

Private

Admiralty, ...  
Wednesday 29 Aug<sup>r</sup> /60.

Dear Lord John Russell.

We received a letter from the F. D. dated  
22<sup>nd</sup> Aug<sup>r</sup> /60 suggesting that the Admiral on the West  
India Station should with as little delay as possible  
order vessels to watch the Bahama Cays and also to  
cruise on the coasts of Cuba. The first object namely  
watching the Cays which are British is unobjectionable, but  
if our ships of war cruise to the north of Cuba, we  
shall inevitably be brought into fresh difficulties with  
the United States. In the month of June 1858  
these difficulties led to a letter from this office  
directing the officers of our cruisers to "respect the  
American flag in all cases, and under whatever  
circumstances of suspicion, until further orders."

D. of Somerset  
Aug 27/60

Then came the treaty, in which we disclaimed all  
right to search or visit American vessels.

If now we send cruizers to the north of  
Cuba, the map will show that the effect  
be nearly the same as if we sent vessels to  
cruise on the coast of the United States.

For the suppression of the slave trade  
vessels will be useless, unless they interfere  
with American ships: so that our captains  
are in this dilemma either they must be  
suspicious traders or it may be known  
perhaps by unchecked, or else we shall hear

d all of an outrage on the American flag. 51

we surely do not want reports on the  
conduct of American vessels: we know quite  
enough, but we cannot interfere without  
risking new disputes.

Upon the whole I may state that we  
think it unadvisable to send cruisers to a  
coast where we may again have to withdraw  
them, and therefore I am anxious that your  
letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> should be modified by the  
omission of that portion of the directions  
which refer to sending cruisers to the coast  
near Cuba, as it might be awkward if

Then came the treaty, in which we disclaimed all  
right to search or visit American vessels.

If now we send cruisers to the north of  
Cuba, the map will show that the effect  
be nearly the same as if we sent vessels to  
coast on the coast of the United States.

For the suppression of the slave trade the  
vessels will be useless, unless they interfere  
with American ships: so that our capture  
are in this dilemma either they must be  
suspicious traders or it may be known  
pass by unchecked, or else we shall hear

of an outrage on the American flag. 54

We surely do not want reports on the  
conduct of American vessels: we know quite  
enough, but we cannot interfere without  
risking new disputes.

Upon the whole I may state that we  
think it inadvisable to send cruisers to a  
coast whence we may again have to withdraw  
them, and therefore I am anxious that your  
letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> should be modified by the  
omission of that portion of the directions  
which refer to sending cruisers to the coast  
of Cuba, as it might be awkward if

this letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> should hereafter be called for, and I do not wish to have any public letter written from this office stating objections to such a course of proceedings. To visit the cases and take such further steps as under the circumstances may appear advisable, would constitute directions which would be quite as useful and more safe; and I trust you will be satisfied to send us another letter in lieu of the one dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August.

Yrs very faithfully  
Somerset

D. of Somerset  
Aug 29/60

Objections to sending  
Cruisers to coasts  
where they will fall in  
with U.S. Slavers -

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, PRO 30/22/24, 2  
9 AUGUST 1860 DUKE OF SOMERSET TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL.  
Using Primary Sources:  
Reproduced with permission of TNA.