt very much whether we shall hear anything more of the affair, which must I think if undertaken end badly.

I was very glad to have an opportunity of free discussion with the officers of the N.A. Squadron, although except in a few minor points, I found them well informed of the true state of the case, and siding to a man with you in toto. Lee spoke very kindly of you, and said that he had intended to write, but thought perhaps it would only bore you to answer. I can scarcely in a letter give you an idea of all that I said or that was said to me in Washington, but can assure you, that at present there is the fairest possible feeling towards you everywhere. So much so, that all of the arguments and explanations that I had prepared were almost useless. The Secretary told me to say to you not to allow yourself to be worried that he was satisfied that every

everything possible had been done, and that he thought you had misunderstood the public feeling or words to that effect. Fox expresses himself most kindly, and impressed me with the idea of being sincere. He appears as I told you quite hurt to think you could have for a moment suspected his loyalty in the matter of the Balt. American, and I can scarcely but think as things now stand, that using what I tell you there is room for a friendly letter, however as you know him so much better than I do, I may be mistaken. He said when the matter cooled down a little he would write himself. The President was very friendly, and I got in my opinions as well as I could where there was no argument or contradiction, as I was going away he asked me if I thought there was any other operation practicable for the Ironclads at present. I told him I was sorry to say that in their weak state as now, nothing; and then we parted.

One of the most difficult things to bluff people of on is the injury done to Sumpter, exaggerated reports of which you will no doubt have seen, against this I always place my eyesight, which I say is too strong evidence to be rebutted by anything but official reports duly signed.

The President does not seem to think that his telegram meant anything in particular, and no one I should think dreams of another attack. Mr Fox asked me whether I did not think we might try again after things were got in order. I told him certainly not without entirely new combinations and other guns, when I was told what these would be I would then give an answer on them. Seymour had stated here that he had agreed with him

him on the Morris Island attack, as Rogers knows this was not so and I contradicted it most emphatically. Goldsborough and Davis think you ought not to leave until this matter blows over, and I think from what I can gather that just now the Navy Dept. would not desire it. - As my views of your wishes are merely from a conversation with Rogers and as I may not clearly have understood them, will you get him to write to me on the subject, and then I will be able to act more knowingly than I can now. -

Owing to the absence of any of our reports, the Publick were pretty ignorant; but although I can't go into the newspapers, I consider I have done a good deal towards enlightening all those persons, who have come in contact with me, not believing that where we are all so much interested any one has a right to muzzle me.

I told Mr Fox he must not take away many of your Ironclads if he expected you to hold the coast. Every thing else having been tried, or at least discussed, seems that Mobile is now coming up, which they say Farragut offered to take with wooden vessels, I suppose as Joe Hooker promised to take Richmond, as I told them they will find the same shallow water to deal with as every where else.

Most sincerely Yours

Rear Admiral S. F. Blair

Flag Ship Wabash, Port Royal S.C.