

without the former, they can have no property; without the latter, no security for their lives or liberties.

The parliament of Great Britain has of late claimed an uncontrollable right of binding these colonies in all cases whatsoever: to enforce an unconditional submission to this claim, the legislative and executive powers of that state have invariably pursued for these ten years past a steadier system of oppression, by passing many impolitic, severe and cruel acts for raising a revenue from the colonists; by depriving them in many cases of the trial by jury; by altering the chartered constitution of one colony, and the entire stoppage of the trade of its capital; by cutting off all intercourse between the colonies; by restraining them from fishing on their own coasts; by extending the limits of, and erecting an arbitrary government in the province of Quebec; by confiscating the property of the colonists taken on the seas, and compelling the crews of their vessels, under the pain of death, to act against their native country and dearest friends; by declaring all seizures, detention, or destruction of the persons or property of the colonists, to be legal and just.

A war unjustly commenced hath been prosecuted against the united colonies with cruelty, outrageous violence, and perfidy; slaves, savages, and foreign mercenaries have been meanly hired to rob a people of their property, liberties and lives, a people guilty of no other crime than deeming the last of no estimation without the secure enjoyment of the former; their humble and dutiful petitions for peace, liberty and safety, have been rejected with scorn; secure of and relying on foreign aid, not on his national forces, the unrelenting monarch of Britain hath at length avowed, by his answer to the city of London, his determined and inexorable resolution of reducing these colonies to abject slavery.

Compelled by dire necessity, either to surrender our properties, liberties and lives, into the hands of a British king and parliament, or to use such means as will most probably secure to us and our posterity those invaluable blessings,

We the delegates of Maryland, in convention assembled, do declare, that the king of Great Britain has violated his compact with this people, and that they owe no allegiance to him; we have therefore thought it just and necessary to empower our deputies in congress to join with a majority of the united colonies in declaring them free and independent states, in framing such farther confederation between them, in making foreign alliances, and in adopting such other measures as shall be judged necessary for the preservation of their liberties: provided, the sole and exclusive rights of