

JOHN ADAMS AND FRANCE: A REMARKABLE BUT COSTLY RELATIONSHIP

By

LARRY MCCREARY

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

December 2009

Winston Salem, North Carolina

Approved By:

J. E. Hendricks, Ph.D., Advisor

Examining Committee:

Donald E. Frey, Ph.D.

David Coates, Ph.D.

Introduction

On March 4, 1797, John Adams was inaugurated second President of the United States in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was preceded by President George Washington, who had served two terms in office. George Washington was elected by popular acclamation due to his military leadership in the Revolutionary War. John Adams was narrowly elected and had little popular support such as had been evident in the Washington Administration for two terms.

John Adams stood up for his beliefs and was willing to absorb the consequences of his actions. A staunch patriot Adams would not compromise his belief that the United States should become an independent nation. He also developed diplomatic skills and assisted the United States in gaining key recognition from Holland. As President, Adams steered the nation through turmoil and kept the nation out of a war it could not afford. Many of his contemporaries labeled Adams as being mentally unbalanced, but he achieved most of the goals he pursued with little or no support.

When President Adams took office, he was faced with the problem of keeping the young nation out of war and the need to ensure that diplomats appointed by the new government were properly treated in the capitals of Europe. The United States was caught between France and Great Britain with both committing piracy on the high seas. The British were impressing American sailors and forcibly removing them from United States ships and the French were constantly harassing United States shipping. Soon after the inauguration, President Adams was faced with the rejection of President Washington's envoy to Paris and the nation began to display an interest in immediate

conflict with France.

President Adams realized that the young nation was not prepared to go to war with France and in his message to Congress he indicated that he wanted peace with the French people, but that diplomats must be received and respected by the French Government. The entire French social and political system had been uprooted by the French Revolution and there was much discussion in the United States as to how the United States would conduct diplomacy with the changing governmental structure in Paris.

President Adams appointed three commissioners to Paris and when they arrived they were rejected by the French Government and payment of tribute was demanded prior to any negotiations. The United States populace was inflamed and people began to build ships and other goods of war to fight the French Nation. The ships and armaments were sponsored by state governments and private investment to prepare the United States to go to war. President Adams guided the nation through this difficulty and with unusual courage and valor he diplomatically obtained a treaty with France.

There were no rules of succession and President Adams kept President Washington's Cabinet intact. Questions of loyalty surfaced frequently and Adams never worked effectively with most of his Cabinet. Vice President Thomas Jefferson became alienated from President Adams as John Adams had from the Washington Administration when he was Vice President. Most of the nation wanted war with France and the Hamiltonian faction of the Federalist Party wanted to pull the nation toward Great Britain and to go to war with France.

President Adams kept the nation out of war during his one term in office, but the cost was the presidential election of 1800 which was ultimately won by Thomas Jefferson.

President Adams served during an extremely difficult time in the nation's history, but his diplomatic skills and his unconventional politics kept the nation from fighting a war which it could ill afford.

Chapter One

Development of Patriotism

President John Adams served during an extremely difficult time in the nation's history, but his diplomatic skills and his unconventional politics kept the nation from fighting a war it could ill afford. From the beginning of his career, John Adams served the citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony by his legal expertise and by his patriotic fervor against the mother country. He served as an attorney and as a legislator. His unorthodox decision making processes are evident in his young career and influenced his later Presidential Administration. He was willing to stand alone and take the wrath of the populace for what he believed to be the correct approach.

John Adams, an extreme patriot from the beginning to the end of his career, stimulated the development of patriotic activities in the United States. Bred from hardworking generations with a Puritanical background, Adams believed in hard work and sacrifice. Born in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1735 from a family of modest means, Adams lived in a small cottage in the town of Braintree. Massachusetts was a flourishing colony with many rich merchants engaged in trade and other lucrative economic activities, but the Adams family did not share in this wealth.

John Adams' father was an officer in the Massachusetts militia and a deacon in the local church and had deep rooted religious convictions. A stern disciplinarian, he demanded much from John and his siblings. His emphasis on education was reinforced by his wife's desire for their children to succeed. John Adams stated that his father managed to obtain a respectable status in the colony by hard work and honesty. Adams

observed that his father was one of the most honest individuals he had ever known, but experienced some conflict with him concerning his desire to participate in sports and his father's demanding that he master the academic curriculum. This conflict continued until Mr. Adams obtained a new school master who assisted John in entering Harvard. John Adams attended Harvard University from 1751-1754 and obtained a degree.¹

In 1756 Adams began his legal studies and was admitted to the bar in 1758. He practiced law for fourteen years working as a lawyer and farmer. During the time that he practiced law, the British Colonies began to change their relationship with the Mother Country. The French and Indian War changed the relationship and led to severe crises between England and her British subjects in the American colonies and Adams was in the forefront of this change. The problem originated with the tremendous expenditures from the British exchequer to defend the American colonies and the lack of contributions by the colonies to the war effort. The need to raise new revenue caused the Parliament and the Crown to enact legislation in an attempt to have the colonies participate in the payment of their defense.

Several pieces of legislation were passed by the British Parliament to levy a tax on the Colonists for their defense. In 1765, the Stamp Act legislation levied a tax on virtually all paper products and installed collectors in each of the British colonies. The colonial general assemblies reacted promptly to the Stamp Act and declared that the British government had no right to tax their American possessions without representation. Another point of the Act was that offenders could be taken out of the normal judicial proceedings and placed in an admiralty court which would take away their right to trial by jury. This Act contributed greatly to the rise of radicalism in the British colonies.²

The Massachusetts Bay Colony, the home of John Adams, was the most radical colony of the thirteen and stood out as the leader in the dissent against the Mother Country and its taxation. John Adams displayed his dislike for the Stamp tax and became a leader in the patriotic movement against unfair treatment by the Mother Country. On December 18th, 1765 John Adams made the following entry in his journal:

The Year 1765 has been the most remarkable Year of my Life. That enormous Engine, fabricated by the British Parliament, for battering down all the Rights and Liberties of America, I mean the Stamp Act, has raised and spread, thro the whole Continent, a Spirit that will be recorded to our Honour, with all future Generations. In every Colony, from Georgia to New Hampshire inclusively, the Stamp Distributors and Inspectors have been compelled, by the unconquerable Rage of the People, to renounce their offices. Such and so universal has been the Resentment of the People, that every Man who has dared to speak in favour of the Stamps, or to soften the detestation in which they are held, how great soever his Abilities and Virtues had been esteemed before, or whatever his fortune, Connections and Influence had been, has been seen to sink to universal Contempt and Ignominy.

The People, even to the lowest Ranks, have become more attentive to their Liberties, more inquisitive about them, and more determined to defend them, than they were ever before known or had occasion to be.³

The essential element of this quote from John Adams documents the spread of the disdain for the British tax and the developing thoughts of freedom in the British colonies. He pointed out that almost every segment of society was beginning to consider liberty and to formulate plans for liberty's defense. The firebrand patriotism of Adams stirred the colonists and contributed to civil disobedience against the colonial government. Adam's leadership during this period of his career was a precursor to the type of Administration he would conduct as President of the United States. He believed in liberty and was willing to participate in its development and defense.

In March of 1770, an incident which became known as the Boston Massacre occurred

in Boston which was to stir patriotism and spread dissent throughout the thirteen British colonies. British troops fired on a gathering of individuals killing five citizens and inflaming the Boston populace. A unique consequence of the incident was that John Adams eventually defended the British captain against the Crown and procured a verdict of not guilty. Adams' reason for defending the British officer was that the segment of society involved in the crowd was of the lower status and constituted an unruly group of people. This premise was Adams' defense against charges levied by the Crown against the officer. Adams laid his reputation on the line, but strongly believed as an attorney he needed to participate in the defense of the accused officer.⁴

In 1770, the British government repealed all of the oppressive taxes with the exception of the tax on tea. As a result of radical reaction within the colonies, the importation of tea greatly decreased. Tax was levied on the importation of tea and eventually led to the dumping of a British shipment in the Boston Harbor. The colonials in the Massachusetts area referred to the 1773 event as the Boston Tea Party. The British responded by demanding that the colonials repay the government for all damaged goods and wanted to prosecute the offenders. The Massachusetts activity reverberated throughout the British possessions and contributed to increased resistance on the part of the colonials.

John and Samuel Adams participated in stirring public resistance to the British government and the oppressive taxes levied by that government. John Adams referred to the Tea Party as the grandest event in resisting British tyranny since the effort had begun.⁵ Resistance was to ebb and flow throughout the early 1770's, particularly with the repeal of major tax acts, but underlying resistance to the British government was always smoldering and ready to flame.

Committees of Correspondence were created to establish communication among the thirteen colonies which had no existing means to coordinate efforts to resist British tyranny. In 1772, the Boston town meeting created a single committee of correspondence to act as a system for municipalities in Massachusetts to contact each other during emergencies. When radical fervor began to decline, the Hutchinson letters rekindled radical dissent. The letters of Governor Hutchinson were published by Benjamin Franklin to demonstrate the governor's idea of the supremacy of the British parliament. The Gaspee affair also stimulated the development of colonial committees of correspondence. The British ship, Gaspee, was burned when the captain interfered with smuggling in Rhode Island. Committees were formed in all colonies with the exception of three.⁶

John Adams' role in the development of the committees of correspondence is documented in *The Founding Fathers; John Adams Biography in His Own Words*, edited by James E. Bishop. John Adams saw himself as the publicist for his cousin Samuel Adams who constantly stirred dissension within the British colonial possessions. The propagation of the patriotic ideas contributed to the formation of Committees of Correspondence and eventually led to the establishment of the first Continental Congress.⁷

In 1774, the colonies began to communicate with each other and radicals began to believe that there was no way to avoid a change in the relationship between the colonies and their mother country. The British North American possessions were not willing to pay taxes without representation although the British government had indicated that increased taxes were for the defense of the colonies. In order for the colonies to form a

method of resistance, it was necessary that an attempt at union be made and to minimize the tremendous differences among the geographical areas. Sectionalism existed early in the formation of attempt at unification.

