

Addressing America: Washington's Farewell and the Making of National Culture, Politics, and Diplomacy, 1796-1852

Author: Jeffrey J. Malanson

Persistent link: <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/2649>

This work is posted on [eScholarship@BC](http://escholarship@bc.edu),
Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2010

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.

Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of History

ADDRESSING AMERICA: WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL AND THE
MAKING OF NATIONAL CULTURE, POLITICS, AND DIPLOMACY,

1796-1852

a dissertation

by

JEFFREY J. MALANSON

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2010

© copyright by JEFFREY JAMES MALANSON
2010

Abstract

“Addressing America: Washington’s Farewell and the Making of
National Culture, Politics, and Diplomacy, 1796-1852”
Jeffrey J. Malanson

Dissertation Advisor: David Quigley

This dissertation argues that George Washington’s Farewell Address established the foundational principles of U.S. foreign policy and was the central text through which citizens of the Early Republic came to understand the connections between the nation’s domestic and foreign ambitions. In the eyes of most Americans, the Declaration of Independence affirmed their ideals and the Constitution established their government, but it was Washington’s principles that would ensure the nation’s maturation into a world power. The Address became deeply embedded in the popular consciousness through annual readings on Washington’s birthday, frequent discussion of its principles in the press, and as an integral component of the civic education of the nation’s youth. Ordinary Americans far removed from the nation’s capital and from complicated debates over particular foreign policies and their implications could still express an informed opinion on the wisdom of those policies based on their understanding of the Farewell.

“Addressing America” goes beyond this popular story to illuminate how the Farewell shaped the fundamental disagreement over the conduct of U.S. foreign policy from 1796 to 1852. When Washington issued his valedictory he intended it as a flexible and pragmatic statement of the general principles that

should guide the construction of foreign policies aimed at protecting American interests. An essential part of Washington's wisdom was the recognition that the nation's interests would change over time, and thus so too would its foreign policies. Five years later, incoming President Thomas Jefferson summarized his approach to foreign policy in his inaugural address of 1801 by promising "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none." This phrase was universally seen as an allusion to the Farewell Address and it immediately entered the popular lexicon as a way of pithily describing the nation's core foreign policy principles. Over time "entangling alliances with none" became associated directly with Washington. More than just a case of misattribution, the linking of this phrase to the Farewell permanently altered the meaning of the Address for most Americans; instead of a flexible statement of general principles, it became a rigid prescription for a permanent foreign policy of virtual isolation from the rest of the world. In the fifty years after Jefferson's inaugural, the overarching narrative of American foreign policy is the conflict between these competing interpretations of the Farewell Address and how these differences in principle produced a varied understanding of both U.S. foreign policy and America's place in the world. This dissertation is the first work of historical scholarship to conduct a sustained examination of the ways that Washington's Farewell Address was understood over time by early Americans and how it fundamentally shaped their view of the United States and its place in the world.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	vi
Introduction	1
One: Constructing the Farewell Address	13
Two: Washington’s Farewell in the American Mind, 1796-1817	61
Three: John Quincy Adams and the Legacy of the Farewell Address	111
Four: America’s Fundamental Principles of Foreign Policy and the Panama Congress of 1826	178
Five: The Revaluing of American Principles, 1826-1850	240
Six: “Washington or Kossuth”?: The Farewell Address in the American Mind after Fifty Years	306
Conclusion	365
Appendix A: The Foreign Policy Portion of Washington’s Farewell Address	372
Appendix B: The Monroe Doctrine	379
Bibliography	383

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee: David Quigley and Seth Jacobs of Boston College, and Drew McCoy of Clark University. Each read multiple drafts of my entire dissertation, providing feedback and guidance and acting as a constant source of encouragement. I must especially thank my advisor, David Quigley, who was a champion of this project from the proposal stage forward, and who, despite being named Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences part way through the process, still made the time to regularly meet with me and read my sprawling chapter drafts. A graduate student could not ask for better mentors.

The graduate students and faculty members of the BC History Department's Americanist Writing Group also deserve a note of thanks here. Not only did my fellow graduate students regularly read my 50-70 page chapters, offering insightful and much needed commentary, but the monthly meetings gave me firm deadlines for which to get work completed.

The research for this dissertation was made possible by generous financial support from a variety of sources. A Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati Fellowship from the Massachusetts Historical Society and a Kate B. & Hall J. Peterson Fellowship from the American Antiquarian Society enabled me to conduct extended research at two of the nation's foremost archives. A Summer Research Stipend from the Clough Center for the Study of Constitutional Democracy at Boston College permitted me to round out my research with trips to

the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives. Finally, a Dissertation Fellowship from the Boston College Graduate School of Arts and Sciences allowed me to take a year off from teaching and get the vast majority of my dissertation writing completed.

Last, but certainly not least, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge family. My families, both the one I was born into and the one I married into, were a constant source of support and their enduring faith in me propelled me forward. My parents deserve special praise for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams, even if they took me to graduate school and multiple degrees in history.

For as much as I owe all of these advisors, institutions, and family members, this work would not have been possible without the unwavering support of my wife, Katie. I am not normally at a loss for words, but I feel incapable of adequately expressing what having my best friend and the love of my life by my side throughout my time working on this project has meant to me. Being able to share the joyful moments and endure the difficult ones with her made this process not only survivable but enjoyable as well. Thank you for everything.

Introduction

For more than fifty years after its first publication in September 1796, George Washington's Farewell Address persisted for most Americans as the central document that shaped their understanding of the relationship the United States should have with the rest of the world and the principles that should guide its foreign policy. Washington could not have known when he sat down to prepare this Valedictory that it would have this type of significant and lasting impact, but he surely would have been gratified to learn that Americans still so highly valued the principles and maxims he had felt were essential to the nation's future growth and prosperity. This dissertation is interested in how the Farewell Address and its principles were used and understood by American policymakers and the American public from 1796 to 1852, and how these evolving views shaped the direction and conception of U.S. foreign policy and the larger project of the early American republic. Throughout this period the Address acted as both a principled foundation and rhetorical justification in debates about U.S. foreign policy between presidents, secretaries of state, diplomats, and members of Congress. Outside of this "official" sphere, it also carried a tremendous cultural importance, as it was seen as being not just the Father of his Country's vital Legacy to the American people but also the prescription for the achievement of the future glory he had predicted. Ordinary Americans far removed from the nation's capital and from complicated debates over foreign policies and their implications could still express an informed opinion on the wisdom of those

policies based on their understanding of the Farewell. Most importantly, the Farewell was the central lens through which most Americans viewed and understood the ongoing project that was the United States and its growth and development as a power on the world stage.

When George Washington wrote about foreign policy in his Farewell Address he was really discussing an approach to foreign policy and the principles that should underlie it. As will be seen in this dissertation's first chapter, he devoted multiple manuscript pages to expressing these ideas, but his multitude of points and warnings can be boiled down to a single core idea: that the object of foreign policy should be the attainment and protection of America's best interests. Washington believed that an honest assessment of those interests, unclouded by foreign attachments or antipathies, by partisanship, or by anything else not concerned solely with strengthening the Union, would produce a wise foreign policy. In 1796 this meant the expansion of U.S. commerce, but an otherwise strict neutrality in all foreign matters. At the same time, he stressed that these interests would necessarily change over time as the nation grew and matured and as external circumstances changed. As a result, the Farewell Address was intended not as a declaration of any specific foreign policy, but rather as a flexible statement of the principles that should permanently guide American diplomacy.

Thomas Jefferson advanced an alternative view of the Farewell Address in his March 1801 inaugural address when he promised the American people that his administration would pursue "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all

nations, entangling alliances with none.”¹ Between its emphasis on commercial expansion and its prohibition against any other external entanglements, Americans immediately interpreted this phrasing as an allusion to Washington and the Farewell. Within a decade, many Americans would come to see “entangling alliances with none” as not just an allusion to Washington, but as a direct quote from the Farewell Address itself. This was a highly significant development that has been grossly underappreciated by historians, as this phrase was responsible for producing an entirely different understanding of Washington’s principles than what he originally intended. Instead of putting forward core principles to guide the creation of a flexible foreign policy, “entangling alliances with none” yielded a rigid prescription for a permanent, and largely isolationist, approach to the wider world. While this influenced the way many politicians and policymakers shaped U.S. diplomacy, it also had a tremendous and widespread impact on popular conceptions of the relationship the United States should have with the rest of the world. Americans continued to support aggressive commercial expansion, but the isolationist tendency of “entangling alliances with none” led many to increasingly view the United States as necessarily standing apart from the rest of the world, and to see the nation’s greatness as intimately connected with its independence of all political entanglements. All the while, there remained a small but vehement group who remained dedicated to Washington’s original principles. As a result, the larger

¹ Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address,” 4 March 1801, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908*, 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908), 1:323.

story of U.S. foreign policy, at least through the 1840s and the conclusion of the Mexican War, is the story of these competing interpretations of the Farewell Address, and how these differences in principle produced a varied understanding of both U.S. foreign policy and America's place in the world. After 1848, the conflict shifted away from the interpretation of the Address and towards the question of whether it still expressed the principles that should guide U.S. foreign policy. To put it another way, after the war with Mexico some Americans felt that the Farewell Address, as defined by the dominant "entangling alliances with none," represented a too rigid prescription for American foreign policy.

The overarching focus of "Addressing America," then, is an exploration of these conflicts. This dissertation is not a history of U.S. foreign policy, but instead is the narrative of an idea, of the evolution of George Washington's Farewell Address in the American political and popular mind. This narrative is illuminated by its connection with key foreign policy decisions and debates, but is more concerned with how they shaped and were shaped by these divergent understandings of American principles. The significance of this study is twofold. First, it allows for a much deeper understanding of the development of U.S. foreign policy over an extended period of time, and places that policy in the context of the evolving conceptions of American principles and ideals, while also highlighting the formative connection between popular views and diplomatic action. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it refocuses modern attention on the paramount importance placed on the Farewell Address by nineteenth century

Americans. People throughout the nation derived their understanding of the development of the United States, its relationship with other countries, and ultimately of its responsibilities on the global stage from the Farewell Address. Despite its centrality, Washington's Farewell remains largely absent from modern historiography.

This is a substantially different approach to the history of the early republic, and to the Farewell Address in particular, than what is often seen in historical scholarship. Most historians who have touched upon the Farewell at all focus almost entirely on its diplomatic or political import and ignore its popular impact.² "Addressing America" builds substantially on this scholarship – not to

² Any discussion of the Farewell Address must begin with Felix Gilbert's seminal work on the development of early American foreign policy, *To the Farewell Address*, and his contention that the Address, with Alexander Hamilton as its chief architect, was simultaneously the application of existing European ideas about foreign policy as well as something new. Two other leading views that speak to the general interpretations that have been advanced by many who have only briefly touched on the Farewell are articles by Samuel Flagg Bemis and Alexander DeConde. Bemis's "Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence," emphasized the long-term view of American foreign policy and the nation taken by Washington when he constructed the Farewell. DeConde, in "Washington's Farewell, the French Alliance, and the Election of 1796," countered such works that praised the Address by condemning it as little more than a piece of political propaganda aimed at influencing the outcome of the presidential election of 1796. Historians have also taken many other approaches to the discussion of foreign policy in the Farewell Address. Joseph Fry noted the intrinsic connection between commerce and foreign policy in his article "Washington's Farewell Address and American Commerce," while Patrick Garrity argued that the Address was actually aimed at the creation of a "distinctive American, and republican, character," in his essay, "Warnings of a Parting Friend." Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961); Samuel Flagg Bemis, "Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence," *American Historical Review* 39 (Jan. 1934): 250-68; Alexander DeConde, "Washington's Farewell, the French Alliance, and the Election of 1796," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43 (Mar. 1957): 641-58; Joseph A. Fry, "Washington's Farewell Address and American Commerce," *West Virginia History* 37, no. 4 (1976): 281-90; and Patrick J. Garrity, "Warnings of a Parting Friend," *National Review* 45 (Fall 1996): 14-26.

For a sampling of other important works focusing on the Farewell Address, see Albert K. Weinberg, "Washington's 'Great Rule' in its Historical Evolution," in *Historiography and Urbanization: Essays in American History in Honor of W. Stull Holt*, ed. Eric F. Goldman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941); Arthur A. Markowitz, "Washington's Farewell and the Historians: A Critical Review," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 94 (Apr.

mention a series of truly excellent recent works on early American politics and political culture – but also moves in important new directions.³ This dissertation is the first work of historical scholarship to conduct a sustained examination of the ways that Washington’s Farewell Address was understood over time by early Americans and how it fundamentally shaped their view of the United States and its place in the world.

