

Circular, Supplemental to the personal instructions to  
The ministers [?] of the United States abroad  
Department of State  
Washington Feb'y [sic] 24<sup>th</sup> 1832

Sir,

The direction contained in your personal instructions, which relates to the archives or your mission, was introduced to avoid a great evil, which that direction has hitherto only partially removed. Neither the instructions given to the Diplomatic Agent by his government, nor the official letters he receives, nor the records of his answers, & of other transactions relating to his offices are his private property-they are to be kept subject to the order of the Department to which his office is attached. The Public interest & convenience of official intercourse with our agents, in a foreign country, requires that every Minister who succeeds to a mission should know accurately the direction that have been given by the Government to his predecessors, & what they have done-what communications they have received from other sources & what answers they have given. It was therefore, made a standing direction to all our diplomatic agents, to preserve the archives of their missions, with the utmost care, that they might be delivered to their successors either immediately, or by means of such persons as might be ordered to receive them until the successor should arrive. It has been observed with regret, at the Department, that these directions have been, in many instances, but imperfectly executed, & in others totally disregarded.

It is therefore that, by the President's direction, I call your attention to the subject by the communication, which, having addressed, without any exception, to each of our ministers abroad, is not to be condemned as implying a charge against any one in particular; but is intended to [?] a more strict compliance with the instructions of the Department, & to [?] more explicit, & the compliance with them in the several missions more uniform.

1. On the arrival of any minister at the place of his destination, at his first [?] he is to examine the archives of the Legation; if an inventory has left by his predecessor, he is to verify it with the person from whom he receives it, by comparing the Archives with the inventory & to acknowledge by his signatures, the receipt of the several articles, contained in the inventory, or of such as one found, noting that which are wanted, and adding those found in the Archives, which are not contained in the inventory-if no inventory has been left, he must proceed to make one, & verify it in the manner above described. This inventory in both cases to be fairly written and copied; one copy to be sent to the Department, and the other kept in the Archives of the Legation. If a preceding inventory has been sent to the Department, the continuation of it only need be sent, but in all cases, where no such inventory has been sent it must be done without delays, in order to enable us to supply deficiencies, or for as it can be done, from the materials to be found here; it being the intention of the President that the Archives of each legation shall be made



- complete, & that henceforth they shall be kept so, on the responsibility of the minister or Agent. In whose charge they may for the time being be placed.
2. Every instruction or letter from the Department, every written communication addressed to the Minister from only other sources, is to be carefully filed, endorsed with a short notice of the contents, & on index formed of the contents of each [?], package, or box, in which they are contained.
  3. [?] Proper books are to be processed, in which every official paper of the Legation, without exception, is to be fairly copied & indexed, this is to include, as will protocols of [?], notes of official conversations & every memorandum [?] to the full understanding of the history of his mission, as copies of his correspondence.
  4. Great care is to be taken to furnish the Department with copies of all official notes or letters received, as well as of the answers given; to note all conversations, with men in office having any materials bearing on the relations of the Country to which you are sent with the United States, & which you think it important that your Government should be informed of to make these notes as soon after the conversations occur as possible to send copies in your next dispatches. Whenever such notes, or any other communications you make would have an injurious effect, if intercepted, either on the interest of the Country or individual feelings, it is recommended to you to use the cipher with which you are furnished.
  5. Your attention is particularly called to that part of your personal instructions which [?] you to furnish statistical information, for the purpose of intimating, that at this period, tables of export & import and language, both foreign & domestic-the rates of duties & every other information relating to the consumer & navigation of the Country to which you are accredited, will be particularly acceptable to the Department; together with only interesting publications on these subjects.

I am with Great Respect  
Your Obt Serv  
Edward Livingston