A primary exporter, the New England area had vast trade with much of the world. On the other end of the spectrum was the South which primarily imported and exported goods and had no merchant shipping similar to the New England area. The South was primarily agrarian with the major source of labor being African slaves. In addition each colonial government had its own legislative bodies and a royal governor appointed by the Crown. The colonists had to form a union to be able to resist the most powerful nation on earth.⁸

The first Continental Congress met in September, 1774, in the city of Philadelphia for the purpose of designing a unified effort against what the colonists considered to be oppression by the British government. All colonies were represented in the Continental Congress with the exception of Georgia. Considering the differences among the colonies, the attendance in this congress was phenomenal. The Continental Congress agreed that if the tyranny from Great Britain continued, the colonies would unite in an effort of resistance.

The British responded by legislating terms of reconciliation between the colonies and the mother country and Prime Minister North was to have reconciliation terms delivered to the colonies. Unfortunately, terms did not reach the North American continent prior to the battles of Lexington and Concord which initiated armed resistance against the Crown.⁹ The attempt at reconciliation would be the last chance for peace between the colonies and their mother country. During the year 1774, the name United States began

to appear in areas throughout the British possessions.

John Adams served in the first Continental Congress as a representative from Massachusetts. Between 1773 and 1774, John Adams had decided that he wanted to devote his life to public service and to work for the cause of liberty. By the time the Congress adjourned, the colonies had placed themselves in active rebellion against the British government.¹⁰

On the last day of the Congress Adams displayed his frustration with the members of Congress and wondered how anything was ever accomplished.

In Congress, nibbling and quibbling-as usual.

There is no greater Mortification than to sit with half a dozen Witts, deliberating upon a Petition, Address, or Memorial. These great Witts, these subtle Criticks, these refined Genius's, these learned Lawyers, these wise Statesmen, are so fond of shewing their Parts and Powers, as to make their Consultations very tedious.¹¹

Adams' statements were precipitated by the constant amendments and bickering concerning the resolutions for redress to the King. Adams also noted that the Congress before adjournment had agreed to reconvene in May of 1775 unless the redress resolution was honored by the Crown. Adams disliked what he perceived to be wasted effort and no activity as he believed was being done in the Continental Congress. Adams disliked inactivity and when he became President he was the center of action and there was constant activity at all levels of his Administration.

During the 1770's, the relationship between the mother country and the thirteen British colonies began to rapidly deteriorate. After the French and Indian War, the British government passed several pieces of legislation designed to collect taxes from the colonies to pay for colonial defense. The colonists began to resist taxation without representation leading to the first Continental Congress in 1774 which outlined specific

rights demanded by the British subjects. From the beginning, John Adams was a protagonist in the movement against the mother country and served his colony of Massachusetts in the House and later as a representative in the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia. His role quickly enlarged with the second Continental Congress and the fight for independence of the United States. Forced to go to war against the most powerful nation in the world, the young country had virtually no government and no means of raising revenue or standing military. John Adams led the colonies to unification and nationhood and began military development.

Chapter Two

The United States Initiates Diplomatic Effort

At the conclusion of the First Continental Congress, conflicts increased between the colonies and the Crown; and the British government offered a limited peace initiative in an attempt to bring the colonies back to the British fold, but the attempts were unsuccessful. The United States established diplomatic relations with France which led to a military alliance and contributed to the independence of the American Republic. The framework of the alliance between the United States and the French governments was important and led to debate over foreign entanglements which would direct United States foreign initiatives for generations to come.

As the Second Continental Congress opened in 1776, John Adams continued recommending independence from Great Britain and the establishment of a new republic. If a new nation were to be formed, it would be essential that a viable government be established and that the government would have the authority and resources to direct the nation. The nation consisted of thirteen entities which were totally independent and did not need to answer to any centralized authority. Adams was a standout in advocating the formation of a central government which would have the power to raise revenue, place an army in the field, conduct foreign policy and negotiate alliances. Adams saw difficulty occurring because the British government had initiated peace attempts and many representatives in the Second Continental Congress were interested in remaining loyal and attempting to reconcile the Colonial position with that of the mother country. He worked tirelessly to eliminate dissidence and to argue for a viable national government.¹²

Aside from the difficulties in establishing a government and troubles on the battlefields, the United States had to deal with a proposed reconciliation conference called by Lord Richard Howe, commander in the British occupied city of New York. In September of 1776, John Sullivan, Representative from Massachusetts, addressed the Continental Congress advising them that the British government was interested in discussing reconciliation with their American colonies and proposed that a conference be held in New York to reduce hostilities between the colonies and England. John Adams was adamantly opposed to negotiations with the mother country and made his point well known to the Continental Congress. From the floor he indicated that it would have been better if Sullivan had taken a musket ball and died rather than submit such a proposal to the congress. ¹³

Although Adams was a staunch opponent of the reconciliation conference, he was unanimously appointed by Congress to the conference to serve with Benjamin Franklin and Edward Rutledge. This diplomatic appointment was to be another step in the development of leadership qualities displayed by Adams and would enhance his diplomatic potential throughout his life. The appointment also displayed the confidence his congressional colleagues had in his abilities to serve the republic. Adams' interest in the conference was probably minimal since he made no mention of the conference in his papers with the exception of indicating the amount of money he took with him and acknowledging the trip from Philadelphia to New York.¹⁴

The actual conference took place on September 11, 1776 at Staten Island, New York. There was no clear cut line as to the authority under which Lord Howe was authorized to conduct the negotiations, but he indicated that all revolutionaries would be given pardon

with the exception of John Adams. The revolutionaries must lay down their arms and renounce the recently developed Declaration of Independence and obey British law as passed by Parliament. Their reaction was swift and complete with the commissioners denouncing the attempt and preparing a report to submit to the Continental Congress. The failure of the negotiations left no way out but for the United States to continue the struggle and to seek an ally who could assist them in carrying on the war.¹⁵

The young Republic had to have a government that could implement and conduct relations with other nations. The war was going badly for the United States and military retreat was constant. On several occasions Congress had considered opening discussions with the government of Louis XVI of France, but the French were reluctant to involve themselves in an alliance which would cause war with Great Britain when they questioned the ability of the United States to win on the battlefield. The French were badly defeated by Great Britain in 1763 in the French and Indian War and many within the French government wanted revenge against the British. The United States needed to gain a foothold in the war in order to gain diplomatic recognition from a world power.

The Battle of Saratoga proved to be a turning point and assisted the United States in obtaining the much needed diplomatic recognition. On October 16, 1777, General Burgoyne surrendered to United States forces. This victory ultimately led to an alliance between the United States and France. Prior to this battle, the United States had little support from the outside world and with no navy and only a small standing army the situation was bleak. In 1776, an overture had been made to the French government by the Secret Congressional Committee of Correspondence when Congress sent Silas Deane to Paris. The Secret Committee of Correspondence was the vehicle by which the limited

foreign affairs of the United States were conducted.¹⁶

The gaining of diplomatic recognition led to John Adams' being involved as a commissioner from the United States government and continued to add to his credibility as a political leader in the new republic. Adams had been a radical patriot in the Continental Congress and had spent many years away from his wife and family in the service of the United States. He often lamented his loss of time with his family and desired to return to them as quickly as possible. In 1776 his wife, Abigail, pointed out in her correspondence that in their fourteen years of marriage they had been together for only seven. In 1777 his wife lost a baby and many attributed this loss to the tension created by her husband's absence from the home.

On November 27, 1777, Elbridge Gerry, a member of the Massachusetts delegation to the Continental Congress, informed John Adams that he would receive an appointment to the diplomatic corps in France representing United States interest. Adams received this information two weeks after returning from the conclusion of a grueling congressional session and was anxious to remain home and be with his family. Gerry had informed the President of the Continental Congress that Adams would not refuse the diplomatic appointment due to his patriotic fervor. Silas Deane was being replaced in the diplomatic corps due to questionable activities which were being investigated. John Adams replaced Silas Deane and served with Arthur Lee and Benjamin Franklin. The purpose of the diplomatic initiative was to attempt to negotiate a treaty of alliance with France against Great Britain.

Adams demonstrated his leadership ability by embarking on a diplomatic mission which was of tremendous value to the United States and throwing all his effort into

understanding the diplomacy which would be required. He learned the French language which was to serve him well during his Presidency.¹⁷

Since the United States had recently declared its independence from the mother country, it had very little diplomatic experience from which to draw. When John Adams considered assuming the post, he had traveled no further than Philadelphia and had never been on a sailing ship. He lamented the fact that he had no experience, but decided to assume the appointment as a joint commissioner and prepared to sail to France. Adams was offered the joint commissioner appointment on November 28, 1777 and accepted the appointment December 23, 1777. He reflected in his letter to Henry Laurens, President of the Continental Congress, that he would contribute whatever he could to the joint commission and would serve his country in that capacity.¹⁸

On Tuesday, February 17, 1778 Adams left for France on a ship commissioned by the Continental Congress which was prepared to fight if necessary to protect John Adams from possible capture or other hazards which might occur on the high seas. The United States was at war with Great Britain and Adams would be fair game in that conflict and would be of tremendous value if he were captured or killed. Adams decided to take his young son, John Quincy, with him, but indicated on many occasions that he later regretted doing this due to the risk involved.