“Addressing America” begins with the construction of the Farewell Address. While the traditional narrative places a great deal of emphasis on developments in Washington’s second term in comprehending the foreign policy portion of the Farewell, fuller consideration of his first term and his post-Revolution/pre-presidential years allows for a more robust understanding of the evolution of Washington’s foreign policy thought as well as a more accurate understanding of his true meanings. In this vein, an examination of the administration’s response to the Nootka Sound Controversy of 1790 is especially

1970): 173-91; Horace Binney, *An Inquiry into the Formation of Washington’s Farewell Address* (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, Publishers, 1859); Victor Hugo Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address: In Facsimile, with Transliterations of All the Drafts of Washington, Madison, & Hamilton, Together with Their Correspondence and Other Supporting Documents* (New York: New York Public Library, 1935); Matthew Spalding and Patrick J. Garrity, *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington’s Farewell Address and the American Character* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); and François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington’s Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

³ These works include, Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Jeffrey L. Pasley, “*The Tyranny of Printers*”: *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997); James E. Lewis, Jr., *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

instructive. Though it was widely praised at the time it was published, the Farewell did not become engrained in the American consciousness as a sacred document containing principles of perpetual utility until after Washington's unexpected death in December 1799. The period of national mourning that followed, and the widespread invocation of the Address by Americans as their departed Father's vital legacy, elevated it to the status of the nation's founding documents. Chapter 2, "Washington's Farewell in the American Mind, 1796-1817," explores this process as well as the immediate impact of Thomas Jefferson's "entangling alliances with none" on evolving conceptions of the Farewell Address. This chapter also examines the spread of Washington Benevolent Societies in the North during the presidencies of Jefferson and James Madison and the role these primarily Federalist organizations played, especially during the War of 1812, in celebrating Washington's birthday as an annual holiday and in making the explicit connection between adherence to the Farewell Address and America's continued peace and security. These Societies largely faded away after the war, but the traditions and discourse they popularized had an enduring impact.

Chapter 3, "John Quincy Adams and the Legacy of the Farewell Address," focuses on the presidential administration of James Monroe and specifically on Secretary of State John Quincy Adams's conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Next to Washington himself, Adams is arguably the single most important individual in any extended discussion of the legacy of the Farewell Address, as he was the

leading proponent of a view of the Address uninfluenced by “entangling alliances with none.” From the 1790s on, Adams was a staunch advocate of Washingtonian principles, which guided him throughout his career as a politician and diplomat. This chapter explores the evolution of Adams’s foreign policy thought for the insight it gives into the application of Washington’s principles in the years after the War of 1812, as well as for how it highlights the growing significance of the differing interpretations of the Farewell Address.

Understanding Adams and his view of the Farewell is also critical to understanding the creation in 1823 of what history has come to call the Monroe Doctrine. The Doctrine was intended by Adams as an expansion of the Farewell Address to meet the new challenges posed by the recent independence of Latin America. It aimed to expand Washington’s sphere of separation from European influence and interference to include all of the free American nations, and warned Europe of this new expectation. Adams was not looking to fundamentally alter U.S. principles or to abandon the nation’s longstanding neutrality, but rather to acknowledge that it was in the best interests of the United States to pursue a minimally closer relationship with the newly free republics extending to its borders than it previously had with Europe.

Initially hailed as a strong defense of American interests and principles, some critics soon began to question the wisdom of the Monroe Doctrine, fearing that it threatened American neutrality, and ultimately that it violated Washington’s Farewell Address. For the first time the competing interpretations

of the Farewell had come into direct conflict with each other in shaping the understanding of the principles America would base its Latin American policy on. “America’s Fundamental Principles of Foreign Policy and the Panama Congress of 1826,” the dissertation’s fourth chapter, examines the moment this conflict entered the political and popular spheres in the national debate over then President John Quincy Adams’s proposal to send U.S. delegates to the Congress of Panama. This congress was intended as a meeting of the independent nations of the Americas at which Adams hoped to see U.S. principles – specifically those of the Farewell Address – adopted internationally. At stake in the Congressional debate over participation were the interpretations and legacies of both Washington’s Farewell and the Monroe Doctrine. While the Panama mission was approved by Congress after five months of rigorous debate, the manner in which the debate was carried out, the way it was covered in the press, and the arguments leveled by both sides resulted in the larger American memory of the proceedings being the failure of the mission. This legacy of failure carried with it the rejection of the Monroe Doctrine and the confirmation of the “entangling alliances with none” conception of the Farewell Address.

Chapter 5, “The Revaluing of American Principles, 1826-1850,” considers the quarter-century after the Panama debate as a period of transition for American society and for U.S. principles of foreign policy. The Panama debate was the first salvo in a renewed partisanship that gave rise to America’s second party system and an era of mass participatory politics. This upswing in political participation

helped to turn the 1832 centennial anniversary of George Washington's birth into one of the grandest national celebrations to take place in the country's history to that point. As the sectional crisis began to deepen in the 1830s and 1840s, the Farewell Address only grew in importance as an expression of Unionist sentiments. In addition to investigating these popular transitions, this chapter also examines the evolving diplomatic uses of the Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine, primarily brought about by America's attempts to annex Texas. The principles of the Monroe Doctrine as John Quincy Adams had envisioned them reemerged in the early 1840s, but they were soon manipulated by Presidents John Tyler and James K. Polk to justify annexation and as part of a pretense for war with Mexico. Not only did these actions engraft entirely alien meanings upon the Doctrine, but victory over Mexico permanently changed the debate over the fundamental principles of foreign policy. After 1848, this debate moved away from the competing interpretations of the Farewell Address and towards the question of whether it was still a useful guide for American action, as an increasingly vocal minority began advocating a more activist and interventionist foreign policy.

These competing views of America's proper role in the world were put on national display from December 1851 to July 1852 with the tour of Hungarian revolutionary leader Louis Kossuth throughout the United States, which is detailed in the dissertation's final chapter, "'Washington or Kossuth?': The Farewell Address in the American Mind after Fifty Years." Kossuth came to the

United States to secure economic, political, and potential military support for Hungary's future revolution against Austrian rule, primarily in the form of a pledge by the United States government that it would intervene in Hungary to prevent any other powers from intervening – intervention to defend the principle of non-intervention. In order for Kossuth to convince the American government and people of the legitimacy of this principle, he had to argue against continued adherence to Washington's Farewell Address. In the wake of the Mexican War, some Americans felt that the United States now had a responsibility to defend republican principles abroad and thus endorsed Kossuth's call. For a larger majority, the attack on the Farewell Address only served to reinvigorate interest in and allegiance to its maxims for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Even for those who saw a grander mission for the United States in the wider world, it was as an example of the strength of republican principles and not as the vindicator of those principles. The great importance of Kossuth's tour is not just that it produced the most significant reevaluation of the Address to take place in the nation's history, but that this reevaluation was carried out by both politicians and a broader spectrum of Americans from throughout the nation.

The significance of "Addressing America" rests with the two interrelated histories it tells about the political and popular understandings of the Farewell Address – the official diplomacy and public celebrations carried out in its name. Handed down by the Father of his Country, its principles shaped American foreign policy, but were also shaped by their cultural life in the early nineteenth

century. Only through this dual investigation can the fundamental importance of George Washington's Farewell Address to the citizenry of the early American republic – to say nothing of the impact it had on the development of that republic – be truly appreciated. First, though, it is necessary to go back to the beginning and Washington's efforts to construct a Valedictory Address that would strike an enduring chord with the nation.

One: Constructing the Farewell Address

On 19 September 1796, word quickly spread throughout Philadelphia of what many had been suspecting for months: George Washington would not seek, nor would he accept, a third term as President of the United States. His closest friends and advisors knew that he had longed for retirement almost since the day he took the oath of office in 1789, and that he had attempted to step down at the end of his first term before agreeing to stand for reelection. Republicans and Federalists alike had been plotting for months over whom they would support and where they could secure victory should Washington bow out. While the fact of his retirement did not surprise anyone, the form in which he chose to announce it did. Rather than issuing a simple statement to Congress or to the states declaring his intentions, Washington produced a lengthy tract addressed directly to the people of the United States.¹ More than just announce his retirement, he used this valedictory, or Farewell Address, to hand down “the disinterested warnings of a parting friend,” and to give to the people “some sentiments; which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all

¹ The Address was published in David C. Claypoole’s *American Daily Advertiser* under the simple heading, “Friends, and Fellow-Citizens.” Washington’s valedictory was not referred to by its more famous title until it was published as “Washington’s Farewell Address” by the *Courier of New Hampshire* several weeks later. It should be emphasized from the outset that even though it is commonly referred to as an address, evoking images of Washington standing before an eager audience as he read it to them, it was never delivered as such and was actually prepared with newspaper publication in mind. Victor Hugo Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address, In facsimile, with transliterations of all the drafts of Washington, Madison, & Hamilton, together with their correspondence and other supporting documents* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1935), 55, 67.

important to the permanency of your felicity as a People.”² This chapter investigates the Farewell Address itself, its content and its creation, but is more concerned with the evolution of George Washington’s thought on U.S. foreign policy and the principles that should guide it. Understanding his conception of these principles is essential to understanding the meaning of and his hopes for the Farewell Address.

While much of the Address was devoted to promoting the importance of the Union and its preservation, the most impactful advice handed down by Washington focused on America’s relationship with the outside world and the principles that should shape it. What was clear throughout this discussion of foreign policy was that he did not just see it as the duty of the government, but instead as the responsibility of the entire populace, as a national project. Washington urged Americans to “Observe good faith and justice towards all Nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. . . . It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great Nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a People always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.” There were two important ideas here that would reappear throughout this portion of the Farewell. Taking the second idea first, it was the assertion that the United States and its people represented a “too novel example” in the history of the world as long as it carried itself appropriately on

² The full text of the Farewell Address can be found in multiple sources, including Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address*, 139-59, but this dissertation will refer to the version in George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), 35:214-38. Quotes from page 218.

that stage. More important was his description of the United States as “at no distant period, a great Nation.” This recognition that the United States had not yet achieved greatness was at the heart of the recommendations to follow.³

Washington cautioned that “nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular Nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded; and that in place of them just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated.” He believed that “The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.” Antipathies caused people and nations to take up arms when wise policy would dictate peace, and passionate attachments encouraged “the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists,” leading to behavior that wise policy would likewise overturn. The most important refrain of the Address was this need to recognize and act upon America’s true interests. Washington was especially concerned with the appearance of favoritism in the conduct of foreign policy, as the “attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful Nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.” In this case, the United States was both a small and a weak nation. Attachments and antipathies plagued more than just national policy, as with the individual, “Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the

³ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 19 September 1796, in *Writings*, 35:231.

other. Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favourite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.” As a result, the “jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake” to the “insidious wiles of foreign influence.”⁴

Washington next laid out his “Great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations,” the basic principle of which was “in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.” It was essential that Americans remember that “Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she much be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns.” As a result, “it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships, or enmities.” Washington believed that one of America’s greatest blessings was that “Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one People, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by our justice shall Counsel.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, 231-33.

This was the heart of Washington's message, the need to not only understand what America's true interests were, but also to fully grasp what they were not, and what was at stake in the process – short-term survival and long-term greatness.⁵

Washington questioned why Americans would “forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European Ambition, Rivalship, Interest, Humour or Caprice?” He concluded that it was “our true policy to steer clear of permanent Alliances, with any portion of the foreign world.” As long as the United States took care “always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.” Once again, the idea of American interest is interwoven throughout this section of the Farewell Address. This was interest broadly defined as well, as Washington was concerned not just with the immediate implications of American actions but the far-reaching ramifications as well. In 1796 the United States could not force any of the great powers of Europe to respect its rights as a neutral nation through intimidation or force, but a wise foreign policy would help to ensure that in the not-too-distant future that would change. Washington expanded on this idea towards the close of the Address in disclosing that, “With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavour to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency, which is

⁵ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 233-34.

necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.”

