

STATE OF SWEDEN

Karl Johan (1763–1844)

to Charles XIII (1748–1818), King of Sweden (1809–1818) and Norway (1814–1818)

7 January 1812

My most ardent wishes have been fulfilled. The re-established health of Your Majesty again enables you to resume the government of the kingdom. I can appeal to your own heart to judge of the delightful emotion mine experiences in replacing in the hands of Your Majesty an authority, the prolonged exercise of which has constantly kept before me the danger which threatened your days.

Notwithstanding the daily reports which I have submitted to Your Majesty, both respecting the exterior and the interior situation of the state, I, nevertheless, consider it my duty to profit by the present occasion, so important for me, upon all accounts to present Your Majesty with a rapid sketch of them.

When Your Majesty decided upon embracing the Continental policy and declaring war against Great Britain, Sweden had got clear of an unfortunate contest. Her wounds were still bleeding; it was necessary for her to make new sacrifices at a moment even when she lost one of the principal branches of her public revenues, the whole of that produced by the customs being nearly annihilated.

In defiance of the insulated situation of Sweden, she has performed for the interest of the common cause all that could be expected from a people faithful to their engagements. More than 2.000.000 rix dollars have been expended in recruiting the army and placing in a state of defence the coasts of our islands, our fortresses, and our fleets.

I will not conceal from Your Majesty that our commerce has been reduced to a simple coasting trade from port to port, and has greatly suffered from this state of war. Privateers under friendly flags, against which it would have been injurious to have adopted measures of safety and precaution, have taken advantage of our confidence in treaties to capture, one after another, nearly fifty of our merchantmen. But at last, Sire, your flotilla received orders to protect the Swedish flag, and the just commerce of your subjects, against piracies which could neither be authorised nor avowed by any government.

The Danish cruisers have given much cause for complaint on our part. But the evil decreases daily, and everything leads us to think the lawful commerce of Sweden will not be any longer disturbed by them and that the relations of good neighbourhood will be more and more strengthened.

The cruisers under the French flag have given an unlimited extension to their letters of marque; the injuries which they have done us have been the object of our complaints. The justice and loyalty of His Majesty the Emperor of the French have guaranteed their redress.

The protections given by friendly governments have been respected. And such of their ships as have touched upon our coasts have been at liberty to continue their voyage, whatever might be their destination. About fifty American ships, driven upon our coasts by successive tempests, have been released. This act of justice, founded upon the rights of nations, has been appreciated by the United States. And appearances promise us that better understood relations with their government will facilitate the exportation of the numerous piles of iron with which our public places are now filled.

Political considerations join with the family connection which unites Your Majesty and the King of Prussia to consolidate the relations of friendship that subsist between the two powers. The peace with Russia will not be troubled; the treaties by which it is cemented are executed on both sides with frankness and good faith.

Our relations with the Austrian empire are upon a most amicable footing. The remembrance of glory brings the two nations nearer to each other, and Your Majesty will neglect nothing which can contribute to maintain the

reciprocity of confidence and esteem it causes. If Spain and Portugal should assume a tranquil posture, these countries will offer to Swedish commerce advantages which would guarantee the perfection of the plans she has commenced for improving her iron mines.

Our intercourse with Southern America has entirely ceased; civil war ravages these fine and unfortunate countries. When they have a regular administration, the produce of the Kingdom will find an advantageous vent there. The maritime war has interrupted our commercial relations with Turkey; but nothing which interests that ancient friend of Sweden can be indifferent to Your Majesty.

Such, Sire, are the exterior relations of Sweden. Justice and loyalty towards all nations have been the political guides of Your Majesty.

The Army and the finances, those two principal guarantees of a state, have, above all, been the objects of my constant solicitude. A wise economy has governed the expenditure of the funds destined for the armaments which the state of war rendered necessary. This war having great influence upon the exportation of Swedish productions, upon the general proceedings of trade, and the imaginations of merchants had caused the course of exchange to rise to an exorbitant height. I particularly directed my attention to stop this scourge of states which, having once broken its dykes, no bounds can be placed to its ravages—by repressing on the one side stock-jobbing; by carrying into execution the ancient laws against the unlawful exportation of gold and silver; by imposing a duty of transit upon the conveyance of ingots from foreign countries passing through Sweden; by endeavouring to bring back the nation to the principles of economy which distinguished their ancestors. On the other side, I have endeavoured to give activity to the interior industry and lawful commerce of Sweden. I have had the satisfaction of seeing my efforts crowned with success, and the course of exchange upon Hamburg, which in March last was at 136 *sk* on 3 January present was only 84 *sk*.

I have taken measures to render more general the manufacture of linen and the culture of hemp; to proceed actively in the discovery of new sources for obtaining salt; to continue the clearing of the grounds in Dalarna; to establish a new communication with and new markets in Värmland; to form a company destined to carry on the herring fishery in the open sea; to augment our commercial relations with Finland; to carry into execution the financial resolutions of the states of the kingdom; to give to the direction of magazines, to those of the customs, and to the island of Saint Bartholomew a fresh organization.