When Adams departed, he had never seen a royal head and had no knowledge of the language of the country in which he was to work. There were French officers on the ship who had worked with the United States military in a mercenary role and Adams and his young son, John Quincy, immediately began to work with these officers to learn the French language. By the end of the six week voyage, they were beginning to read the

French classics and had begun to develop much more than conversational French. In addition to the French language, Adams became acquainted with the customs of the French nation and had a working knowledge its culture.¹⁹

When John Adams boarded the vessel for France, he noted that the American captain seemed to be a qualified commander, but officers lacked discipline and did not know how to properly man their stations when called to battle. The voyage to France was hampered by severe weather and the death of a crewman caused by lightning. Also, the voyage involved a constant risk of contact with the powerful British Navy which would benefit greatly from a political prize such as Adams. In fact, the United States vessel did encounter a British Man-Of-War but after a brief skirmish, the British ship struck its colors. Adams describes the dangerous activities in his diary and documents encounters with the enemy military vessels.²⁰

Two surprising developments occurred during Adams' trip from North America to the European Continent. News of the British surrender at Saratoga, New York had reached London and Paris and the British and French were making diplomatic moves toward the United States. In the first instance Lord North, Prime Minister of Great Britain, proposed to the United States that immediate peace negotiations begin and that the initial framework include home rule for the people of the British possessions within the British Empire. These negotiations were never started, but were used as a scare technique by Benjamin Franklin in dealing with the French government.²¹

The French government was concerned that the United States might prematurely make peace with Great Britain and that Great Britain would maintain a footprint on the North American Continent. Franklin utilized this fear and made his point known to Vergennes,

the French Foreign Minister, and this point was transmitted to the French King. On February 6, 1778, France granted the United States diplomatic recognition and prepared to enter the war as an ally of the young republic. In the terms of the treaty the French government recognized the independence of the United States and prepared to give military support. The United States would begin trade with France on a most favored nation status and neither party could negotiate peace with Great Britain without the consent of the other.²²

When John Adams landed at Bordeaux, he found the United States and France beginning to involve themselves in diplomatic ties and heading toward a military alliance. As previously indicated, the United States was in desperate need of recognition of a world power and, with its success on the battlefield, diplomatic recognition had been earned. The United States suddenly became a much more formidable enemy to the British nation and the chances of its obtaining independence were tremendously enhanced.

Arriving in Paris, John Adams immersed himself in the cultural activities of France and became involved in the upper echelon of society. He continued to develop his skills in the French language and attended many cultural events. These cultural events presented a challenge for him to understand and to interpret them within the French context. He also began philosophical discussions with the French and became acquainted with the famous Voltaire with whom he engaged in many conversations. Although Voltaire was aging, John Adams found him to be alert and mentally stimulating.

In addition to engaging the French intellectuals in classical and philosophical debates, Adams was often involved with social exchanges with the upper echelon in French

society. He was particularly impressed with the French women who often displayed their independence by expressing their opinions freely on all types of subjects. He compared them to English ladies who were more subdued and less likely to express themselves in discourse. The wealth of the French nation surprised and interested John Adams. He had never seen more finery and wealth as was displayed by the upper class of French society.

On May 8, 1778, the Diplomatic Commission consisting of Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams performed its only joint action. John Adams had recently arrived in Paris and it was the day that he was scheduled to make a diplomatic presentation to King Louis XVI which would be of extreme importance in further cementing the diplomatic alliance between France and the United States. Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee accompanied him on this mission, but Adams made the diplomatic presentation. The Commission met the King in his bedroom where he was being dressed and Adams was impressed with the unusual finery and pomp of the event. Adams left the palace surroundings with the feeling that the situation could be compared to Indian leaders addressing the Congress and the curiosity of the seated representatives whom they were addressing. Adams felt that he could identify with the Indians in this respect and felt disarmed by the splendor of the palace and the court. John Adams presented well to the King and the King was impressed with his command of the French language. This encounter further assisted Adams in his diplomatic efforts to keep the nation out of war with France upon assuming the Presidency.²³

Adams described the love and respect which the French people held for Benjamin Franklin. Everyone he met wanted to be identified with this diplomat. Displays available on the streets of Paris depicted Franklin's figure and both men and women wore tributes

to him on their clothing. Although Franklin was aging, the tremendous respect for him and his abilities permeated throughout the French society. The members of the French scientific community were impressed with his experiments and the inventions which he had effectively marketed throughout the English colonies and the developed world.

The composition of the diplomatic commission was also a center of discussion for John Adams. The dissention among the three commissioners was of great concern to Adams. His overall thought was that three commissioners were not necessary and was actually a waste of needed funds which could be utilized by the young republic in its conflict with England. Adams' assessment of Franklin was that, although being a talented individual, he wasted his talent somewhat by not fully involving himself in learning the French language and mastering the customs of the host nation. Franklin's financial responsibility also raised some concern in Adams' mind and he wondered about accountability. Though aging, Dr. Franklin continued to pursue a luxurious lifestyle and spend freely on social activities. John Adams and Benjamin Franklin worked together well for a commission which was too large by Adams' assessment. They had previously worked together on the British overture to peace in New York and were acquainted with each other through their work in the Continental Congress.

Arthur Lee was the other commissioner and was constantly concerned about spies and participated little in the acts of the commission. Adams indicated that almost every person the commission contacted Lee considered a spy. Lee rarely became involved in French cultural events and did not have a working knowledge of the French language. He was not liked by the French and the French government had little respect for his abilities. Lee also disliked having to function in Franklin's shadow and wanted the

respect Franklin enjoyed. John Adams questioned Lee's abilities and his contribution to the diplomatic effort, but as previously indicated he saw no need for the three person commission and made his feelings known to the appropriate congressional committee.

By the time Adams arrived in France, the commission had very little to do due to the fact that most of the heavy diplomatic work had been done in February of 1778. The primary focus of Adams was to involve himself in understanding the French people and cultivating the type of diplomatic climate which would be beneficial to the United States. He also became active in documenting expenditures to the congressional committee and seeing that the other two commissioners complied. Although there was resistance, Adams greatly improved expenditure documentation.²⁴

In order to better understand the workings of the three-man commission, it is essential that Adams' views on Franklin and Lee be examined. The commission did very little work as a unit and tended to splinter along individual interests. John Adams acknowledged the fact that Dr. Franklin was outstanding with the French court and that he initially obtained the much needed alliance with France that the United States had to have. Adams also pointed out Franklin's limitations as illustrated in the following quote:

On D. F. the Eyes of all Europe are fixed, as the most important Character, in American Affairs in Europe. Neither L. nor myself, are looked upon of much Consequence. The Attention of the Court seems most to F. and no wonder. His long and great Rep[utation] to which L's and mine are in their infancy, are enough to Account for this. His Age, and real Character render it impossible for him to search every Thing to the Bottom...²⁵

John Adams displayed distrust of Arthur Lee by indicating that Lee was not trustworthy and often kept council with individuals who did not have the best interests of the United States at heart. He believed Lee to be conniving and by his actions made the work of the

United States Diplomatic Commission more difficult.²⁶

As John Adams' tenure increased in the diplomatic corps, he became lonely and missed being with his wife and family. It was very difficult to receive news of the war and it often took more than six months for information to come from Philadelphia to Paris. After the Battle of Saratoga, the British moved their focus of the war from the north to the south hoping that their fortunes might change with Tory sympathizers. The change in strategy proved to be unsuccessful and the British fortunes continued to decline. Adams and the other commissioners received virtually no information on the war, but even more troubling they received no instructions from Congress.

As previously indicated, there was a great deal of friction within the commission itself, and as time passed and no instructions coming from Congress, animosity developed between Lee and Franklin. Adams saw himself as being friends with both and the mediator between the two factions of the commission. He lamented the fact that his position had been relegated to not much more than a clerk with no specific instructions as to how to proceed to best assist the United States. From the beginning of Adams' tenure, he believed that he was always second place to Franklin and disliked this. He stated that he worked hard, but felt that he had accomplished very little in service to his country.²⁷

In 1776, Adams had been a supporter of the United States developing only a commercial treaty with France, instead of a binding military alliance. After he joined the diplomatic commission in Paris and became acquainted with the French people, he changed his mind and realized that in order for the United States to be successful in its war for independence, sea power could be the deciding factor. With this change of thought, he believed that the United States could win against the British on land if French

sea power could be brought to bear against the British Navy. Adams completely reversed his thinking and developed a joint letter with Dr. Franklin and Arthur Lee which was delivered to Vergennes in January, 1779. Adams had taken a strong approach in the letter asking for French assistance against the British Navy in coordination with the efforts of the United States. The letter was toned down by Franklin and the final draft had little resemblance to the thoughts Adams had originally expressed. Vergennes did not respond to the diplomatic correspondence and ignored the letter completely. The Americans believed that the French government had ideas of invading the British Isles and were not interested in using their navy in assisting the United States in the manner requested.²⁸

In 1778, September 14, a surprising occurrence happened when the United States Congress voted to dispense with the three-man diplomatic commission to France. Arthur Lee was to go to Madrid and Dr. Franklin was named minister plenipotentiary to France. The surprising element of the Congressional decision was that Adams was given no instructions as to his status and was left without any diplomatic post. This situation was very depressing to Adams and further added to his desire to return home as soon as possible. The Congressional change did not reach Paris until February 12, 1779 and the change was to occur immediately.

Adams had recommended that the commission be reduced to one minister who could provide consolidated contacts with the French government and present the United States' case to the French government. Although Adams' recommendation had been followed, he was bitter about the fact that he had been given no instructions with the exception that something might be forthcoming, but no hint as to what that might be. Adams reflected

his sentiments concerning the lack of instructions in his diary.

There is no such Thing as human Wisdom. All is the Providence of God. Perhaps few Men have guessed more exactly than I have been allowed to do, upon several Occasions, but at this Time which is the first I declare of my whole Life I am wholly at a Loss to foresee Consequences.²⁹

On March 3, 1779, Adams returned to Versailles for his departure discussions with French Government officials including King Louis XVI. By this time, Adams had become fluent in the French language and could conduct conversations without difficulty. He communicated with the French Ministry concerning the conduct of the war and as to whether England might be able to make alliances with northern countries, particularly Prussia. During these conversations Adams obtained information which would be beneficial to congressional foreign committees in conducting the United States war for independence and the consideration of new alliances. Adams was very pleased that the King and Ministry congratulated him for his contribution to the Franco-American Alliance and acknowledged their full trust in his abilities.

Adams loved the people of France and had fully involved himself in the social and cultural activities of the nation. He was fluent in French and could communicate his ideas effectively in regular conversation. In addition, he had exchanged ideas with the French thinkers of the day and was acquainted with the prevailing philosophy of the French people. He missed his family and the home environment and found himself leaving the people he loved without any assignment and he believed he would probably never return to the French nation.

On March 8, 1779, John Adams and his son, Quincy, left Paris to board a ship that was scheduled to sail to the United States. John Adams had served on the diplomatic

commission for more than one year and was ready to go home and attend to his personal affairs. His personal fortune had declined and he wanted to be with his family. He was to encounter much more difficulty and would not be returning in the near future.