Washington firmly believed that with time – time free from foreign interference, time dedicated to the development of an American character and the strengthening of the American union – the United States would become a great power, equal, if not superior, to any in Europe.⁶

In the years after its publication the Farewell Address was interpreted many different ways and took on vastly divergent meanings, but an examination of Washington’s entire discussion of foreign policy makes clear that, despite its length and its multitude of points, it can be distilled down to a few core principles. First and foremost, and as had been repeated several times already, it was the responsibility of policymakers and all Americans to render an honest assessment of what the best interests of the United States were before constructing or enacting foreign policies. In 1796, while the United States was still a small and weak nation, those interests were commercial expansion and political separation from Europe, as well as the avoidance of permanent alliances. As the nation grew and prospered, as its people and institutions solidified and matured, and as the international context changed, those interests – and the specific policies that would best protect them – would necessarily change as well. The recognition of change over time was the second core principle of the Address, and, as will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation, was the one largely forgotten by subsequent generations. Washington was not prescribing a permanent foreign

⁶ *Ibid.*, 234-35, 237. The complete text of the foreign policy section of the Farewell Address can be found in appendix A.

policy, but rather permanent principles to guide the construction of new foreign policies to meet new global challenges. Beyond suggesting that in the future the United States would more easily be able to force other nations to respect its principles, Washington did not predict what those future interests or policies might be as he understood that as the nation's relationship with the rest of the world changed so to would its foreign policy. He clearly believed that the avoidance of permanent alliances and the maintenance of neutrality in foreign political concerns and conflicts would be enduring ideals, but they were pursued to protect those interests. With this understanding of the Farewell Address in mind, two questions emerge. First, how did Washington come to have this conception of American principles and why did he feel it was necessary to lay it out in his Farewell Address? Second, what impact, if any, did they have? The first of these questions will be answered in this chapter; the second comprises the investigation to be carried out in the rest of this dissertation.

Washington's Second Term

Washington had originally planned on retiring from the presidency at the close of his first term. In the spring of 1792 he turned to James Madison, whom he often sought out when he needed assistance drafting important public messages, and set him to work on a "Valadictory [*sic*] address from me to the public" that would express "in plain & modest terms" his reasons for stepping down. It would also include a plea for national union and support of the federal

government.⁷ According to Madison, Washington confided to him that this additional component of the message was necessary because “a spirit of party in the Government was becoming a fresh source of difficulty, and he was afraid was dividing some (alluding to the Secretary of State [Thomas Jefferson] & Secry. of the Treasury [Alexander Hamilton]) more particularly connected with him in the administration.”⁸ Despite Washington’s very specific concerns, Madison’s draft of an address avoided any overt discussions of partisanship, simply declaring, “We may all be considered as the children of one common country. We have all been embarked in one common cause. We have all our share in common sufferings and common successes.” If the “common Government” established by the Constitution was “supported by wise councils, by virtuous conduct, and by mutual and friendly allowances, [it] must approach as near to perfection as any human work can aspire, and nearer than any which the annals of mankind have recorded.”⁹ Washington approved of the tone of Madison’s message, but ultimately consented to stand for reelection at the urging of his confidantes and advisors. The question then became why Washington desired such a sharp shift in focus and a dramatic expansion of his valedictory by 1796? Why move from a

⁷ George Washington to James Madison, 20 May 1792, in *The Papers of George Washington: Presidential Series*, ed. Dorothy Twohig, 15 vols. to date (Charlottesville; University Press of Virginia, 1987-), 10:400.

⁸ James Madison, “Memorandum on a Discussion of the President’s Retirement,” 5 May 1792, in *The Papers of James Madison*, eds. William T. Hutchinson and William M.E. Rachal, 17 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962-91), 14:301.

⁹ James Madison to George Washington, 20 June 1792, in *Ibid.*, 14:323, 324. Later in the year, after he had consented to forego retirement and stand for reelection, Washington took the issue of partisanship up directly with Jefferson and Hamilton. See Washington to Thomas Jefferson, 23 August 1792, and Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 26 August 1792, in *Papers: Presidential Series*, 11:23-31, 38-40.

brief and general address to an extended and quite detailed discussion of principles? Why talk about the nation's foreign policy at all? The answer boils down to the lived experience of the United States and of Washington himself in the intervening years.

Almost as soon as Washington agreed to stand for reelection, intelligence began to reach the United States of the outbreak of war between France and Austria; by March 1793, a general war in Europe seemed imminent. While Washington desired that "such an event will not take place," he also hoped that his fellow citizens would "have too just a sense of our own interest to originate any cause that may involve us in it," and he "ardently" wished that the nation would "not be forced into it by the conduct of other Nations."¹⁰ He firmly believed that it would be "unwise . . . in the extreme to involve ourselves in the contests of European Nations, where our weight could be but Small – tho' the loss to ourselves would be certain."¹¹ By early April word had reached the nation's capital at Philadelphia that France had declared war on Great Britain and Holland.¹² War between Great Britain and France was especially difficult for the United States given that the nation had formally allied itself with France in 1778 in the midst of its own revolution and that Britain was by far its most important commercial partner.¹³ Upon receiving the news Washington wrote to Secretary of

¹⁰ George Washington to David Humphreys, 23 March 1793, in *Papers: Presidential Series*, 12:362-63.

¹¹ George Washington to Gouverneur Morris, 25 March 1793, in *Ibid.*, 380.

¹² Tobias Lear to George Washington, 8 April 1793, in *Ibid.*, 434-37.

¹³ See "Treaty of Amity and Commerce" and "Treaty of Alliance," both dated 6 February 1778, in Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-48), 2:3-34, 35-44.

State Thomas Jefferson that “it behoves the Government of this Country to use every means in it’s [*sic*] power to prevent the citizens thereof from embroiling us with either of those powers, by endeavouring to maintain a strict neutrality.”¹⁴

Less than two weeks later Washington issued his famed Proclamation of Neutrality in the hopes of keeping his nation at peace with both European powers and uninvolved in their wars as anything more than a neutral trading partner.¹⁵ It should be emphasized that as far as Washington was concerned, the maintenance of American neutrality was the responsibility of all American citizens.

The Proclamation was an attempt to declare a national approach to the war, but in its wake the administration became engulfed with Franco-mania. As has been well-documented, many Americans in this period felt that not only was France following in their own nation’s revolutionary footsteps, but that the United States owed its loyalty and aid to France as a result of the 1778 alliance. While these views manifested themselves in a multitude of ways, the most problematic in the summer of 1793 was privateering. Supporters of France would arm their merchant vessels and prey upon British shipping in American waters, leading to a seemingly endless stream of letters flowing into the president from governors and revenue officers seeking guidance on how to deal with the privateers and their prizes (captured British vessels).¹⁶ The actions of these private citizens placed

¹⁴ George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, 12 April 1793, in *Papers: Presidential Series*, 12:448. See also Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 12 April 1793, in *Ibid.*, 447.

¹⁵ George Washington, “Proclamation of Neutrality,” 22 April 1793, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908*, 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908), 1:156-57.

¹⁶ See “Cabinet Opinion on the Rules of Neutrality” and “Cabinet Opinion on French Privateers,” 3 August 1793, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 13:325-27 and 327-29.

America's national neutrality on a precarious footing, as even though the privateers were not state sponsored or government sanctioned, Great Britain could justifiably complain that its vessels, sailing in supposedly neutral waters, were subject to attack.

The difficulties with privateering for the U.S. government went beyond the actions of American citizens as well. The treaty of alliance with France left open the question of what rights French privateers might have actually had to operate out of American ports. More problematic was that France's minister to the United States, Edmond Charles Genet, was actively enlisting American citizens as privateers in the cause of France. Genet first arrived in the United States to a cheering crowd in Charleston, South Carolina two weeks before Washington issued the Proclamation of Neutrality, and immediately commissioned four vessels as privateers of the French nation. After manning them with largely American crews and setting them to sea, he set up courts under the control of the local French consul in Charleston to condemn the British prizes they brought back. Ten days after he arrived in Charleston, Genet set out on a twenty-eight day trek north to Philadelphia, courting the public as he went, and caring little for the view the U.S. government was taking of his actions.¹⁷ Later in the summer, after it had been made clear to Genet that the outfitting of French privateers in American ports to prey on British shipping was prohibited, he pushed forward to begin equipping the *Petite Democrate*, a British ship originally

¹⁷ Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 335-36.

named the *Little Sarah* that had been captured by a French privateer, to set out on a privateering mission of its own.¹⁸ When Genet was ordered to stop, he threatened to ““appeal from the President to the People,”” claiming popular authority for the work he was doing.¹⁹ This was an affront to the authority and the legitimacy of the federal government, and to President Washington in particular, but Genet felt that he could engage in such behavior as a result of the enthusiastic crowds that received him throughout his travels. By August Washington and the cabinet agreed that they could no longer abide Genet’s insolence and that he would need to be recalled by the French government.²⁰ While Genet’s actions and the larger privateering issue did no permanent damage to U.S. relations with Britain or France, it acted as a stark demonstration to Washington of both the practical dangers of foreign influence being exercised domestically and the impact private citizens, with their attachments, antipathies, and actions, could have on America’s foreign relations.

In part spurred by an encouraging Genet, the Proclamation of Neutrality also caused the party development that Washington had lamented in 1792 to spiral out of control during the summer of 1793. Most disturbing to the president was

¹⁸ See “Cabinet Opinion on the *Little Sarah* [*Petite Démocrate*],” [8 July 1793], in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 13:180-85.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 352; Harry Ammon, “The Genet Mission and the Development of American Political Parties,” *Journal of American History* 52 (Mar. 1966): 727; quote taken from the Introductory Note to Alexander Hamilton to Rufus King, [13 August 1793], in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett, 27 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-87), 15:233.

²⁰ See “Notes of Cabinet Meeting on Edmond Charles Genet,” 1 and 2 August 1793, in Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd, 36 vols. to date (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-), 26:598, 601-3. A final resolution of the recall issue was not reached until 23 August. See “Cabinet Opinions on Edmond Charles Genet,” 23 August 1793, in *Ibid.*, 745.

the Republican press, which generally favored the cause of France, and continually portrayed the program of neutrality as an attempt to subvert the Franco-American treaties in aid to Great Britain. One writer, labeling himself “Veritas,” wrote several letters to Washington in May and June, which were also published in the *National Gazette* of Philadelphia, condemning him for “officially opposing the *national will*,” which he claimed supported France. Veritas predicted that “An attempt of this kind, at present, would be scouted with deserved contempt, and bring ruin on its author.”²¹ Another writer, calling himself, “A CITIZEN,” informed Washington that “The affections of thousands of your fellow-citizens are withdrawn from you, and suspicions are entertained, that you have, indignantly, cast behind you those endearing principles of republicanism, which are so congenial to the minds of your countrymen, and to a strict observance of which, you are, in a great measure, indebted for all your fame.”²² Washington’s attempts to keep the nation at peace in a war it had no direct interests at stake in were being depicted by those in favor of France as being not only pro-British but also anti-America. While this was an extreme view of the president in 1793, it was the increasingly common view that Republicans held of the Federalist program. Federalists similarly distrusted Republican motives in their seemingly unwavering devotion to France. While Washington

²¹ Emphasis in original. Veritas to George Washington, 30 May, 3 June, and 6 June 1793, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 12:647-49, 13:17-19, 34-37. Quotes are taken from the letter of 3 June. The letters were published on 1 June, 5 June, and 8 June 1793. As an interesting aside, Genet believed that the Veritas letters had been composed by Thomas Jefferson. While the true identity of Veritas is not known, there is no evidence to suggest that it was Jefferson. See Elkins and McKittrick, *Age of Federalism*, 343-45.

²² A CITIZEN to George Washington, 4 July 1793, in *Ibid.*, 13:175-77.

felt the personal attacks were unwarranted and misguided, he was greatly concerned about the populace turning against itself over a war he hoped the nation would have no direct involvement in.