The harvest not having proved a good one, I have adopted means to prevent a scarcity by causing corn to be imported from foreign countries; but in order to prevent such importation influencing the exchange, salt must be exported for grain so received. This exchange will be effected with so much the more facility as there yet exists a sufficient provision of salt in the country for two years' consumption.

I have with grief observed that the immoderate use and manufacture of brandy, by which the general interests are sacrificed to individual ones, corrupt the nation and will sooner or later inevitably cause a scarcity. I have only employed exhortations on this subject, which I have collected from the paternal sentiments of Your Majesty, and I leave it to other times, and to the judgment of the *Riksens Ständer*, to put an end to an evil which everybody acknowledges continues increasing.

I have paid particular attention to the state and organization of the hospitals, to the religious establishments, and to the means of preventing, or at least of relieving, the condition of mendicity.

The interior police and agriculture have not been lost sight of, and a central Academy of Agriculture will shortly be established for the purpose of giving an impulse and an encouragement to the public economy, and to scientific knowledge, which will contribute to ensure the prosperity of the state.

The works of the canal of Götaland, that grand monument of Your Majesty's reign, have been carried on with great activity. Those of the canal of Södertälje, stopped by obstacles which the zealous efforts of the directors have not been able to surmount, have again re-commenced with more rapid strides.

I have carried into execution the solemn resolution of the *Riksens Ständer*, sanctioned by Your Majesty, regarding the national armament. But, careful not to deprive agriculture of any more arms than are indispensably necessary for the defence of our country, I have merely ordered a levy of 15.000 men (exclusive of the 50.000 which the *Riksens Ständer* had placed at Your Majesty's disposal).

The most direful errors were carried even into Skåne, where violence and a public rebellion threatened for a moment to oppose the execution of the measures ordained. Already did our enemies, or such as are envious of our repose, begin to rejoice at our intestine dissensions. But these were soon suppressed by the united force of the Army and the laws, and were succeeded by the return of national sentiment and obedience to their duty.

The vacancies in the new enrolment and in the national armament are almost entirely filled up, and every measure has been taken to render them useful in this employ. The regular army has been recruited, as is also the whole of the reserve new clothed and supplied with well-conditioned arms, of which sufficient quantities are found in the magazines. And the foundries for arms have obtained a renewed activity. The making of gunpowder and saltpetre has been extended and improved, and the artillery put into a respectable condition.

The pensions granted to officers and soldiers wounded during the war have been either confirmed or augmented. The accounts of the expenses of the late war have been accelerated, and such measures as have been successively adopted had no other object in view than to render the troops serviceable and to supply them with the necessaries requisite.

Your Majesty will deign to perceive by the statement that, notwithstanding all that the detractors of Sweden have insinuated on this head—that it would take sixty years to organize an army of 60.000 men—yet the effecting of this will be apparent in the month of April next, both to the friends and to the enemies of Your Majesty. The intent of this augmentation of our military force is merely defensive. Without any other ambition than that of preserving her liberty and laws, Sweden will have the means of defending herself; and she can do it. Bounded by the sea on one side and on the other by inaccessible mountains, it is not solely on the courage of her inhabitants, nor in the remembrance of her former glory, that she has to seek for the security of her independence. It is rather to be found in her local situation, in her mountains, her forests, in her lakes, and in her frosts. Let her therefore profit by these united advantages, and let her inhabitants be thoroughly persuaded of this truth—that if iron, the produce of their mountains, cultivates their farms by ploughing up their fields, that it is likewise iron alone, and the firm determination of making use of it, that can defend them.

I have been seconded in my efforts by the good spirit prevalent in the Army, and by the zeal and abilities of the public functionaries. The magistracy has maintained its ancient imputation; it has painful duties to fulfill, but this has procured it a fresh claim to the general esteem,

The different departments of the Chancery of State have rivalled each other in giving the quickest dispatch, compatible with the formalities required by our laws and customs, to all business which has come under their cognizance. The Secretary of State's Department for Church Affairs has, since 17 March, expedited nearly 600 causes; that of the Interior, 952; that of Finance and Commerce, 1653; and the War Department, 2535. The causes in which final decision has not yet been given—which are confined to a very moderate number in each department in comparison to the extent coming under their several denominations—are either of such nature as to require Your Majesty's decision or to be again brought forward for final determination.

Should Your Majesty deign to recognise, in the sketch which I have laid before you, the desire which has actuated me to deserve the high confidence you have shown towards me, this would prove (next to the joy I feel on Your Majesty's re-establishment) the most pleasing recompense for all my pains.

May Heaven, in accordance with my prayers, lengthen Your Majesty's days. And may Sweden, protected by your virtues, Sire, find an imperishable guarantee for her future destiny in the absolute devotion which my heart has vowed to Your Majesty, in the respectful attachment of my son, in the sanctity of the laws of the state, in the uprightness of the public functionaries, and in the union, the courage, and the patriotism of all Swedes!

With the most sincere sentiments of attachment, and with the most profound respect, I am, Sire, Your Majesty's most humble and faithful subject, and good son.

John Philippart, *Memoirs and Campaigns of Carl John, Prince-Royal of Sweden* (London: Harrington, 1814):174–186