Adams remained on board ship with no movement for approximately three months and, during that time, became acquainted with Captain John Paul Jones, the most successful commander in the United States Navy. Jones had disrupted shipping by the British government and had defeated several British Navy war ships. The delay in Adams' sailing came from the fact that a French officer was to board ship heading to the United States to assist in training, but he, too, had been delayed. Adams was skeptical of Captain Jones and his motives. He noted that eccentricities and irregularities were present in Jones' character and that he was excessively ambitious. He further pointed to the fact that Jones and his crew wore different uniforms than those prescribed by Congress and that Jones had his own decorations on his uniform. In general, Adams distrusted Captain Jones and believed that he and Franklin may have contributed to the delay in his departure from Europe.³⁰

On June 17, 1779, Adams finally departed from France on his way back to the United States. He and his son had been delayed for three months in leaving Europe and Adams wanted to get back to his family as soon as possible. On August 2, 1779, Adams arrived in the United States and hoped he would have time to spend with his wife and family. Shortly after returning he was appointed to draft the Massachusetts Constitution and his philosophies of government and ideas on liberty dominated that document.

During the month of October, Adams received another Congressional appointment which would require him to return to France. The appointment was as Minister

Plenipotentiary and his assignment was to explore peace with Great Britain and to attempt to develop a treaty of commerce and a cessation of hostilities with the British government. Adams had been at home for three months and with his acceptance of the assignment sailed for France November 13, 1779. Adams was nominated by Henry Laurens and accepted the appointment officially November 4, 1779.³¹

During the voyage to France, British ships were encountered and several skirmishes occurred. Three days from port the ship began to take on water and the service of every man on board was required to keep the ship afloat. It was decided by the commanding officer that the ship should sail directly to Spain and hope to make port before the ship sank. When the ship made port Adams found himself with two options to complete his trip to France. He could wait for several months in Spain to board another vessel or he and his entourage could cross the Pyrenees in difficult winter conditions. He decided to cross the Pyrenees into France. The trip was treacherous, but Adams was successful in entering France.

During Adams' stay in Spain he had an opportunity to talk with John Jay, the United States commissioner to the Spanish government. Although Spain had entered the war as an ally of France, she refused to recognize the United States and did not interfere with the British effort against the rebelling colonies. Adams did exchange diplomatic information with Jay and they discussed how Spain might be involved in the struggle for independence by the United States.

As Adams traveled through Spain, his impression was that the people were poor and had a very low standard of living. He observed that no one was rich except the Catholic church and no one was fat except the clergy. Most places he stayed were flea-infested

and were dirty and filled with smoke.³²

Upon arriving in Paris, Adams was requested by French Minister Vergennes to keep his commission secret and not to advise the court in London that he had authority to begin preliminary negotiations for a peace and commercial treaty with Great Britain. Adams strongly believed that sea power would be the deciding factor in the United State's fight for independence. When he arrived at the French Court he was promised that the French would increase their naval commitment immediately and would place four thousand more troops in the field against the British in North America. The promise never materialized and Adams began to believe that France would do enough to keep the United States from being conquered, but never wanted the United States to be a world power.³³

In February, 1780, Vergennes put his feelings concerning the secrecy of Adams' mission in writing to Adams. Adams responded to his letter in July of 1780 and set forth several reasons why his mission should be discussed among the belligerent parties. The first, and primary reason, was the fact that the London Court should know exactly what Adams' plans were concerning peace and commerce and should know that they could begin negotiations with him. In addition, the British government was concerned about the role of Spain and France in the war and whether any deals had been made concerning most favored nation status by the United States. Great Britain was the most dominant economic power as well as the leading military power and would have economic interests if the United States achieved independence. Since Adams was concerned that Vergennes and the French government wanted to pre-empt and redefine the original Congressional instructions, he wanted to reject the French intervention in the mission.

Adams also pointed out to Minister Vergennes that the British Parliament would soon be coming into session and that they ought to know that the United States government was interested in peace on favorable terms and that they should know that a Peace Commissioner had been authorized by Congress with whom they could negotiate. The war had gone badly for the United States and Adams felt strongly that the country should avail itself of all peace opportunities and should have a negotiator with a specific assignment in the diplomatic realm.³⁴

During the spring of 1780 Adams spent much time continuing to explore the arts and gardens of France and remaining in contact with the French people. He wrote regular letters to Congress during the spring and had addressed ninety-five letters to that legislative body outlining his feelings about the war and how the war should be conducted. Vergennes had grown to dislike Adams' actions and wanted him recalled and removed from the diplomatic corps as soon as possible. In July of 1780, Vergennes indicated to Adams that any further correspondence with the French should be limited to United States interests only and should refrain from any statement of opinion as to the conduct of war or the negotiation of peace. The fact that the United States had re-valued the dollar and that Adams had supported the re-valuation, angered Vergennes who felt that French merchants should be given preferential treatment. Vergennes also addressed his concerns to Benjamin Franklin and Franklin relayed the French concerns to Congress with a letter supporting the French position. Subsequently, Adams would be removed and the Peace Commission would be reformulated.³⁵

John Adams made another surprising diplomatic move July 2, 1780 when he decided to go to Holland and attempt to represent United States interests in that country. He had

no assignment from the United States Congress, but had grown tired of being in France and making no diplomatic progress as far as assisting his country. Adams' statement of his intent was to attempt to secure financial assistance from the Netherlands for the financially drained United States economy. He was looking specifically for loans from the Netherlands and to attempt to get the nation to drop their arms neutrality. Holland had come close to war with Great Britain and Adams hoped that he could gain assistance for the United States.

Although Adams had conflict with Minister Vergennes concerning Adams' extreme patriotism and the fact that he wanted more direct French assistance, the controversy had little to do with his attempts to gain assistance for his country in Holland. He also had disagreements with Vergennes concerning re-valuation of the United States dollar and how it affected French trade with the United States. These disagreements seem not to have contributed to Adams' desire to go to Holland.³⁶

Adams went to Holland with no diplomatic credentials and functioned only as a private citizen with a history in the diplomatic field. Upon his arrival in Amsterdam, Adams engaged the public socially and culturally as he had done in France. He immediately began to involve himself in learning the language of the country and becoming involved in their customs and cultural affairs. He constantly reminded the Dutch people of their common heritage with the United States and that their country had originally settled New Amsterdam, which tied the Dutch people to the people of the young republic.

Adams had to learn a method of diplomacy in Holland which frustrated him and was to lead to a diplomatic move that would be one of the biggest gambles he had taken. His

first contact with The Hague, capitol seat of the Netherlands, helped him realize that the power structure in Holland was different than most situations he had previously encountered. He found that there was very little authority and centralized government vested in The Hague, but that the city-state government structure existed throughout the nation. The balance of power was centralized in Amsterdam, but other municipalities could easily derail efforts he might make in the diplomatic arena. Adams' insight into the structure of the Dutch government would assist him greatly in conducting foreign policy during his presidential administration and in keeping the United States on the course he had chosen. He had an uncanny ability to analyze situations and to determine the action he wanted to take. He was able to carry his message to the populace and to achieve the diplomatic goals he had established.

On September 16, 1780, Congress gave Adams the authority to serve in Holland until Henry Laurens could assume official diplomatic duties in that country. The Congressional appointment greatly enhanced the chances that Adams could conduct diplomatic relations with the Dutch Republic. Henry Laurens was captured by the British Navy en route to Holland and was unable to dispose of diplomatic papers before being taken prisoner. Laurens was imprisoned in the Tower of London and never assumed his diplomatic post in Holland.

With Laurens captured in Great Britain, the sole responsibility for obtaining loans and alliances with Holland rested with John Adams. Adams began by assuring Dutch officials that the United States would accept nothing short of complete independence from Great Britain and that the young republic would continue to wage war until independence was obtained. Britain was beginning to harass Dutch shipping and it was

quite probable that a belligerent state would exist between the two nations.

During the winter of 1780, Adams was given the authority he sought when Congress appointed him plenipotentiary minister to Holland. His hoped that this appointment would enhance his credibility and would assist him further in obtaining suitable negotiations with the Dutch government. The British Ambassador to Holland was threatening war and the Dutch people were very concerned the country would be dragged into the war against Great Britain. The Dutch people were divided concerning war with Great Britain and there was much uncertainty as to what direction their government would take.

On April 19, 1781 Adams took his biggest diplomatic gamble by addressing the diplomatic corps and releasing his address to the Dutch papers and to others who might be of assistance in gaining help for the United States. Before releasing his address to the Dutch, he had consulted the French ambassador who advised him against taking this diplomatic gamble. He wanted Minister Vergennes to clear this diplomatic effort, but Adams knew Vergennes would never approve. He released the address in English, French, Spanish, and Dutch. He outlined the United States position and hoped that this effort would gain the United States an alliance with Holland. The address was called Memorial and was submitted to all the “Mightinesses” in the Dutch structure of government. This move further angered Vergennes, who wanted Adams removed from his diplomatic position.