Partisan vitriol worsened in 1795 with the conclusion of the Jay Treaty between the United States and Great Britain. Washington sent John Jay to Great Britain to settle the nations' differences stemming from recent violations of American neutral shipping by British vessels and British shipping by "French" privateers sailing in American waters, the impressment of American sailors to serve on British ships, and a series of long-standing complaints dating from the treaty of peace signed between the two nations at the end of the American Revolution.²³ By the summer of 1794, tensions between the United States and Great Britain had reached such a height that an open rupture seemed likely if something was not done to avert it. While the Francophiles might have welcomed such a conflict, Washington understood that war was clearly not in America's best interest given how woefully unprepared the country was to fight. War would also create a significant upheaval for American commerce and would likely widen the already substantial rift in public opinion. At the same time, Washington would not let Britain violate American rights with impunity just to avoid war. Jay succeeded in negotiating a treaty that secured peace, but little else; even Washington admitted that its terms were far from ideal, as it failed to resolve

²³ See "Definitive Treaty of Peace" between Great Britain and the United States, more commonly referred to as the Treaty of Paris, 3 September 1783, in Miller, *Treaties*, 2:151-57. The chief complaint on the part of the United States was the failure of British troops to vacate a series of posts in the American northwest; for the British it was the failure of Americans to repay debts owed to British merchants predating the Revolutionary War.

many of the issues that had led to the increased tension on the American side in the first place.²⁴

As Jay completed his negotiations, he too recognized the potential shortcomings of the treaty, but warned Alexander Hamilton, “If this Treaty fails, I despair of another.”²⁵ For those concerned with keeping the United States at peace, it was this treaty or it was nothing. Republicans saw the signing of this one-sided treaty as the consummation of a de facto alliance with Great Britain and the refutation of American obligations to France, and they regularly depicted it as such in the press. Once again, as Washington saw it, an unbiased assessment of practical realities had been abandoned in favor of partisan views, leaving him to complain of a press that had rendered “the most tortured interpretation” of the treaty and whose writings were “pregnant of the most abominable misrepresentations.”²⁶ The treaty passed the Senate with the minimum number of votes possible, and encountered a great deal of resistance in the House of Representatives. Constitutionally speaking, the House had no direct role to play in the treaty-making process, but it was responsible for originating the appropriations necessary to carry the treaty into effect. Republican congressmen

²⁴ For the text of the Jay Treaty, see “The Jay Treaty. Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation,” 19 November 1794, in *Ibid.*, 245-74.

²⁵ John Jay to Alexander Hamilton, 19 November 1794, in *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, ed. Henry P. Johnston, 4 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1890-93), 4:135.

²⁶ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 29 July 1795, in *Writings*, 34:262. Hamilton, with the aid of Rufus King, attempted to counter the Republican press by publishing a defense of the Jay Treaty they called, appropriately, “The Defence.” This was no ordinary defense, though, as from 22 July 1795 to 9 January 1796 they published thirty-eight articles, twenty-eight of which were written by Hamilton, in which they minutely analyzed the various provisions of the treaty to demonstrate how it was beneficial for the United States, and that it was neither contrary to its declared neutrality nor in violation of its treaties with France. See the Introductory Note to “The Defence No. I,” in Hamilton, *Papers*, 18:475-79.

sought to leverage this power to defeat the treaty, and with some initial success. Ultimately, though, Washington's endorsement of the treaty swayed public opinion to exert pressure on members of the House to give up their opposition and pass the appropriations. Writing in the aftermath of the crisis Washington reflected that the Republican members of the House had been motivated by "the partialities in favor of one nation, and of the prejudices against . . . Another." This sentiment, expressed just days before Washington commenced the project of drafting his Farewell Address, clearly shaped its message.²⁷

More deeply troubling to Washington than the affect these partialities and prejudices were having on the actions of the larger Republican party was the impact they had on the conduct of his personal friend and trusted advisor, Edmund Randolph. Randolph had served as an aide-de-camp to Washington during the Revolutionary War and had been a pivotal member of the Virginia delegation to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. When Washington was assembling his cabinet he tapped Randolph to be the nation's first Attorney General, and when Jefferson resigned as Secretary of State at the end of 1793 Randolph was the president's choice to replace him. Washington had complete

²⁷ George Washington to Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, 1 May 1796, in *Writings*, 35:30. For a more detailed discussion of the entire Jay Treaty episode, see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New York: Macmillan, 1923); Jerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); and Todd Estes, *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006). For an overview of the debate in the House of Representatives, see Elkins and McKittrick, *Age of Federalism*, 441-49. Finally, for a discussion of the impact of Washington's support of the Jay Treaty on the failure of the House efforts, see Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 76-77 and Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 229-30.

confidence in Randolph, confidence that proved to be misplaced. In July 1795 evidence surfaced in the form of an intercepted dispatch from Joseph Fauchet, the French minister to the United States, that while Washington had been in Pennsylvania the previous October attending to the Whiskey Rebellion, Randolph was disclosing information to Fauchet about the administration's dealings with the rebels. It was also alleged that during their conversations, Randolph solicited a bribe from Fauchet in exchange for exerting influence over how the administration would handle the rebellion from that point forward.²⁸

While historians have generally concluded that no such bribe was actually demanded, the overall direction and tone of Randolph's dealings with Fauchet were highly inappropriate, given that as Secretary of State he was laying before a foreign minister confidential insights into the nation's domestic discord, especially given that it was a minister from the very nation who had been sowing the seeds of discord just two years earlier. Historians Stanley Elkins and Erik McKittrick have argued that Fauchet's dispatch "breathed malevolence and contempt for the United States government on the part of the resident French minister, and the confidences of Edmund Randolph had had a great deal to do with the way he had arrived at those sentiments. At the very least, there was

²⁸ In late July 1795 a paper was delivered to Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott, Jr. by George Hammond, Great Britain's minister to the United States. The paper, dated 31 October 1794, was a dispatch to the French government written by Fauchet that had been intercepted by a British cruiser. A copy of the dispatch in the original French can be found in Frederick Jackson Turner, ed., "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 2:444-55; an English translation can be found in Edmund Randolph, *A Vindication of Mr. Randolph's Resignation* (Philadelphia: Samuel H. Smith, 1795), 41-48.

something here profoundly disreputable to the government's good faith and character."²⁹ A week after receiving the dispatch, Washington, in front of the entire cabinet, confronted Randolph and demanded an explanation. Randolph defended his actions as having been entirely above board, but ran from the president's house, embarrassed by what had transpired. He submitted his resignation later that day.³⁰ A burgeoning party spirit and attachments to Britain and France had torn apart Washington's first cabinet, permanently splitting Jefferson and Hamilton, and distancing him from James Madison as well. Now the attachment to France had caused a trusted friend, and the last original member of his cabinet, to actively undermine the American government.

From Confederation to Constitution: The Evolution of Washington's Foreign Policy Thought

While the events of Washington's second term, detailed only briefly here, were clearly influential in shaping his discussion of foreign policy in the Farewell Address and the import he attached to that discussion, they only served to solidify the foreign policy ideas and ideals that had been evolving in Washington's mind since the end of the American Revolution. Lessons from the Confederation period and his first presidential term helped give specific shape to the foreign policy principles tested during his second term and expounded upon in the

²⁹ Elkins and McKittrick, *Age of Federalism*, 425-26.

³⁰ John Lamberton Harper, *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160-61.

Farewell.³¹ Key to understanding the development of these principles in Washington's mind is his conception of the American government itself. Washington's views of government were largely shaped by his experience at the head of the Continental Army during the Revolution. This vantage point allowed him to see firsthand the weakness of the Confederation government in its inability to provide the army with adequate men, supplies, and monetary support.³² By the end of 1778, Washington expressed his fear that the United States was "on the brink of ruin" and he implored a fellow Virginian to "exert yourself in endeavouring to rescue your Country, by, . . . sending your ablest and best Men to Congress; these characters must not slumber, nor sleep at home, in such times of pressing danger; they must not content themselves in the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own Country, while the common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable (if a remedy is not soon applied) ruin, in which theirs also must ultimately be involved."³³ Virginia's best and brightest were needed in Congress if this nascent nation was to survive. Two years later Washington lamented "that unless Congress speaks in a more decisive tone; unless they are vested with powers by the several States competent to the great purposes of War, or assume them as a matter of right . . . our cause is lost. . . . I

³¹ It should be stressed that the point of the ensuing discussion is not to suggest that the principles of foreign policy Washington expressed in the Farewell Address were fundamentally new. Felix Gilbert's *To the Farewell Address* was grounded on the idea that U.S. foreign policy in the 1790s was a direct outgrowth of European foreign policy ideals and America's experience in the 1770s and 1780s. This section seeks to demonstrate how Washington's experience, both before and during his presidency, produced his particular understanding of these principles and shaped how and what he espoused in his Farewell Address.

³² See Ellis, *His Excellency*, 124-28 for a discussion of Washington's increasing concern for the weakness of the national government during the Revolution.

³³ George Washington to Benjamin Harrison, 18-30 December 1778, in *Writings*, 13:466.

see one head gradually changing into thirteen.”³⁴ By Washington’s side throughout much of this time was aide-de-camp Alexander Hamilton, who shared the general’s tremendous concern for the weakness of the central government. In 1780 he offered a critique of the “defects of our present system, and the changes necessary to save us from ruin.” According to Hamilton, the “fundamental defect [of the present system] is a want of power in Congress,” a “want of sufficient means at [Congress’s] disposal to answer the public exigencies and of vigor to draw forth their means.” The system also suffered from “an excess of the spirit of liberty which has made the particular states show a jealousy of all power not in their own hands.” The danger was that the “uncontrollable sovereignty in each state . . . will defeat the other powers given to Congress, and make our union feeble and precarious.”³⁵

In 1781-82 Hamilton brought his argument for a stronger central government directly to the people in a series of anonymous articles published in *The New York Packet, and the American Advertiser* known as *The Continentalist*.³⁶ He forcibly and publicly expressed the deep fears held by himself and Washington for the future of the nation if the union and its government were not placed on a more stable footing. With the approach of

³⁴ George Washington to Joseph Jones, 31 May 1780, in *Ibid.*, 18:453.

³⁵ Alexander Hamilton to James Duane, [3 September 1780], in *Papers*, 2:400-402; the full letter is 400-418. In the same spirit as this letter to Duane, Hamilton wrote an even longer letter to the nation’s first Superintendent of Finance under the Articles of Confederation, Robert Morris, expressing similar sentiments in even greater detail. See Hamilton to Morris, 30 April 1781, in *Ibid.*, 604-35.

³⁶ All of the *Continentalist* essays are reprinted in Hamilton, *Papers*. See *The Continentalist No. I*, 12 July 1781, 2:649-52; *No. II*, 19 July 1781, 654-57; *No. III*, 9 August 1781, 660-65; *No. IV*, 30 August 1791, 669-74; *No. V*, 18 April 1792, 3:75-82; and *No. VI*, 4 July 1792, 99-106.

peace with Great Britain in 1783, Washington wrote to Hamilton that the end of war marked an opportunity to affect the changes necessary to “make us a great, a respectable, and happy People,” and that such changes needed to be made by “other means than State politics, and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices.”³⁷

It took four years for the rest of the nation to come around to Washington’s view, but in May 1787 the Constitutional Convention got underway in Philadelphia with Washington presiding. During the early days of debate, Washington wrote to Thomas Jefferson, then stationed in Paris, “That something is necessary, all will agree; for the situation of the General Governmt (if it can be called a governmt) is shaken to its foundation – and liable to be upset by every blast. In a word, it is at an end, and unless a remedy is soon applied, anarchy & confusion will inevitably ensue.”³⁸ These United States were at a dire crossroads. Hamilton, also a delegate at the Convention, was one of the most ardent proponents of a strong national government.³⁹ In early July, when he was called back to New York to attend to personal business, Hamilton wrote to Washington, who was still presiding over the Convention, outlining his belief that this was “the critical opportunity for establishing the prosperity of this country on a solid

³⁷ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 31 March 1783, in *Writings*, 26:276-77.

³⁸ George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, 30 May 1787, in *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series*, eds. W. W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig, 6 vols. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992-97), 5:208.

³⁹ Of the various proposals introduced at the Convention for ways to alter or replace the Articles of Confederation, Hamilton’s called for by far the strongest national government. Speech of Alexander Hamilton, 18 June 1787, in Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, revised edition, 4 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 1:282-311. *Records* contains versions of Hamilton’s speech as transcribed by James Madison, Robert Yates, and Rufus King, as well as Hamilton’s own notes. Madison’s version is the most complete, and can be found on 282-93; Hamilton’s notes are on 304-11.

foundation.” He feared “that we shall let slip the golden opportunity of rescuing the American empire from disunion anarchy and misery. No motley or feeble measure can answer the end or will finally receive the public support.”⁴⁰

Washington was pessimistic about the prospect of success, replying to Hamilton that an examination of the progress of the Convention since he had departed would reveal “little ground on which the hope of a good establishment can be formed. In a word, I *almost* despair [*sic*] of seeing a favourable issue to the proceedings of the Convention, and do therefore repent having had any agency in this business.” Washington was especially critical of the men “who oppose a strong & energetic government” as being “narrow minded politicians . . . under the influence of local views.”⁴¹ Washington and Hamilton both believed that they could very well be witnessing the final days of the United States of America.

The Convention finished its work, producing the Constitution and establishing a stronger federal government than either Washington or Hamilton had expected. Even when placed on a stronger footing, though, Washington knew that future success would depend on the will of men and their ability to maintain national views. In the winter of 1787-88, as war between Great Britain and France appeared to be imminent, and as the ratification of the Constitution remained uncertain, Washington expressed his wish that “we shall have wisdom enough not to take a part in their quarrels.”⁴² Expanding on these sentiments, he

⁴⁰ Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, 3 July 1787, in *Papers*, 4:223-24.

⁴¹ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 10 July 1787, in *Papers: Confederation Series*, 5:257.

⁴² George Washington to William Gordon, 1 January 1788, in *Ibid.*, 6:1.

declared that in the event of a European war, “we shall feel more than ever the want of an efficient general Government to regulate our Commercial concerns, to give us a National respectability, and to connect the political views and interests of the several States under one head in such a manner as will effectually prevent them from forming separate, improper, or indeed any connection, with the European powers which can involve them in their political disputes.”⁴³

Nevertheless, he feared that “we shall certainly get involved, unless there is energy enough in Government to restrain our People within proper bounds.”⁴⁴

While it soon became clear that peace would prevail in Europe, if only for the time being, it did not wholly ease Washington’s concerns. Writing in August 1788, he declared his “hope that [the] United States of America will be able to keep disengaged from the labyrinth of European politics & Wars,” as a period of peace, along with “the adoption of a good national government,” would allow the United States to “become respectable in the eyes of the world so that none of the maritime Powers, especially none of those who hold possessions in the new world or the West Indies shall presume to treat them with insult or contempt.” With regards to Europe, “It should be the policy of [the] United America to administer to their wants, without being engaged in their quarrels. And it is not in the ability of the proudest and most potent people on earth to prevent us from becoming a great, a respectable & a commercial nation, if we shall continue united & faithful

⁴³ George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, [1 January 1788], in *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ George Washington to Henry Knox, 10 January 1788, in *Ibid.*, 28.

to ourselves.”⁴⁵ Before he had even been elected to the presidency, then, Washington had a clear sense of the principles that would guide his foreign policy and that would shape the Farewell Address eight years later. The United States needed to engage commercially with Europe without becoming otherwise involved; if the country could walk that tightrope it would achieve greatness over time. When Washington assumed the presidency early the next year, he was thankful that the Constitution had been ratified and a stronger government erected that could better coordinate domestic concerns and foreign relations, but he still appreciated that ultimate success or failure of the American experiment lied as much with the people as with their new government.

Washington’s First Term and the Nootka Sound Controversy

The first concrete foreign policy challenge faced by President Washington and his administration, the Nootka Sound Controversy, is also the most instructive for understanding his conception of America’s principles and of the challenges the United States faced as a weak nation in a world of strong powers. In the spring of 1789 as the United States was setting up its government in New York, across the continent Spain and Great Britain were looking to expand their commercial empires. At this point the United States only occupied a small portion of North America, as Britain controlled Canada and Spain maintained as colonies the Floridas and the remainder of the continent west of the Mississippi River. By and large there was minimal dispute between these two great empires over their

⁴⁵ George Washington to Edward Newenham, 29 August 1788, in *Ibid.*, 487.

North American claims, until it came to the northwest coast, where both powers aimed to establish ports to facilitate the fur trade with local Indians. Both countries set their sights on Vancouver Island, just off of the coast of modern day British Columbia, and specifically on Nootka Sound.⁴⁶

In mid-May 1788, John Meares, a retired British naval officer, landed at Nootka Sound as a preparatory step to a more permanent British settlement of the island. He lived there for roughly six weeks at the start and end of the summer, as bookends to a series of trading voyages, before departing for the winter. The following May a Spanish ship arrived at the Sound and found no evidence of prior occupation by anyone other than the natives, and claimed it for Spain. Two months later two British ships sailed to Nootka Sound to initiate trade with the local Indians, believing it to be British territory by virtue of Meares's occupation of the island the previous summer. Both ships were captured and sent as prizes to Mexico, as the Spanish commander at Nootka interpreted their presence as a violation of Spain's territorial rights. Given the great distance between Nootka Sound and the imperial centers of Great Britain and Spain, it was not until the following February that negotiations began between the two countries to equitably settle the matter. These negotiations quickly faltered as each side took a hard stance, leading the British to being preparations for a military solution.

On the surface the United States had no role to play in this European controversy, but two factors threatened to involve the Americans deeply. The

⁴⁶ Russia was also planning to extend its trading network southward from Alaska and likewise looked to Nootka Sound; however, it did not feature into this controversy.

first was the British military preparations, which included a “hot Press” wherein several thousand sailors were impressed into service in the British navy.⁴⁷ From March to September 1790 several hundred American sailors were caught up in the impressments and were forced into service for Britain. Impressment was a critical issue for American sailors and for the United States government and would increasingly become a point of conflict between the two governments over the next quarter-century. In this case, though, the more critical factor determining American involvement was the potential theaters in which an Anglo-Spanish war could be carried out and the impact this would have on the United States. It quickly became apparent to Washington and his cabinet that should hostilities erupt between Spain and Britain, the United States, surrounded by their colonies, could be forced to take sides. This belief was further encouraged when George Beckwith, a British envoy in the United States, suggested to Alexander Hamilton that “should a war take place . . . the U. States would find it to be their interest to

⁴⁷ For a fuller discussion of the Nootka Sound Controversy, see William R. Manning, “The Nootka Sound Controversy,” *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1904* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905): 281-478; Derek Pethick, *First Approaches to the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: J. J. Douglas Ltd., 1976); Barry M. Gough, *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579-1809* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), chapters 6-9; Frank T. Reuter, *Trials and Triumphs: George Washington’s Foreign Policy* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1983), 81-85; and Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, 29 May 1790 and Alexander Hamilton to Washington, [8 July 1790], in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 5:438, n. 1 and 6:26-29, source note. Julian Boyd, editor of the *Jefferson Papers*, also compiled an extensive analysis of Alexander Hamilton’s relationship with a representative of the British government, George Beckwith (whom Boyd described as being a secret agent), and discussed how the Nootka Sound Controversy played into Hamilton’s larger efforts to “bend American foreign policy toward a closer connection with Great Britain.” See “The War Crisis of 1790,” Editorial Note and accompanying documents in Jefferson, *Papers*, 17:35-108, 108-60. Boyd subsequently expanded his treatment of the incident in Julian P. Boyd, *Number 7: Alexander Hamilton’s Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy, with Supporting Documents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964). Above quote from *Ibid.*, ix.

take part with Great Britain rather than with Spain.”⁴⁸ Britain was certainly the stronger power at this point and a more important commercial partner than was Spain, but the United States could not afford a rupture with the Spanish, who controlled access to the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans, which were of tremendous importance to U.S. trade. Of course the greater danger for the United States was that Britain would displace Spain on the North American continent. As the U.S. minister to Great Britain, Gouverneur Morris, put it, should Spain submit to British naval power, “she may as well give up her american Dominions.”⁴⁹

Faced with the possibility of alliances, warfare, and territorial transfer, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson framed a British victory over Spain in quite stark terms. He warned of “The dangers to us, should Great Britain possess herself” of the Floridas and Louisiana. Britain would “possess a territory equal to half ours, beyond the Missisipi [*sic*]” and would “seduce that half of ours which is on this side the Missisipi [*sic*].” Gaining such a significant foothold on America’s borders would enable Britain to “take from the remaining part of our States the markets they now have for their produce by furnishing those markets cheaper, with the same articles.” Britain would thus “encircle us compleatly [*sic*], by these possessions on our land-board, & her fleets on our sea-board,” and “instead of two neighbors balancing each other, we shall have one, with more than the strength of both.” If Britain supplanted Spain, the continued existence of the

⁴⁸ Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, [8 July 1790], in *Papers*, 6:484-85.

⁴⁹ Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, 29 May 1790, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 5:430.

United States as an independent nation would be placed in doubt. Understanding what was at stake in this Anglo-Spanish conflict, the question for Jefferson then became, “Would the prevention of this be worth a war?”⁵⁰ For Washington and his cabinet the answer was complicated. If they could be assured that if they joined the side of Spain that Great Britain would be defeated, then obviously war would be a reasonable course; however, America’s inconsequential military and naval power would not tip the scales in Spain’s favor. The sober reality for the United States was that unless France – bankrupt and engaged in its own revolution – would throw its weight behind Spain, there was little chance of stopping Great Britain.

Washington’s administration needed to find an alternative solution. One such solution was to work with Spain to see Louisiana and the Floridas made independent, for, as Jefferson asked, “might [Spain] not prefer their Independence to their Subjection to Grt Britain?” One possibility that Jefferson rejected was Beckwith’s suggestion of an alliance with Great Britain. As no guaranteed positive outcome would result from the United States involving itself in the conflict, Jefferson concluded that “in the event of a war between Gr. Brit. & Spain we are disposed to be strictly neutral.” Should war occur, “we should view with extreme uneasiness any attempts of either power to seize the possessions of the other on our frontier, as we consider our own safety interested in a due balance between our neighbors.” Jefferson’s assessment of the Nootka Sound

⁵⁰ Thomas Jefferson, “Outline of Policy Contingent on War between England and Spain,” 12 July 1790, in *Papers*, 17:109-10.

Controversy and its possible impacts on the United States reinforced for President Washington just how precarious America's situation was and how far beyond the new government's control was the determination of its fate.⁵¹

Jefferson had clarified for Washington the real dangers posed by Anglo-Spanish hostilities but had left him unsure of how to move forward. Several days later the president requested any available information on the geographies, populations, and military capabilities of Mexico and Brazil, colonial possessions of Spain and Portugal, respectively. What precisely the president planned to do with this information is unknown, although several historians have speculated that he was entertaining the idea of a potential U.S. intervention in those colonies. No further evidence of discussion on the matter has been found, making it impossible to assess how seriously this option was considered or what Washington expected could be achieved by such an intervention, but even the preliminary consideration of such a step reveals how far afield the president's search for possible solutions went.⁵²

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Jefferson based his suggestion that the United States pursue independence for Spanish territories on a letter received by Washington from the comte d'Estaing in which d'Estaing suggested "the honesty, the convenience and the utility of making Louisiana a free colony under its own government & its own laws, and immediately protected by France & Spain." See d'Estaing to George Washington, 20 March 1790 and accompanying notes, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 5:256-61, 261-63, esp. 257.

⁵² Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 22 July 1790, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 6:114 and 114-16, source note. The editors of the *Washington Papers* noted that both Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of War Henry Knox had knowledge of the previous plans of Venezuelan revolutionary Sebastian Francisco de Miranda to conduct filibustering expeditions against the Spanish in South America and raised the question of whether or not they might have discussed these plans with Washington in light of the Nootka Sound Controversy. Knox may have also had an ongoing financial stake in Miranda's schemes. Miranda met with Britain's prime minister on 14 February 1790, three days after the British government first received word of the incident at Nootka Sound, and during that meeting the prime minister pledged British support for Miranda's plans for invading South America in the event that Britain

By early August, Washington and Jefferson had decided to use what they still believed to be an imminent war to their diplomatic advantage. From the moment the United States gained its independence, free navigation of the Mississippi River, and the right of deposit at New Orleans had been objects of repeated negotiations with Spain. Given the great military and naval advantage Britain would have over Spain in any war, Washington and Jefferson intended to leverage an offer of American friendship to extract concessions from Spain on these points.⁵³ In support of his plan, Washington went so far as to write to the Marquis de Lafayette, a prominent leader in France and a close personal friend of Washington's dating back to the Frenchman's service in support of the United States during the American Revolution. If anyone would assist Washington in this project it was the French, who deplored the prospect of British advancement on the North American continent just as much as the Americans and the Spanish did. In his letter to Lafayette, Washington observed that the United States was "patiently advancing in our task of civil government, unentangled in the crooked politics of Europe, wanting scarcely any thing but the free navigation of the Mississippi." In the event of war between Britain and Spain, the United States would "observe a strict neutrality," though he expected that their "friendship" would be "courted" by both sides. Specifically with regards to Spain, Washington

went to war with Spain. Miranda met with the prime minister again in May and received similar assurances. See *Ibid.*, 114-15, source note; Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, [c. 15-22 July 1790], in *Ibid.*, 81-82, n. 8; and Manning, "Nootka Sound Controversy," 370-71, 380, 383-84.
⁵³ Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 8 August 1790, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 6:217-18, source note. See also Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, "enclosing Outline of Policy," 2 August 1790, in *Papers*, 17:111-16.

asked “Why will not Spain be wise and liberal at once? It would be easy to annihilate all causes of quarrels between that Nation and the United States at this time. At a future period that may be far from being a fact.” The not-so-subtle suggestion was that both nations had something to gain by an immediate negotiation. Washington closed his letter by predicting that “Should a war take place between Great Britain and Spain, I conceive from a great variety of concurring circumstances there is the highest probability that the Floridas will soon be in the possession of the former.” Whether aiming to plant the seed that Spain could declare the Floridas independent, or simply trying to add greater weight to his letter, Washington was painting a bleak picture for the Spanish in North America in the event of war with Britain while also alluding to some steps that could improve their situation.⁵⁴ He was clearly hoping that Lafayette could use his influence to encourage Spain to negotiate with the United States.