On June 15, 1781 Congress decided to change the peace commissioner role and to establish a five-man commission which would be representative of all the sections within the borders of the United States. John Adams was appointed the commissioner from

New England and accepted the Congressional appointment. The commissioners were charged with the responsibility of working with the French government to attempt to find methods of negotiating peace with Great Britain. The United States could not negotiate with Great Britain for terms unless the French approved. The peace commission would not perform any duties until the British surrender at Yorktown and until John Jay notified Adams that the British had made peace overtures and needed him to come to Paris.³⁷

In July, 1781, there would be one futile attempt to bring peace between the warring nations with Russia and Austria acting as mediators. Adams was summoned to Paris by French Minister Vergennes and informed that peace overtures had been made. During the negotiations, Russia and Austria attempted to implement a cessation of all hostilities and to have all fighting stopped with troops maintaining their current places. There was no mention of United States independence or a change in Great Britain's role on the North American Continent. Adams totally rejected the proposal and submitted his report to the President of Congress outlining his reasons for rejection. He also communicated his reasons for rejection to Minister Vergennes at Versailles. There would be no other attempt to end hostilities until negotiations began in Paris after the Battle of Yorktown.³⁸

During the summer and early fall of 1781, Adams was hampered in his work by a malady which was called the "nervous fever". This illness kept him from his work over six weeks and was finally corrected by the utilization of quinine. When Adams began to post letters again in October of 1781, he was melancholy about his health and the diplomatic conditions surrounding him. He indicated that thoughts had often crossed his mind about withdrawing from the diplomatic corps and returning to his home and family. In addition, he felt betrayed by Congress' rearrangement of the peace commission which

prevented him from acting as the sole negotiator with Great Britain.³⁹

On Friday, October 19, 1781, in Yorktown, Virginia, General Charles Cornwallis surrendered to the United States. Cornwallis' army was bottled up by the Americans in front and by the French Navy in the James River at their backs. There was nowhere for the British to retreat and they could not advance. Adams had won the argument that he had submitted for years that sea power would make the difference for the United States in their war for independence. His theory was well tested and brought him much acclaim, particularly, in the Dutch Republic. The Dutch had long been involved in mercantile commerce and were keenly interested in the developing United States and how that nation would emerge as a trading partner. Adams' fortune changed immediately in Holland because the merchants did not want to be caught on the losing side. The sea power argument would continue to dominate Adams' thinking and he believed strongly that sea power would be the best defense for the United States. During his administration, he continued to build United States naval forces and to insure the country's defense by sea.

Early in 1782, Adams continued his diplomatic gamble in his "Memorial" address to the Dutch government by going directly to the citizenry by petition requesting that they press their governments to grant immediate recognition to the United States. As opposed to an attempt one year earlier, Adams found a much more receptive audience with opinions changed by the recent events in North America. The Dutch leaders did not want to be outside a trend which was becoming prominent in Europe. On March 28, 1782, the Providence of Holland gave official recognition to the United States acknowledging the nation's independence from Great Britain. The Netherlands' governments were based on

a city/state construct and when Holland recognized the independence of the United States the other cities followed.

On April 19, a year after Adams published his “Memorial“, he was given the title of Ambassador to the High Mightinesses for the United States of America. On April 22, 1782, a formal recognition ceremony was held and Adams received much praise and acclaim from the attending ministers, particularly the ministers of Spain and Holland. Adams had held steadfastly to his ideals and was able to obtain recognition from the Dutch leaders and praise and acclaim from the Spanish government.⁴⁰

As a result of diplomatic recognition, Holland loaned the United States two million dollars at five per cent interest. Not only was the loan very badly needed by the new Republic, but the fact that Holland loaned money meant that the United States could enter the available credit markets of Europe and procure more loans which would be required if the nation were to survive. The United States and Holland signed a commercial treaty in 1782 assuring free flowing commerce between the two nations. Dutch recognition provided the impetus for peace negotiations to begin among the warring nations.

On March 20, 1782, the British government made substantial changes effecting the upcoming negotiations with the United States and its allies. Lord North, the Prime Minister of Great Britain during the war, resigned indicating that the war was lost. He did not believe that he could withstand a vote of confidence by the British Parliament. Lord Rockingham, who had been lenient toward the thirteen colonies as a Member of Parliament, became Prime Minister. He had moderated the Stamp Act, which the colonists had considered an oppressive and unfair tax, and was ready to negotiate terms with the new United States.⁴¹

Since 1780 the British government had experienced isolation and internal difficulties. The struggle in the United States was not going well. Britain had declared war on Holland and Russia and found itself in a situation where they were expending the lives of many young men and the exchequary was spending national funds at a tremendous rate. Britain was not beginning the negotiations from the point of strength and was willing to end the military conflicts as quickly as possible. With Lord North's replacement, Prime Minister Rockingham, the stage had been set for the United States to obtain its independence from the British Empire.⁴²

In late September, 1782, John Jay, one of the peace commissioners, contacted John Adams indicating that the United States planned to be in contact with Great Britain for the purpose of beginning initial negotiations for a peace treaty. He encouraged Adams to come to Paris as soon as possible so that he could participate in the initial phase of the negotiating process. Adams was in no hurry to go to Paris, but during the third week in October he left Amsterdam to meet with Jay in Paris. Adams did not like the fact that Congress had ordered the commissioners to conduct no negotiations that would leave France out of the negotiating loop. France was to be involved in all the peace process and no peace terms could be finalized without French consent. Adams indicated that he would rather resign his commission than to participate in a situation where France could veto a final peace treaty. Fortunately, Jay and Adams were in agreement concerning the fact that it would be in the best interest of the United States to obtain the best peace arrangement with Great Britain with or without French involvement.⁴³

As the treaty negotiations developed, the United States did violate the alliance with France and negotiate a treaty with Great Britain to obtain their independence. Congress

had instructed the United States Commissioners not to leave France out of negotiations and not to make an individual peace with Great Britain. Many officials of the United States believed that the war with Great Britain would never end unless a separate peace was formulated, but Adams and Jay believed that no European power should be trusted and that the young nation should not become entangled in the affairs of the European Continent. Adams' belief that no European power should be trusted carried over to his administration and guided his foreign policy.⁴⁴

When negotiations initially began, Benjamin Franklin was ill and could not participate in the negotiation process. Henry Laurens was imprisoned in London and the negotiations for peace rested on the shoulders of John Jay and John Adams. The chief negotiator for the British government was Richard Oswald assisted by Henry Strachey. Adams knew Henry Strachey from the British attempt at peace in the conference held in Staten Island, New York at the start of the United States war for independence. Franklin recovered from his illness and joined Jay and Adams. He also was familiar with the British assistant negotiator, Henry Strachey.

The negotiating commissioners for the United States did agree that France could not be given veto over terms established between Great Britain and the United States. Jay and Adams had previously agreed and Franklin consented to go along with this process. Franklin had a strong relationship with Minister Vergennes of France and he believed he could smooth the relationship between the United States and France.

The primary points to be considered during the negotiation process would be the independence of the United States, the national boundaries of the United States, the right of navigation on the Mississippi River, the treatment of Tories and Loyalists, and fishing

rights off the coast of Newfoundland. The British would eventually give the United States almost everything it wanted, including the Appalachian mountain range and territory from the Canadian border south to Florida. The United States would also have free navigation on the Mississippi River, however, there would be a tremendous amount of difficulty enforcing British compliance with the terms of the treaty. This was to influence United States foreign policy for several decades.⁴⁵

Benjamin Franklin made a brilliant diplomatic move with the French and kept the United States in a situation whereby good relations could continue with its primary ally. Although the original Treaty of Alliance stated that neither nation would make peace without consent of the other, Franklin pointed out to Minister Vergennes that the British thought they had divided the United States from its ally and that with this line of thinking the two allies had out smarted the British. Adams was to later state that, in his opinion, Vergennes and Franklin had conspired to involve France in the negotiating process and that the French were complicit in the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Not only did Franklin smooth the relationship with Minister Vergennes, but, he acquired a loan from the French government for the United States.

Adams and Franklin had experienced turmoil throughout their working relationship in the diplomatic arena and it is interesting to observe Franklin's thoughts on Adams. Franklin indicated that Adams was a patriot and represented his country well in the diplomatic arena. He believed Adams to be honest and sincere in his work, but "sometimes in some things, absolutely out of his senses."⁴⁶

On September 3, 1783, the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended hostilities between the two nations. The United States had

successfully obtained their independence and had achieved a miraculous treaty of peace. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay were the signers of the treaty for the United States. John Adams later stated that John Jay was the leading negotiator in obtaining the terms the United States was able to obtain, but Adams played a significant role. His knowledge of the diplomatic processes and his understanding of the French government would later influence his decision to make every effort to keep the French and United States at peace.

Shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Adams began to receive overtures from Congress concerning a probable appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain. He discussed the probable appointment with his wife and she strongly encouraged him not to accept the appointment, but to come home. When he was tapped for the diplomatic appointment, he readily accepted and his wife agreed to sail to Europe. His wife, Abigail, had never been more than fifty miles away from home.

Before Adams left France going to England, he had an exit meeting with Minister Vergennes. Vergennes continued to be very cordial and congratulated Adams on being the first appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James in England. This compliment deeply moved Adams and was very much appreciated.⁴⁷

On May 26, 1785, John Adams arrived in London and immediately contacted British Foreign Secretary, Carmarthen and presented his credentials to the British Government. The credentials were accepted and Adams initiated the first diplomatic connection between the newly formed United States and Great Britain. Adams was soon to purchase and open the first United States legation. His future contacts with Carmarthen would be difficult and would be disappointing to the United States Ambassador.

On June 1, 1785, John Adams met King George III of Great Britain against whom he had led the revolt in the United States. The King accepted him well and also accepted the fact that the United States was now a free independent country. The King did raise a question concerning Adams' ties to France and his previous work with that nation, but Adams stated that he had no tie to any country other than the United States.⁴⁸

Adams had much difficulty in England with the British Government and the British press. He was portrayed as a traitor and other disparaging remarks which caused him a great deal of emotional distress. In addition, Congress provided very little money to carry out his Ambassadorial duties. The Loyalists living in England disliked the American patriots and tried to do everything they could to dissuade the British Government from adhering to the terms of the treaty. The British also believed that the United States would soon return to the British Empire and could not stand alone as a nation. The United States was in economic shambles and was being threatened by the Barbary pirates who interfered with United States commerce on the high seas. Both Britain and France had paid bribes to protect their shipping and the United States had no available funding to pay to stop the seizure of ships and the impressments of seamen.