While the Lafayette letter is a fascinating example of a weak nation (the United States) trying to wield the power of a strong nation (Great Britain) to bring a third party (Spain) to the negotiating table, it would take months to receive a response from Europe. More than this, a positive response would not diminish the dangers posed to the United States by an Anglo-Spanish War – and there was no assurance of a positive response – and it did not reduce the perceived likelihood that war could break out on the nation’s borders at any time. By late August, Washington had become convinced, as he expressed it to Vice President John Adams, “that New Orleans and the Spanish Posts above it on the Mississippi

⁵⁴ George Washington to Lafayette, 11 August 1790, in *Papers: Presidential Series*, 6:234-35.

will be among the first attempts of the [British], and that the reduction of them will be undertaken by a combined operation from Detroit.” Writing to Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, Secretary of War Henry Knox, and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court John Jay, Washington asked for advice on how he should respond to the British minister, Lord Dorchester, “in case he should apply for permission to march Troops through the Territory of the said States from Detroit to the Mississippi,” and “What notice ought to be taken of the measure if it should be undertaken without leave, which is the most probably proceeding of the two?”⁵⁵ Washington’s concern was twofold. First, as a neutral nation, what were the implications of the United States allowing or disallowing British troops to move through its territory? Second, how should the United States respond if its territorial sovereignty was not respected and the British marched through against America’s wishes or without previously asking for permission? The premise underlying both questions was that the U.S. did not want to see the British troop movement in the first place. The answers Washington received to his queries all hinged upon the idea that the United States had to recognize what its true interests were, but that it had to balance those with the current inability of the nation to defend itself militarily in support of those interests if either Britain or Spain should violate them. How the United States should respond to this particular situation stood at the root of his advisors’ responses.

Jay believed that the only way the United States could refuse the British would be if they “should declare and make it an invariable Maxim in their Policy

⁵⁵ George Washington to John Adams, 27 August 1790, in *Ibid.*, 6:343-45.

never to permit the Troops of any Nation to pass thro' their country." He pointed out that "Such a Measure might be wise in case the U.S. were in Capacity to act accordingly; but that not being as yet the case, it would perhaps in the present Moment be unreasonable." If the United States did refuse and the British marched anyways, they likely faced "one of two inevitable Inconveniences;" namely "that of opposing their Progress by Force of Arms and thereby risque being involved in the War; or of submitting to the Disgrace and Humiliation of permitting them to proceed with Impunity." As either result was undesirable, Jay favored allowing the troop movement.⁵⁶ Jefferson saw the same difficult choice as Jay, namely that if they refused the movement and the British marched anyways, the United States would either need to "enter immediately into the war, or pocket an acknowledged insult in the face of the world: and one insult pocketed soon produces another." If Washington had to give an answer, he believed that he should allow it; however, he preferred a "middle course" in which they should "avoid giving any answer." In his estimation, the British "will proceed notwithstanding. but to do this under our silence, will admit of palliation, and produce apologies, from military necessity; & will leave us free to pass it over without dishonor, or to make it a handle of quarrel hereafter, if we should have use for it as such." By neither approving nor condemning a troop movement, they avoided possible insult should the British disregard their wishes and it left the United States free to act at future points as their interests dictated.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ John Jay to George Washington, 28 August 1790, in *Ibid.*, 354-55.

⁵⁷ Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 28 August 1790, in *Papers*, 17:129-30.

Adams disagreed with the conclusions reached by Jay and Jefferson. He believed that in order to maintain American neutrality, and more importantly the *appearance* of neutrality, it was necessary for the administration to refuse the British troop movement. He argued that to grant the British “permission to march troops through the territory of the United States . . . would not only have an appearance offensive to the Spaniards, of partiality to the English, but would be a real Injury to Spain.” Even if they also granted Spain the right to move its troops through U.S. territory, the initial step would be perceived as a facilitation of British aggression, thus the only truly equitable response was to deny any British request. Adams acknowledged that should Great Britain proceed anyways, the United States would then be faced with a decision for war, but rather than fight or sheepishly accept the insult, he saw the real alternative to war being negotiation. He asserted that “Nations are not obliged to declare War for every Injury or even Hostility. A tacit Acquiescence under such an Outrage, would be misinterpreted on all hands; by Spain as inimical to her and by Brittain [*sic*], as the effect of Weakness, Disunion and Pusillanimity. Negotiation then is the only other Alternative.” Adams admitted that negotiation was itself “attended with peculiar difficulties,” and was not likely to produce a positive effect, but it kept the United States out of war, avoided “a tacit Acquiescence,” and allowed them to stand firmly by their avowed neutrality in the eyes of the rest of the world.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ John Adams to George Washington, 29 August 1790, in *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, 10 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1850-56), 8:498-99.

Knox also determined that the passage should be refused, but that the refusal should not be backed by force, as “The true interests of the United States dictate a state of neutrality in the affair between Spain and England.” Neutrality was more important to America’s long-term interests than was the British insult. Along these lines, Knox feared that American neutrality would also be threatened by existing treaty obligations to France, as he believed it to be “highly improbable that Spain would enter the War unless she expected to be supported by France.” In that event, “every effort on the part of France will be employed to associate America in the War. And it is a question of great moment whether the United States could strictly comply with the treaty of friendship and Commerce entered into with France . . . and observe an exact Neutrality.”⁵⁹ Almost three years before the Proclamation of Neutrality, Washington and his advisors were already beginning to see the unintended consequences and great dangers posed by enduring foreign alliances. Hamilton also raised the potential complications raised by treaty commitments, but leaned towards the view that there was no solid foundation to believe that France would actually involve itself in the war. He concluded that the United States was in no position to oppose the passage, and would derive greater benefit from granting permission to a British request, as he argued that if the troops were going to proceed regardless of the American response, the British might be more inclined to acknowledge American rights of

⁵⁹ Henry Knox to George Washington, 29 August 1790, in Washington, *Papers: Presidential Series*, 6:365-66.

navigation on the Mississippi if the United States did not hamper the war effort.⁶⁰ Of all the responses Washington received, Hamilton's was the most driven by a pragmatic reaction to realistic outcomes rather than a concern for larger principles or ideals.

For Washington and his administration, this flurry of letters on how to respond to a possible British troop movement and the ramifications of that response for American principles and policy proved to be the end point of documented discussions as the seemingly imminent war never arrived. As Hamilton had expected, France could not commit to entering a war against Britain, leaving Spain, in the face of Britain's naval and military supremacy, to pursue a negotiated solution. Historians of Washington's presidency have tended to give only minimal consideration to the Nootka Sound Controversy in assessing his foreign policy principles and mindset since there was no war and thus no formal diplomatic response. While this fact makes it virtually impossible to know which course Washington would have pursued – especially given that he did not respond in writing to any of these last letters he received stemming from Nootka – the cabinet's discussion of theoretical plans of action is in many ways more useful for understanding Washington than had a war actually broken out. The Nootka Sound Controversy confirmed Washington in his belief in the importance of U.S. neutrality in foreign war and politics and it acted as a stark reminder of how precarious the U.S. situation was given that it was surrounded by European colonies and could thus be easily embroiled in a war it had no interests in the

⁶⁰ Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, 15 September 1790, in *Ibid.*, 439-59.

causes of but everything at stake in the outcome. The Nootka letters also likely clarified two additional thoughts for Washington. First, it illuminated the great dangers posed by permanent alliances with other powers. Knox's warning of the difficult decisions the United States would face should France enter the war make it that much easier to understand why the president was proactive in announcing American neutrality when war erupted throughout Europe three years later. Second, and more importantly, the entire Nootka Sound Controversy instructed Washington that the conduct of American diplomacy was really about managing America's weakness and pursuing policies that would minimize the nation's exposure while best fostering its long-term growth and security. Attempting to leverage American friendship to extract concessions from Spain was a perfect example of this. The disagreement over how to best respond to a British request to march troops through U.S. territory when the government could do nothing to prevent it also emerged from differing viewpoints on this idea. Later in his administration, the Jay Treaty was the embodiment of it. The Nootka Sound Controversy produced no concrete foreign policy precedents, but it did help to shape Washington's understanding of America's foreign policy principles – principles that helped to guide him through the crises of his second term and served as the foundation of his Farewell Address to the American people.

The Farewell

With the peaceful resolution of the Nootka Sound Controversy in Europe, the remainder of Washington's first term passed in relative peace from a foreign

policy perspective. When he approached James Madison to help with the drafting of a valedictory in 1792, foreign policy was not on his mind. Madison convinced Washington that the address should be written directly to the people, as a reflection on the American experience to that point. With Nootka having been debated out of public view and two years in the past, and with the internationalization of the French Revolution and the popular upheavals it brought still a year away, there was no immediate context or need for a discussion of foreign policy principles, thus the draft Madison prepared contained no mention of them. By 1796, with all of the changes and stresses the nation had experienced during his second term, Washington clearly understood that the project of constructing a new valedictory address was a much different undertaking than it had been four years earlier. This was further cemented in Washington's mind, as preparations for composing it commenced in the immediate aftermath of the House debate over the Jay Treaty appropriations. Washington had grown distant from Madison since 1792, so when he began preparations for a new valedictory he turned to a man who understood his approach to American government, union, and foreign policy better than anyone else, Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton's impact on the form, scope, and specific content of the Farewell Address has been hotly debated by historians. Felix Gilbert argued that while Hamilton used Washington's ideas in framing his version of the Address, "he placed them in a different setting and gave them a new meaning."⁶¹ Alexander

⁶¹ Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 133.

DeConde took this a step further in pointing to the “prominent” hand of Alexander Hamilton in the construction of what he described as a “political manifesto, a campaign document.”⁶² Samuel Flagg Bemis disagreed with these views, and instead argued that “the ideas and thought of the Farewell Address are intrinsically the President’s own. Where he ceased to agree with Hamilton, Washington could not be led.”⁶³ Victor Hugo Paltsits came to the same conclusions as Bemis, emphasizing the process Washington went through in constructing the final draft as he “drew upon each source and altered or introduced words at will, even words that were in no anterior draft. In the last analysis he was his own editor; and the Farewell Address, in the final form for publication, was *all* in his own handwriting. It was then in content and form what *he* had chosen to make it by processes of adoption and adaptation in fulfilment [*sic*] of what *he* desired. By this procedure every idea became his own without equivocation.”⁶⁴

Hamilton’s biographers have tended to emphasize the cooperative nature of the venture. Broadus Mitchell saw the Address as “the joint product of Washington and Hamilton. Hamilton’s was the lesser rôle, but important if only

⁶² DeConde, “Washington’s Farewell,” 648.

⁶³ Samuel Flagg Bemis, “The Background of Washington’s Foreign Policy,” *Yale Review* 16 (Jan. 1927): 335. Bemis has also argued that the writings of a young John Quincy Adams may have influenced Washington in the construction of his first draft of the Farewell Address in 1796. See Bemis, “John Quincy Adams and George Washington,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1945): 365-84, especially 377-83.

⁶⁴ Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address*, 53-54. James Thomas Flexner pointed out that “Had Hamilton drafted the address according to his own thinking, Washington would have simply laid it aside.” He brought the thought to its logical conclusion in arguing that “The Farewell Address could be considered Hamilton’s had it expressed Hamilton’s ideas. It expressed Washington’s. . . . Although grounded on Hamilton’s Main Draft, the famous paper is correctly called Washington’s Farewell Address.” James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 349.

because he furnished the form of words which conferred additional merit on the thoughts. . . . In the Farewell Address they worked together over both principles and expression.”⁶⁵ Ron Chernow argued that “It is difficult to disentangle the contributions of Washington and Hamilton because their ideas overlapped on many issues,” and because “their two voices blended admirably together.” He described the results as “a literary miracle. If Hamilton was the major wordsmith, Washington was the tutelary spirit and final arbiter of what went in. The poignant opening section in which Washington thanked the American people could never have been written by Hamilton alone. Conversely, the soaring central section, with its sophisticated perspective on policy matters, showed Hamilton’s unmistakable stamp.”⁶⁶ Gilbert Lycan, taking a closer look at the foreign policy section of the Address, concluded that “Hamilton contributed notably to the composition of the Farewell Address. He is responsible not only for its beautiful style but also for many of its best-known principles. His role in its creation, though second to that of Washington, is one of his greatest legacies to his nation.”⁶⁷

Foregoing a detailed discussion of each draft of the Address, what emerges from a close examination of them is that Hamilton’s involvement made it

⁶⁵ Broadus Mitchell, *Alexander Hamilton: The National Adventure, 1788-1804* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 388.

⁶⁶ Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 506.

⁶⁷ Gilbert L. Lycan, *Alexander Hamilton & American Foreign Policy: A Design for Greatness* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 283, 294. Lycan also argued that three of the fourteen distinct foreign policy ideas the Address enunciated were entirely Hamilton’s. These were the occasional need for temporary alliances, the value of the recent commercial treaties concluded by the United States, and the need for an impartial commercial policy towards all nations.

possible for Washington to figure out what he wanted to say and how to best articulate it, but the beliefs themselves, the principles put forward, were all truly Washington's.⁶⁸ A few key passages from the president's first draft of May 1796 illustrate this point. He expressed his wish "That we may avoid connecting ourselves with the Politics of any Nation, farther than shall be found necessary to regulate our own trade." He hoped "That every citizen would take pride in the name of an American, and act as if he felt the importance of the character by considering that we ourselves are now a distinct Nation the dignity of which will be absorbed if not annihilated, if we enlist ourselves (further than our obligations may require) under the banners of any other Nation whatsoever. And moreover, that we would guard against the Intrigues [*sic*] of *any* and *every* foreign Nation who shall endeavor to intermingle (however covertly and indirectly) in the internal concerns of our country." He admonished "That whatsoever and so long as we profess to be Neutral, let our public conduct whatever our private affections may be, accord therewith; without suffering partialities on one hand, or prejudices on the other to controul our Actions." Finally, Washington asserted that "without the gift of prophecy, it may safely be pronounced, that if this country can remain in peace for 20 years longer: and I devoutly pray that it may do so to the end of time; such in all probability will be its population, riches, and resources, when combined with its peculiarly happy and remote Situation from the other quarters

⁶⁸ The process the two men went through to construct the Farewell Address is really quite interesting, but is also of secondary importance to the larger point of this dissertation. For a thorough description of the process, see Paltsits, *Washington's Farewell Address*, 31-54 and James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington: Anguish and Farewell (1793-1799)* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 292-303 among other works.

of the globe, as to bid defiance, in a just cause, to any earthly power whatsoever.”⁶⁹ Looking back at the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that Hamilton gave to the Farewell Address a distinctive thoroughness, structure, and style, but the major ideas were all present in Washington’s first draft.

With a clearer understanding of why Washington chose to discuss his principles of foreign policy in the Farewell Address, the question still remains as to what he was trying to accomplish by invoking these principles? In the short term, the Address was written with successor concerns in mind. The two worst kept secrets in the nation’s capital in the summer of 1796 were that Washington intended to retire and that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were contending to replace him.⁷⁰ Given that a basic premise of the Address was that passionate attachments for certain foreign nations bred unwise policies, Washington clearly had to fear for the outcome of the pending election and the implications the next president’s politics would have on America’s relationship with Great Britain and France. Despite these successor concerns, DeConde’s labeling of the Address as little more than a campaign document was an inaccurate assessment of it for two critical reasons. First, while it hoped to impact Americans’ approach to the coming election, the Address was written so as to not be grounded in the

⁶⁹ George Washington, “Farewell Address [First Draft],” [15 May 1796], in *Writings*, 35:51-61, esp. 56-57.

⁷⁰ Washington himself wrote to Hamilton in June 1796, complaining that he should have published the Address earlier in the year and that “It would have been announcing *publicly*, what seems to be very well understood, and is industriously propagated, *privately*. It would have removed all doubts from the mind of *all*, and left the field clear for *all*.” Emphasis in original. George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 26 June 1796, in *Ibid.*, 103.

immediate politics of the time. It expressed contemporary concerns and alluded to recent experience, but there was a conscious decision made to not specifically reference Great Britain and France or the actions of particular people or parties. In transmitting his first draft to Hamilton, Washington stated that “My object has been, and must continue to be, to avoid personalities; allusions to particular measures, which may appear pointed; and to expressions which could not fail to draw upon me attacks which I should wish to avoid, and might not find agreeable to repel.”⁷¹ He recognized that the Address could have a political impact, but he distinctly did not want it to be a political document.

Second, even if pointing to Hamilton’s unabashed partisanship in his other endeavors, it is not possible to place his intentions ahead of Washington’s when interpreting the Farewell Address. Washington had specifically instructed Hamilton that even if he “should think it best to throw the *whole* [draft] into a different form,” it should still be “predicated on the Sentiments contained in the enclosed Paper.”⁷² Hamilton did this, and in constructing his draft of the Address, felt it to be his “object to render this act *importantly* and *lastingly* useful, and avoiding all just cause of present exception, to embrace such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time, & redound to future reputation.”⁷³ Just like Washington, he did not want the Address to be rooted in the politics of 1796. Even the language in the Address that can be interpreted as being more overtly political when attributed to Hamilton must be

⁷¹ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 15 May 1796, in *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 48, 50.

⁷³ Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, 30 July 1796, in *Papers*, 20:265.

read in light of how Washington would likely have understood it. When Hamilton made reference to the “tools & dupes” of the favorite nation (France), he was likely thinking of leading members of the Republican party, such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.⁷⁴ When Washington kept the reference in the final draft, Edmund Randolph more likely came to mind as someone who had actively worked against his government for the sake of that favorite nation.⁷⁵

Washington was optimistic that the Address would influence people’s behavior beyond the presidential election. He described the “Sentiments” expressed in Hamilton’s draft to be “extremely just, and such as ought to be inculcated.” In the Address itself he offered the “counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish; that they will controul the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the Destiny of Nations.” He continued by declaring his hope that these counsels “may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign Intriague [*sic*], to guard against the Impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompence for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.”⁷⁶ For the good of the country, Washington wanted the Address to have an impact. In the short term, the influenced behavior

⁷⁴ Alexander Hamilton, “Draft of Washington’s Farewell Address,” 30 July 1796, in *Ibid.*, 284.

⁷⁵ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 19 September 1796, in *Writings*, 35:233.

⁷⁶ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 10 August 1796, in *Ibid.*, 178; and George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 19 September 1796, in *Ibid.*, 236.

should be a diminution of partisanship and the election of a successor who would dedicate himself to the principles of Washington's administration, not to mention a cooling of the rhetoric surrounding America's relationship with France and Britain.

In the longer term, Washington's objective was more nuanced. There were fundamental ideas that should be taken from the Address – the importance of a strong union and government, the constant need to put aside antipathies and affections in order to properly recognize America's true interest and to let that guide American action – but more than anything it was supposed to be a reminder that the country was still young and developing and needed time to mature. The best interest of the United States was seeing the attainment of that time. In Washington's first draft he had expressed the hope that “this country can remain in peace for 20 years longer”⁷⁷ This was an idea that was not new to Hamilton when he took up the task of reworking Washington's draft. The previous summer, in writing a defense of the Jay Treaty, he had declared, “If we can avoid War for ten or twelve years more we shall then have acquired a maturity, which will make it no more than a common calamity and will authorize us in our national discussions to take a higher & more imposing tone.”⁷⁸ In the published version of the Farewell Address, specific timeframes were removed in favor of the more abstract declaration that “the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude

⁷⁷ George Washington, “Farewell Address [First Draft],” [15 May 1796], in *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷⁸ Alexander Hamilton, “The Defence No. II,” [25 July 1795], in *Papers*, 18:499.

as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by our justice shall Counsel.”⁷⁹ Washington’s final version of the Address expanded on this point in a paragraph that had not appeared in any previous iteration. “With me,” it said, “a predominant motive has been to endeavour to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency, which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.”⁸⁰ If the United States was going to rise to equal the powers of Europe, it needed time to develop.

Time itself was not enough, though, as it needed to be time well spent. Time free from foreign influence and partisan instability, time free from international conflict. Even at peace, it needed to be time spent developing the means for self-defense, as he frequently reiterated the idea throughout his writings that “If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it.”⁸¹ It was also time when the citizens of America needed to look beyond their local attachments and partisan views and begin to come together once again as Americans. James Madison’s original draft of a valedictory contained language referring to

⁷⁹ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 19 September 1796, in *Writings*, 35:234.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸¹ George Washington, “Fifth Annual Address,” 3 December 1793, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:138-42. Two years later he again reminded Congress of the need to conduct a “review of our Military establishment,” and in his final annual address he moved past the regular military and stressed that “the protection of a Naval force is indispensable,” a point which he elaborated on in some detail. George Washington, “Seventh Annual Address,” 8 December 1795 and “Eighth Annual Address,” 7 December 1796, in *Ibid.*, 182-86, 199-204.

Americans as “the children of one common country.”⁸² Four years later similar sentiments were expressed in the final draft. Along these lines, the one portion of the Address Washington and Hamilton disagreed on was a section dealing with the creation of a national military academy. For Hamilton it was too specific a policy recommendation to merit inclusion in the president’s valedictory, but to Washington the military academy was more than just a school to teach the next generation of America’s fighting men, it represented the central institution for cementing the Union in the minds of the next generation of America’s national leaders. Washington demanded of Hamilton, “What, but the mixing of people from different parts of the United States during the [Revolutionary] War rubbed off these impressions? A century in the ordinary intercourse, would not have accomplished what the Seven years association in Arms did: but that ceasing, prejudices are beginning to revive again, and never will be eradicated so effectually by any other means as the intimate intercourse of characters in early life, who, in all probability, will be at the head of the councils of this country in a more advanced stage of it.”⁸³ As far as Washington was concerned, the interests of the United States were best served by maintaining peaceful relations with Europe and by cementing the bonds of Union at home. The achievement of these two goals would secure to the nation the time it needed to ensure its survival and prosperity.

Towards Retirement

⁸² James Madison to George Washington, 20 June 1792, in *Papers*, 14:323.

⁸³ George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 1 September 1796, in *Writings*, 35:199-200.

When George Washington left Philadelphia for Mount Vernon on the morning of 19 September 1796, leaving the scene before the public would get hold of his valedictory, he believed that he had laid out a coherent set of foreign policy principles to guide the nation in the short term, and some basic but fundamental maxims that would lead the United States to future greatness. He hoped his Address would have a positive impact on Americans because he feared for the survival of the nation if affairs progressed as they had for the past four years. In the remaining years of Washington's life, both his hopes and his fears would be realized.

Two: Washington's Farewell in the American Mind, 1796-1817

As Thomas Jefferson rose to deliver his inaugural address on 4 March 1801, he faced new and different challenges than had his predecessors in the presidency. George Washington had confronted the daunting task of presiding over the new government created by the Constitution, putting his reputation on the line to give it added authority and legitimacy. As John Adams took office, not only was he leading in the wake of Washington, but storm clouds were fast approaching both domestically and internationally as mass partisanship was coming to define American politics and as relations with France were quickly deteriorating. When Jefferson took the reins, though, the government had been established, the quasi-war that had developed with France was on the verge of resolution, and his Republican party had become the majority party and had soundly defeated the Federalists throughout much of the country. For him, then, at least at the beginning of his presidency, his challenge was not to navigate the country between war and peace, but rather how to mold the government and the nation into his own Republican image. To put it another way, as Federalist Roger Griswold of Connecticut fretted a few months into Jefferson's presidency, "Under this administration nothing is to remain as it was, . . . every minutia is to be changed. When Mr. Adams was President, the door of the president's House opened to the East. Mr. Jefferson has closed that door and opened a new door to the West."¹

¹ Stephen Howard Browne, *Jefferson's Call for Nationhood: The First Inaugural Address* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 42.