While Adams was in England, Thomas Jefferson had replaced Franklin in Paris, making Adams the senior diplomat of the United States. Adams and Jefferson became very close friends during their diplomatic service and Jefferson often provided support to Adams during his difficult situation in England. British Foreign Secretary, Carmarthen, had refused to withdraw troops from the Northwest Territory which the Treaty of Paris stated should occur. Adams and Jefferson discussed the possibility of recommending war against Great Britain, but both knew the United States could not afford war at this point

in its history.⁴⁹

The primary concerns were that the British had not withdrawn and the United States had made no effort to satisfy the debts owed to the Tories and Loyalists. Carmarthen believed that the United States had no government and no British ambassador had been appointed to the United States. Shays' Rebellion further strengthened the British due to the fact that the government was powerless to control it. The Rebellion occurred in Massachusetts in 1787 and was a result of the worthless currency of the United States. Another deterrent, with which Adams had to deal, was the fact that the states began to abrogate portions of the treaty which did not meet their satisfaction. Adams' home state of Massachusetts passed legislation that they would not be responsible for reparations required by the treaty.⁵⁰

Adams had begun to believe that it was time for him to go home and engage himself in other aspects of the debate concerning the new nation. He felt that he had accomplished nothing, but he was operating under severe circumstances with no real national government with the authority to enforce international treaties. The debate over the creation of a United States Constitution was strong and Adams wanted to be a part of it.

On February 20, 1788, Adams had his last meeting with King George III. The meeting was cordial and the King thanked Adams for his work in Great Britain. Although nothing was accomplished, Adams had opened diplomatic relations with the former mother country and had begun a relationship which would lead eventually to an unusual friendship with economic and military ties.

On June 17, 1788, Adams returned to Boston. He was given a hero's welcome by the

populace and was recognized for the tremendous work he had performed for the Republic. In 1788, the United States held its first presidential election. The individual state legislative bodies appointed representatives to cast votes in the elections determining the president. Adams was interested in being Vice President, but he was also discussed as a candidate for a judiciary role as Chief Justice. Alexander Hamilton was concerned that Adams might become president and began to talk with the electors concerning the need to elect George Washington. Washington did win the Presidential election, but Adam took a sizable amount of the vote. John Adams' election as Vice President was a result of his long career as revolutionary leader, a diplomat to foreign countries and now as a national official.

In 1777, John Adams was appointed by Congress to serve in France as part of the diplomatic corps. Adams had no diplomatic experience and had never been outside his state. While in France he became fluent in the language and engaged himself in the cultural and social affairs of that nation. He contributed to the alliance between France and the United States with a strong belief that sea power would eventually determine the outcome of the war. When the final verdict was reached, his sea power philosophy prevailed.

Adams also served in Holland where he outlined the United States position and took his case directly to the citizens of that nation. He was able to obtain diplomatic recognition from The Hague and opened a line of credit which the United States desperately needed. He returned several times to Holland to obtain more needed capital for his country.

During his service in Great Britain, he established and opened the United States

legation. Although his work was difficult, he did gain the respect of the ruling monarch of Great Britain. His work was hampered by the fact that the United States was functioning under the Articles of Confederation and there was no centralized government. Adams spent more than ten years in the diplomatic service of his country and accomplished a great deal under very adverse circumstances.

From 1777 to 1789, John Adams served as a diplomat to France and Holland and worked on the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris. He also served as an ambassador and opened the United States legation in Holland. His extensive experience as a diplomat in Europe provided him with an understanding of European diplomacy which enabled him to avoid war with France during his Presidency.

Chapter Three

From Vice President to Mr. President

In 1789 George Washington became President of the United States and John Adams assumed his duties as Vice President. The United States found itself with a new government in a world which was rapidly changing due to the French Revolution. Washington served as President for two terms and began to define the role of government, but experienced difficulty in carrying out foreign policy of the country.

In 1789, the United States had established a new government composed of three distinct branches, Legislative, Judicial, and Executive. These branches were to provide checks and balances and to prevent the abuse of power by any branch within the Federal system. When George Washington took office, Congress created the following departments within the Presidential Cabinet: Department of State, Department of War, Department of Treasury, Attorney General, and Postmaster General. Appointments to these Departments were to be made by the President with the United States Senate providing advice and consent.

When Adams first came to the Senate in 1789, the only Constitutional authority the Vice President had was to preside over the Senate and to break a Senatorial tie if necessary. It was Adams' custom to inject himself into a situation and to involve himself in the dialogue concerning solutions to specific problems. Not long after he came to the Senate, a debate began concerning the title for the newly elected President. Some wanted to address the President as His Excellency, His Majesty, and some Mr. President. Adams injected himself into the debate and lost a great deal of credibility by insisting that the

President be called His Majesty and be granted a specific title. Accusations began to arise that Adams was in favor of a monarchical type of government and many agreed that Benjamin Franklin was right in his earlier assessment of Adams' emotional instability.

Severe consequences occurred as a result of Adams' behavior in the Senate, the most significant of which was his alienating himself from President Washington and never becoming a member of his close inner circle. Many individuals within the government believed Adams was unstable and that he was dangerous to the young Republic.

Although Adams had accomplished a great deal in his public life, he did severe damage by enlarging his Constitutional role in the Senate and by championing a cause that many saw as having little benefit.⁵¹

John Adams did not believe in popular sovereignty and did not believe that all individuals were created equal. He stated on many occasions that no policy of government could rid the country of unequal individuals and he feared the populist movements and the effect they could have on nations. This view was manifested in the so-called Boston Massacre which contributed to the eventual colonial revolt against the mother country. Adams, along with many others, believed that there was a good possibility that the United States would eventually turn to a monarch and that would be the type of government accepted by the people. His essential premise was that the masses would cause a Constitutional and governmental change. This theory guided his Presidency and helped to explain why the majority rush to war against France was avoided by his administration.⁵²

April 30, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated President of the United States. The new administration began with the United States adopting the *Bill of Rights*. The *Bill*

of Rights specifically outlined liberties of United States citizens against which the Federal Government could not diminish. The *Bill of Rights* was required by several states before they would ratify the Constitution. The French Revolution began with the storming of the Bastille which complicated foreign affairs for the young nation. Relations were deteriorating between the United States and France. Vice President Adams supported the French Revolution, but he feared what might be rebuilt after the masses had torn the present social structure apart. He wondered where all the destruction might stop.⁵³

During Washington's terms as President, the Senate engaged in a great deal of legislative activity and the ratification of two important treaties which were to have a tremendous effect on the United States. United States shipping was being constantly harassed on the high seas by Great Britain and France. Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, affirmed the United States position of neutrality in the European conflict between the primary nations of Great Britain and France, but both nations continued to interfere with United States shipping and Great Britain was removing Americans from ships claiming that they were British citizens. A nonintercourse resolution had been introduced in Congress to cease all trade with Great Britain, which would hurt the United States economy and would probably lead to war between the two nations. John Adams cast the deciding vote in the Senate to break a tie and voted against the bill. Vice President Adams was to cast twenty-one tie-breaking votes in the United States Senate. He indicated that he had had enough war and did not want to see the young Republic involved in this type of conflict.

John Jay was dispatched to London in June of 1794 to attempt to solve the problem with Great Britain. In November of 1794, he obtained a treaty with no conciliation to the

United States with the exception of a vague promise to remove British forces from occupied territory which was to have been relinquished by the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. No mention was made of United States neutrality which was to have been a cornerstone of the negotiating process. When the framework of this treaty reached the United States in 1795, President Washington consulted with Vice President Adams concerning the ratification of the treaty and indicated the treaty had Presidential support. The treaty was ratified by the Senate, but caused a great deal of dissension among the populace of the country. Much of Jay's work was unraveled by the fact that he had negotiated a very poor treaty which, according to public opinion, did nothing to benefit the United States.⁵⁴

Throughout the Washington administration divisions occurred between the Jeffersonians and the Hamiltonians which affected American foreign policy and eventually created a two-party system in the country. The Hamiltonians believed in a strong central government and had advocated a president appointed for life. They also recommended that the United States develop a manufacturing economy and that they model themselves after the British. The Jeffersonians believed in rule by the populace with a loosely structured government, had no respect for the British style of government, and supported an agrarian economy. These factions fought bitterly over the direction of the young Republic and influenced presidential politics for several years.

Adams was a staunch revolutionist and desired to do whatever was necessary to preserve the integrity of the country. He believed that the American Revolution was fought for the benefit of all mankind, including the people on the European Continent. Although he had misgivings about the populace being in power, he believed that the

United States could establish a constitution which would protect against mob rule.⁵⁵

The factions within the government continued to split so severely that the Washington Cabinet was destined to lose one of its most prestigious members. Effective December 31, 1794, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson submitted his resignation as Secretary of State to President Washington. Although Jefferson and Adams had divergent political opinions, they had been close friends and Adams lamented the loss of the able statesman Jefferson. They had worked together on many projects and Adams recognized the contributions Jefferson had made in the diplomatic arena for his country.

The 1796 Presidential campaign was far different than the previous campaign in 1792 in which there was no question that Washington would win re-election and there was minor dissent from the populace. Washington refused to run for a third term. In the 1796 campaign, John Adams was depicted as desiring to establish royal succession to the presidency and discussion centered on John Quincy Adams becoming his successor. He was also portrayed as a monarchist and one who would eventually destroy the Constitution. On the other side of the campaign, Jefferson was seen by some as one who would ruin the country by his agrarian approach and his tilt toward the common people. In a very close election, Adams defeated Jefferson in the electoral vote seventy-one to sixty-eight.⁵⁶

On Saturday, March 4, 1797, John Adams was inaugurated President of the United States. The nation had changed significantly since its inception and now had a total of sixteen states with an overall increase in population. The nation was involved in quasi-war with France; and Great Britain continued its harassment of shipping and impressment of American personnel on the high seas. Even before the inaugural, Vice President

Thomas Jefferson had begun to criticize his old friend Adams and this criticism would alienate Jefferson from Adams as Adams was alienated from Washington in his administration. Washington had warned against partisanship and foreign entanglements in his farewell address, but the country began to divide into partisan factions.

The United States had just begun its experiment in the transition of power between two chief executives. There was no historic tradition to rely upon and Adams chose to ask the Washington Cabinet to remain during his Administration. The Cabinet was composed of all Federalists who had been supportive of the Hamiltonian faction. The Cabinet consisted of Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State; Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Secretary of Treasury; James McHenry, Jr., Secretary of War; Charles Lee, Attorney General. The entire cabinet supported Hamilton's belief that the United States should have a strong standing army and that trade would be the lifeline of the nation. The Cabinet was closer to the British form of government and economy and opposed to the French type.

In his inaugural address, Adams attempted to show the country that he was fully in support of the United States Constitution and that he would utilize every means to defend it. He devoted time to support the United States Constitution to attempt to minimize criticism leveled at him by the Federalists who were his own party. He re-iterated Washington's position that the United States policy would be to remain neutral in the European conflict and to seek no foreign entanglements that would require treaties with foreign countries.

He directed his attention to France and stated that the United States wanted mutual respect and friendship with that nation. He pointed to the time he spent in France and his attachment to the French nation. In President Adams' inaugural address he displayed his

admiration for the French people and his desire to keep the United States out of war with France.

...if a personal esteem for the French nation, formed in a residence of seven years chiefly among them, and a sincere desire to preserve the friendship which has been so much for the honor and interest of both nations;⁵⁷

The Adams Administration was quickly faced with a new problem concerning the rejection of Charles Pinckney, Washington's envoy to the French Directory. When this information was received, an immediate clamor for retribution against the French began to arise within the nation. The most disturbing aspect of the crisis stemmed from the fact that France declared that it would continue to harass American vessels on the high seas and that any American aboard a British ship would be considered a pirate.

In April, 1797, President John Adams called a special session of Congress to outline a dual policy concerning French relations. He informed Congress that he would attempt to negotiate with France and dispatched John Marshall and Elbridge Gerry to join Charles Pinckney in Paris. The President's Cabinet and many others within government did not want Gerry to be appointed as a negotiator in Paris, but the President was familiar with his work and withstood the opposition. Gerry would prove to be the negotiator that the French would eventually accept.

President Adams also prepared the nation for war should the negotiations fail. Minister Talleyrand rejected the appointments and his commissioners demanded monetary tribute to begin any negotiations with the United States. This coercion, known as the XYZ Affair, pushed the United States closer to a war with France. The names of the three French diplomats were coded XYZ by the United States Government to prevent retribution against individuals. When Marshall and Pinckney left Paris, the French

Government requested that Gerry remain and offered to negotiate with him.

From its inception, the Adams Administration had been gripped by French atrocities against the United States. More than three hundred vessels had been seized and the Hamiltonians in the New England area were extremely disturbed by French intervention with their commerce. There was an outcry for war against France and Adams was criticized by Hamiltonian Federalists for his reluctance to go to Congress for a declaration of war against that nation. Many local municipalities and state governments began to construct vessels of war to loan to the Federal Government to conduct the war against France. In addition, the Jeffersonians criticized Adams for his lack of decisiveness in the diplomatic arena.

The Federalists frightened the country by claiming that the French were preparing to invade the United States. The Hamiltonians had long advocated a standing army and this idea had been pushed by the Federalists in Congress. The Federalist legislators referred to the army as an Additional Army, but the Republican view and the predominant view of the country was that it was becoming a standing army. President Adams had long been an advocate of a well developed navy and created the Department of Navy in 1798. He wanted to develop a navy that would protect American interest on the high seas and would provide defense along the vast United States coastline. The President did not believe that the threat of a French invasion was real and minimized the need of a standing army.⁵⁸ In this and other ways the President refused to yield to the Hamiltonian Federalists. Demands for the United States to declare war on France began to come from the leading Hamiltonian Federalists. Adams refused to support such action.

In the summer of 1798, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts which were

pushed by the Federalists and were signed into law by President Adams. The Alien Act provided for judges to alter the term of residency for an alien to apply for citizenship and also gave the President the power to deport individuals from the country that were suspected of engaging in any activity that could be characterized as being harmful to the United States. It was expected that massive deportations would occur with the President possessing this power, but Adams did not engage in massive deportations.

The Sedition Act prevented anyone from printing untrue statements against the United States Government and gave the Government the power to prohibit any publication of a story that the Government deemed to be untrue. This Act was not universally enforced and President Adams did not exert his power in this area. There were some charges and convictions, but most of these were Republican editors who printed articles to excite and enrage the public. Former President Washington supported the Sedition Act and Jefferson bitterly opposed it. Jefferson's opposition set the climate for the Presidential election of 1800.⁵⁹

In October, 1798, negotiator Elbridge Gerry returned from Paris indicating that the French were interested in establishing peace with the United States. Prior to this overture, the Hamiltonian faction had been pushing for a standing United States Army with Alexander Hamilton being the second in command. President Adams had received much correspondence dealing with this subject, including correspondence from former President George Washington, who indicated that he would like to see Hamilton second in command of the army. The Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians had a common belief that President Adams was not properly preparing the nation for war with France and some continued to believe that France planned to invade the United States. With Gerry's return

to the United States and the peace overture, the standing army idea lost some of its luster, but remained a topic of United States politics.

President Adams informed Congress that he wanted to create another diplomatic initiative with the French, which caused debate among the Representatives. Many insisted that the United States not send diplomats to Paris, but that Paris should initiate diplomatic contacts with the United States by sending representatives to Philadelphia. Further deterioration of the French military status occurred when Admiral Lord Nelson defeated the French fleet in the Nile River in Egyptian territory in the fall of 1798. This defeat precluded any invasion attempt against the United States and further diminished the French threat.⁶⁰

The United States would be faced with another crisis related to the Alien and Sedition Acts. Thomas Jefferson, Vice President of the United States, ignored his position for approximately six months and assisted the State of Kentucky in developing a legislative annulment of the Alien and Sedition Acts. The legislation was written to document the fact that the State of Kentucky had entered the Union voluntarily and had the right to nullify Federal legislation which it deemed to be unconstitutional. The legislation passed and Kentucky refused to enforce the Alien and Sedition Acts within its border. There was also a threat to secede from the Union if any attempt were to be made to enforce the legislation.

James Madison, a staunch Republican in Virginia, led the opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts in the Virginia Legislature. This legislation also declared the Federal Alien and Sedition Acts null and void within the borders of Virginia. President Adams had difficulty controlling the crisis and it was believed that Hamilton might take the standing

army and invade the South to prevent the states from arbitrarily refusing to enforce Federal Legislation. The nullification of Federal Legislation by Virginia and Kentucky was to be a precursor for the South Carolina nullification of the Tariffs of Abomination during the Jackson Administration. The civil war that had been predicted did not occur, but the precedent had been set.⁶¹

On Monday, February 18, 1799, President Adams took the biggest gamble of his career by again attempting to open negotiations with France. The American nation continued in a war mood and wanted reprisal against the French Nation which had displayed belligerence toward the United States for a substantial period of time. The President consulted no one, including his wife or his Cabinet, before making a bid for peace with the French Republic. He sent a letter to the Senate which was read by Thomas Jefferson indicating that he wanted to nominate William Vans Murray, Minister at the Hague, to be Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Government. His nomination letter stated that Minister Vans Murray must be given full Ministerial privileges and that he must be given the opportunity to negotiate with a French Minister of equal status.

When the nomination reached the United States Senate, the Federalists and the Jeffersonians were vehemently opposed. The prevailing opinion among the politicians was that the President had made a bad appointment and many wondered about his sanity. Alexander Hamilton, who would eventually help to decide the outcome of the election of 1800, indicated that he would rather see Jefferson be elected to the Presidency than for Adams to be re-elected. Hamilton believed that Jefferson would be a preferred enemy as opposed to the sitting President of his own party. Constant accusations were made by members of the Senate and in the print media of the time. President Adams made the

nomination and then went into hibernation for a six-month period. The Vans Murray appointment was to set the tone for the campaign for the 1800 election. Adams had taken a gamble that would nullify the need for a standing army and would mean there would be no reason for Alexander Hamilton to remain as commander.⁶²

Vans Murray, Adams' appointed Minister to France negotiated a treaty with the French Government which made the mission a success. On October 3, 1800, the Convention of 1800 or the Treaty of Mortefontaine was signed. The Treaty assured that peace would exist between the two Republics and that the United States and French arguments had been resolved. The French agreed to cease their interference with American vessels on the high seas. By this treaty, President Adams succeeded in steering the country away from war with the French Republic. The treaty of peace would not prevent Adams from losing the 1800 election, but it did keep the infant Republic from a war for which it was not prepared. President Adams was surprised by the success of the negotiations and was pleased by the outcome.⁶³

As the election of 1800 drew nearer, bickering between Hamilton and President Adams grew more intense. Hamilton and the President met in Trenton, New Jersey for a policy discussion and Adams completely lost his temper. He stated to Hamilton that Hamilton knew nothing about foreign policy and that he had no knowledge of the governments of Europe and how to conduct diplomacy with them. He further stated that the partisanship was tearing the country apart and that no real consolidated effort could be made until the partisanship was broken and the country became more united.

President Adams had a great deal of difficulty dealing with his Cabinet and this difficulty interfered with his ability to formulate and implement policies of the

administration. The primary difficulties were with Pickering and McHenry; and Adams accused McHenry of undercutting Administrative policies and being loyal to Hamilton. Adams dismissed both these individuals from the Cabinet and made new appointments, with the most significant being John Marshall, Secretary of State.

James Callender, Washington newspaper publisher, wrote a great deal about the upcoming campaign with most of his wrath directed against President Adams. President Adams sought and achieved conviction of Callender in the Federal Circuit Court of Richmond under the Sedition Act which outlawed slanderous attacks against the United States Government. The conviction further kindled the fire of public opinion and influenced resentment against the President. Many in the Federalist Party had begun to believe that Jefferson and Adams were conspiring to overthrow the government and that they intended to be the head of a newly created administration.⁶⁴

As the campaign of 1800 unfolded, many unusual accusations and political barbs began to appear in the press and in campaign speeches. Thomas Jefferson, Vice President of the United States, was painted as a lover of liberty and a candidate who would ensure the basic freedoms of all Americans. There was no mention of the fact that Jefferson bought and sold individuals held in bondage and that he profited immensely from their labor. President John Adams was categorized as a President who was too close to France, had created a standing army, had increased taxes, and most of all had episodes of temper tantrums which led to bad decisions. Throughout the campaign, character assassinations were prominent with Federalists attacking other Federalist office holders. In his role as Vice President of the United States Jefferson had so removed himself from government that he could be held accountable for very little in the

development of governmental policy. President Adams had been totally immersed in policy and was easily held accountable.

The surprising development of the 1800 campaign was the fact that Alexander Hamilton turned totally against President Adams and determined to participate in the defeat of the President for re-election. Hamilton had been impressed by the English style of government and made his ideas clear that the United States should go to war with France and lean toward Great Britain. He had pushed for a standing army and was given command of that force. In the spring of 1800 Hamilton actively began to work for the defeat of the President by extensive circulation of letters pointing out the character flaws and bad decisions in policy making by the President. He went so far as to say that if two enemies of the Republic were to be chosen, Jefferson would be a better choice than the President. Hamilton's campaign stirred the Federalist Party against the sitting President and contributed to Adams losing the Presidential election of 1800.

The *Washington Federalist* printed a stirring tribute to President John Adams and his patriotism. His diplomatic services were cited with highlights including his mastering of the French language and his participation in the French culture. The paper also stated that he had performed heroic efforts in Holland and had also mastered the Dutch language which enabled him to communicate with the populace. It was also pointed out that he had averted war with France and his diplomatic skills had contributed greatly to this endeavor.⁶⁵

In the 1800 election, President John Adams was defeated, but did carry the New England States and the State of New York. He lost the South and the Western States which cost him enough votes in the Electoral College to lose the election. The final

Electoral College vote tally was seventy-three for Jefferson, seventy-three for Aaron Burr, and sixty-five for President John Adams. This tied election would finally be decided between Jefferson and Burr in the House of Representatives as prescribed by the Constitution. Jefferson became president and Burr was vice president

The campaign had created a severe split between Jefferson and Adams who had been close friends during their days of diplomacy in the 1770's and 1780's. The campaign had left them on very hostile terms, but later they again became fast friends. The two patriots died on July 4, 1826, fifty years after the colonies had declared their independence from Great Britain.

Conclusion

President Adams kept the nation out of war during his one term in office, but his actions cost him the election of 1800 which was ultimately won by Thomas Jefferson. President Adams served during an extremely difficult time in the nation's history but his diplomatic skills and unconventional politics kept the nation from fighting a war which it could ill afford.

John Adams was one of the most unique individuals in American history and contributed greatly to the formation of the Republic. He also contributed to the success of the young nation during its struggle for independence from Great Britain during the Revolutionary War. He served as Vice President for two terms in the popular Washington administration and was elected President of the United States during a most difficult period in United States history. John Adams stood up for what he believed and often ran into extreme difficulties created by decisions he made.

When John Adams was inaugurated March 4, 1797, he was faced with a nation in a de facto war with France, a dominant world power. He steered the nation through this difficult time in history and kept the nation out of war, which he believed it could not afford. His actions prior to and during the Revolutionary War gave an indication as to the types of decisions he made as President.

John Adams began his patriotic career by working very closely with his cousin, Samuel Adams, in stirring resentment against the British Government. He defended British officers who killed citizens in Massachusetts Bay Colony. He achieved great

success in defending these individuals. He went to France as part of the Diplomatic Corps to procure French assistance against the British. Although the Corps did little in France, Adams became well acquainted with the French people and with the French Government. He acted as liaison with the Continental Congress and kept that legislative body informed on activities in Paris. He easily mastered the French language and could communicate effectively with the host country.

When the Continental Congress changed the composition of the Commission, Adams took it upon himself to go to Holland in an attempt to enlist the Dutch in providing funding to the United States effort. He mastered the Dutch language and took his issues directly to the Dutch people which was against diplomatic protocol. He obtained funding from the Dutch and participated in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

John Adams participated in the negotiations with Great Britain as one of the United States Commissioners. The United States was able to win an excellent peace with Great Britain by violating the original Treaty of Alliance between the United States and the French nation.

During the Washington Administration, Vice President Adams alienated himself from the Administration by his participation in Senatorial debate concerning the role of the President and his title. Friction began between the Vice President and the President's Cabinet, but when Adams was elected President he made no Cabinet changes. The continuity in Cabinet members would later cause much friction and difficulty for President Adams.

During his four years in office, President Adams was constantly bombarded by

diplomatic upheavals and by rejection of his selected envoys to Paris. The infamous XYZ Affair in which the French Government demanded payment prior to negotiation placed the United States closer to war with France. The populace began to demand war and to outfit ships to conduct naval expeditions against France. The Federalist Party insisted that the nation become closer to England and go to war with France. Vice President Thomas Jefferson turned against his President because of Adams' determination to avoid war with France.

President Adams was totally unconventional in his insistence that the United States develop a treaty with France. He appointed an envoy who was very unpopular and few people wanted him to negotiate with France for the United States. This envoy obtained a treaty with France which avoided war between the two countries.

The Alien and Sedition Acts contributed greatly to the defeat of President Adams in 1800 Presidential election. The biggest problem came from Alexander Hamilton who wrote derogatory letters concerning President Adams and the decisions he had made. Hamilton was a firm believer in the English form of government and felt that every reason existed for the United States to go to war with France.

President Adams kept the nation out of war and when he left office there was a treaty with France which kept the two nations from engaging in armed activity. President Adams' decisions did cost him the election, but his prior experiences in France influenced his decisions to the point that war was avoided. President Adams admired the culture of France and knew the language well, immersing himself in national activities. He firmly stated in his inaugural address that he wanted friendship between the French people and the people of the United States. John Adams went from farmer to President

of the United States and because he stood for his beliefs he lost the election and returned to his Massachusetts home.

Endnotes

¹ L. H. Butterfield, et al eds. *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 3.* Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. 256-26

²Norman Risjord. *Jefferson's America 1760-1815.* Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Press, 1991, pp. 63-70

³The Adams Papers Vol. 1. p. 263

⁴James E. Bishop, ed. *The Founding Fathers; John Adams A Biography in His Own Words.* New York, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1961, pp. 77-78

⁵*Founding Fathers.* p. 78

⁶*Jefferson's America.* pp. 81-82

⁷*Founding Fathers.* p. 135

⁸Alan Brinkley. *The Unfinished Nation. Volume 1, To 1877.* New York, New York: McGraw Hill, 2008, pp. 92-98

⁹*The Unfinished Nation.* pp. 112-115

¹⁰*Founding Fathers.* pp. 135-136

¹¹*The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. p. 156*

¹²*Founding Fathers.* pp. 163-164

¹³David McCullough. *John Adams.* New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001, p. 154

¹⁴ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. p. 250*

¹⁵*John Adams.* pp. 154-157

¹⁶ *Jefferson's America 1760-1815.* pp. 115-117

¹⁷ *John Adams.* pp. 170-177

¹⁸*The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. pp. 270-272*

-
- ¹⁹*John Adams.* pp. 175-180
- ²⁰*The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. pp. 272-276*
- ²¹ *The Unfinished Nation.* p. 126
- ²²*Jefferson's America 1760-1815.* pp. 118-121
- ²³ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2 pp. 309-310*
- ²⁴ *John Adams.* pp. 190-196
- ²⁵ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. p. 347*
- ²⁶ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. p. 347*
- ²⁷ *John Adams.* pp. 206-208
- ²⁸ *John Adams.* pp. 209-210
- ²⁹ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. p. 354*
- ³⁰ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. pp. 370-371*
- ³¹ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. pp. 401-402*
- ³² *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Vol. 2. pp. 419-42*
- ³³ *John Adams.* pp. 232-236
- ³⁴ Gregg L. Lint, ed. *Papers of John Adams.* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 1-3
- ³⁵ *John Adams.* pp. 230-240
- ³⁶ *Papers of John Adams.* p. 28
- ³⁷ *John Adams.* pp. 243-261
- ³⁸ *Founding Fathers.* pp. 285-288
- ³⁹ *John Adams.* pp. 266-268
- ⁴⁰ *Founding Fathers.* pp. 280-290

-
- ⁴¹ *John Adams*. p. 270
- ⁴² *Jefferson's America*. pp. 128-129
- ⁴³ *John Adams*. pp. 273-275
- ⁴⁴ *Unfinished Nation*. pp. 128-130
- ⁴⁵ *John Adams*. pp. 276-279
- ⁴⁶ *John Adams*. pp. 284-285
- ⁴⁷ *Founding Fathers*. pp. 262-265
- ⁴⁸ *The Adams Papers; Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*. Vol. 3. pp. 180-181
- ⁴⁹ *John Adams*. pp. 364-366
- ⁵⁰ *John Adams*. pp. 368-371
- ⁵¹ *John Adams*. pp. 403-410
- ⁵² Joseph J. Ellis. *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams*. New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001, pp.129-135
- ⁵³ *Unfinished Nation*. pp. 154-157
- ⁵⁴ *Jefferson's America*. pp. 225-227
- ⁵⁵ Edward Handler. *America and Europe in the Political Thought of John Adams*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964, pp. 101-102
- ⁵⁶ *John Adams*. pp. 363-365
- ⁵⁷ *Founding Fathers*. p. 357
- ⁵⁸ Edward J. Larson. *A Magnificent Catastrophe*. New York: Free Press, A Division of Simon and Schuster, 2007, pp. 32-34
- ⁵⁹ *John Adams*. pp. 504-508
- ⁶⁰ *John Adams*. pp. 510-522

⁶¹ *Jefferson's America.* pp. 243-245

⁶² *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams.* pp. 33-35

⁶³ *A Magnificent Catastrophe.* p. 226

⁶⁴ *A Magnificent Catastrophe.* pp. 132-136

⁶⁵ *John Adams.* pp. 546-551

Special Acknowledgements

To my wife, Judy, appreciation is extended for her special efforts in assisting in compiling and editing project materials. Her efforts are sincerely appreciated.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. J. E. Hendricks, Department of History, for his work in advising on the development of the project and for his excellent classroom instruction on post-American colonialism.

To Dr. Donald Frey, Department of Economics, appreciation is expressed for his assistance in acting as third reader and serving on the examining committee.

To Dr. David Coates, Department of Political Science, special thanks is extended for his assistance serving as second reader on the examining committee and for excellent classroom instruction on the composition and operation of British government.

Very special appreciation is extended to my brother, Bob, for his enthusiasm and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
1. Development of Patriotism.....	4
2. The United States Initiates Diplomatic Effort.....	12
3. From Vice President to Mr. President.....	43
4. Conclusion.....	58
5. Endnotes.....	62