Jefferson was eager to get to work putting the nation back on the right path it had diverted from under Federalist leadership. As he stood before Congress on that 4th of March, he sought to lay out the “essential principles of our Government . . . which ought to shape its Administration.” He saw the United States as “A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye.” As Washington had discussed on many occasions, and as would become a familiar trope in years to come, the nation had a great destiny, but it was only attainable if the people remained committed to the project of a republican union. He reminded Americans that although partisanship had marked recent years, “every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.” On the subject of American foreign policy, he promised “Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.” In discussing these principles, he declared that they formed “the bright constellation which has gone before us and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or of alarm,

let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.”²

To those who heard Jefferson deliver his inaugural, it was an underwhelming performance. As historian Forrest McDonald put it, the inaugural “was delivered in a voice so unprepossessing that few could even hear it, much less be inspired by it.”³ Where the address shone, though, was in print as it circulated throughout the nation in newspapers, broadsides, and pamphlets. “Entangling alliances with none” had a special impact, as it immediately became the phrase popularly used to describe the fundamental principles of American foreign policy. When it first appeared it was seen as a nod to George Washington’s Farewell Address, and as a pithy restatement of its complex maxims for foreign policy. As the rest of this chapter and dissertation will reveal, though, this phrase and its ultimate association with Washington’s valedictory dramatically changed the Farewell in the American mind and oversimplified its original meanings, over time turning its pragmatic axioms for the conduct of American foreign relations into a rigid and permanent declaration of virtual isolation. This process took many years, and its ramifications would not be fully realized until the mid-1820s and after, but its impact on popular understandings of the Farewell could be seen less than ten years after it was first written.

² Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address,” 4 March 1801, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908*, 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908), 1:321-24.

³ Forrest McDonald, *The Presidency of Thomas Jefferson* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1976), 39.

This chapter will investigate the evolving conceptions of Washington's Farewell Address in the American mind in the two decades after its publication. From initial reactions to the role it played in commemorating Washington after his death in December 1799, the Address quickly came to shape the Americans' minds, both with regard to principles of foreign policy and how they conceived of America's past, present, and future. "Entangling alliances with none" becomes vitally important because of the influence it had on such conceptions. This chapter will also examine how the Address was interpreted by Washington's successors in office and how their understandings shaped some of the major foreign policies pursued by their administrations. The purpose is not to give a comprehensive history of foreign policy decision making in the Adams, Jefferson, and Madison administrations, but rather to consider how Washington's principles influenced foreign policy construction on a broader level after his retirement and death. In the end, this chapter will provide an overarching examination of the evolution of Washington's Farewell Address in the American popular and political mind in the period from 1796 through the end of James Madison's presidency.

Reactions to the Farewell Address

By the summer of 1796 Washington's impending retirement was the nation's proverbial worst kept secret. This did not stop a rabid press from relaying the news and the text of his valedictory address after its initial

publication in *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* on 19 September.⁴ Philadelphia newspapers began reprinting it in their later editions that same day, with the text making its way throughout the nation over the ensuing days, weeks, and months.⁵ As Victor Hugo Paltsits pointed out in his landmark 1935 study of the physical history of the Farewell, there was surprisingly little commentary on it in many newspapers when it was first reprinted. For many Republican papers, the silence was the result of them quickly turning their attention away from Washington and towards the approaching presidential election.⁶ Commentaries did emerge, though, and for some they were heavily influenced by partisanship. Those who had come to paint Washington as a Federalist, or as having fallen into Hamilton's clutches, tended to see the Farewell as being a campaign document, aimed at generating support for John Adams at Thomas Jefferson's expense. William Duane, for example, wrote a scathing public letter to Washington accusing the outgoing president of trying to present his partisan views in the guise of disinterested warnings, declaring that "you have discharged the loathings of a sick mind; you have collected the aggravating recollections of wounded pride, and warmed to the inveteracy of hatred, discharged the whole burthen of your blazing spirit at the object of your personal dislike, under the form of advice to your

⁴ "To the People of the United States; Friends and Fellow Citizens," *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 19 September 1796.

⁵ See, for example, "To the People of the United States," *Philadelphia Gazette*, 19 September 1796; "To the People of the United States," *Federal Gazette* (New York), 21 September 1796; "Resignation of the President," *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven), 28 September 1796; "President's Resignation to the People of the United States," *Rural Repository* (Leominster, MA), 29 September 1796; etc.

⁶ Victor Hugo Paltsits, *Washington's Farewell Address: In Facsimile, with Transliterations of All the Drafts of Washington, Madison, & Hamilton, Together with Their Correspondence and Other Supporting Documents* (New York: New York Public Library, 1935), 62.

beloved country!” Duane was especially worked up over the Jay Treaty and how it brought the United States closer to Great Britain while Washington sought to push the United States away from France. He argued that “Whatever may have stimulated you to the execution of such a treaty, it is evident the advice you have offered to your fellow citizens, with regard to foreign connexions, conveys a tacit condemnation of that measure, while it displays an attempt to defend your conduct, though deviating from the policy you recommend.”⁷ Many Republicans contended, just as Duane had, that Washington’s warnings about foreign connections struck a hypocritical tone given his treatment of Britain and France. Republican views of Washington’s conduct toward Europe clouded their interpretations of his Farewell Address and led them to see it as electioneering.

Despite the views of some Republican partisans, it is important not to overstate the weight given to these opinions in the broader popular consciousness. The vast majority of Americans, regardless of partisan leanings, still had respect for and complete faith in Washington and greeted his valedictory with the sad acknowledgement that he was leaving public life. New York’s *Daily Advertiser*, for example, remarked that “there is nothing we can say, that will fully express the estimation in which his illustrious and important services are held by the citizens of this much favoured country; or that will equally express their regret at

⁷ Jasper Dwight [William Duane], *A Letter to George Washington, President of the United States: Containing Strictures on His Address of the Seventeenth of September, 1796, Notifying His Relinquishment of the Presidential Office* (Philadelphia, 1796), 35, 26. For another politically charged attack on Washington’s motives, see *President II. Being Observations On the Late Official Address of George Washington: Designed to Promote the Interest of a Certain Candidate for the Executive, and to Explode the Pretensions of Others. Addressed to the People of the United States* (Newark, NJ: Daniel Dodge, and Co., 1796).

being deprived of the continuance of his paternal watchfulness and care.”⁸ More important than such expressions of sorrow, though, was the immediate recognition by many of the importance of what Washington had said in his Farewell. One orator in Salem, Massachusetts, speaking at a local celebration of Washington’s birthday in 1797, commented, “But even when retired to private life, will our WASHINGTON continue to bless his country, if his affectionate valedictory address is duly regarded. While it manifests the sincerest patriotism, it abounds with the wisest and best political maxims.”⁹ Oliver Wolcott, Sr., whose son was the Secretary of the Treasury at the close of Washington’s administration, described the Farewell’s advice as “the best which could possibly be given.”¹⁰

Despite a widespread hearty endorsement of the Address and its maxims, much of the positive commentary was very general in nature, and it is not a large leap in logic to suggest that such approbation, at least in the immediate short term, stemmed as much from the fact that it had come from Washington’s pen as from its actual principles. One of the enduring facets of the popular approval of the Address was the tension between belief in the wisdom of the principles it enunciated and faith in the wisdom of Washington and thus unquestioned support of his valedictory. This tension manifested itself most notably when questions

⁸ *The Daily Advertiser* (New York), 21 September 1796.

⁹ Benjamin Pickman, Jun., *An Oration, Pronounced, February 22, 1797, Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Salem, in Massachusetts, Assembled to Commemorate the Birth-day of George Washington, President of the United States of America* (Salem, MA: Thomas C. Cushing, 1797), 16.

¹⁰ Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, 3 October 1796, in George Gibbs, *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams: Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury*, 2 vols. (New York: W. Van Norden, 1846), 1:385-86.

about the authorship of the Address were discussed publicly in the 1820s. Questions about the nature of American support for the Address aside, a demonstration of the immediate significance attached to it can be seen in how widely available the text became in the months after its initial publication, as printers not only put it in their newspapers but also started selling it in pamphlet form. Paltsits, focusing only on the year 1796, compiled a list of over 140 newspapers in which the Address was reprinted, and identified at least forty-six separate pamphlet publications.¹¹ Washington had not left office yet, and his Farewell was being put forward as an important contribution to the nation's history and future.

The formal announcement of Washington's retirement also meant the beginning of the first contested presidential election. Adhering to contemporary political norms, neither of the major candidates, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, actively campaigned on their own behalf, leaving the "dirty work" to surrogates, newspaper editors, and local party functionaries. The vagaries of the Electoral College make it nearly impossible to assess what impact, if any, the Farewell Address had on the contest, but in the end, Adams won the presidency, and Jefferson succeeded Adams as vice president.¹² When Adams took office he

¹¹ Paltsits, *Washington's Farewell Address*, 311-60. Paltsits lists every newspaper and every separate edition of the Address; the above statistics do not include international printings.

¹² The Constitution provided that the president and vice president would be chosen by the Electoral College, and that each state could determine how it would select its own electors. In 1796, seven of the sixteen states provided for some form of popular election of electors (meaning that people would vote for electors who would vote for president), seven had legislative selection (meaning that people would vote for their state legislators, who would choose the electors who would vote for president), and two states had systems that melded popular and legislative selection. While even at this early date it was generally known for what party the potential

committed himself to carrying out Washington's policies. In his inaugural address he warned against "the pestilence of foreign influence" and expressed his "inflexible determination to maintain peace and inviolable faith with all nations, and that system of neutrality and impartiality among the belligerent powers of Europe."¹³ In his first address to Congress, he announced his desire to "preserve peace and friendship with all nations" and reiterated the maxim that "we ought not to involve ourselves in the political system of Europe, but to keep ourselves always distinct and Separate from it if we can."¹⁴ To further preserve the link to Washington, Adams retained his cabinet, not fully realizing that Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, Secretary of War James McHenry, and Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott, Jr. had dedicated themselves to Adams's nemesis, Alexander Hamilton.

One of the great ironies of Adams's presidency was that while he honestly strove to be non-partisan, he presided over some of the bitterest party struggles

electors would vote, given how removed the average citizen was from the actual election of the president, it is difficult to trace the influence of the Farewell Address on the outcome of the election.

The Electoral College system was further complicated by the fact that before passage of the Twelfth Amendment in 1804, there was no way for electors to distinguish between a vote for president and a vote for vice president; each elector cast two votes and both were treated as votes for president. In 1796 this meant that even though both Adams and Jefferson were candidates for president, and no one cast a vote for either one intending it to be a vote for the vice presidency, since they received the two highest vote totals they received the two highest offices. This feature of the system would create much more significant problems four years later when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, the Republican candidates for president and vice president, respectively, each received the same number of electoral votes.

For a breakdown of state elector selection methods, see Susan B. Carter, et al, eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial edition online (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006-), 5-171. For more on the Electoral College, see Lawrence D. Longley and Neal R. Peirce, *The Electoral College Primer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

¹³ John Adams, "Inaugural Address," 4 March 1797, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:231.

¹⁴ John Adams, "Special Session Message," 16 May 1797, in *Ibid.*, 236, 238.

the nation would witness until the Jacksonian period. Republicans saw Adams as the nation's pre-eminent monarchist and as being motivated by Federalist and pro-British sympathies. At the same time, the Arch-Federalists allied with Hamilton distrusted him as not being fully committed to their specific agenda. For Adams, the decision-making process, especially as it related to the central crisis of his presidency, the quasi-war with France, was always focused on what was best for the country, regardless of which group of politicians he would please or anger. The rampant distrust partisans had for their perceived opponents meant that Adams's decisions usually upset both groups in the long run. In the wake of the XYZ affair, Adams's decision to form an army under the command of Washington was greeted with acclaim by the Arch-Federalists who saw such preparations as a precursor to war with France, but was interpreted by the Republicans as yet another example of Adams choosing Britain over France. When Adams chose to send another peace delegation to France in 1799, he was heavily criticized by the Federalists for not putting the country's new army to use, but his motives were still distrusted by the Republicans. In reality, Adams never wanted war, but understood, as Washington had counseled, that in circumstances such as these, "An efficient preparation for war can alone insure peace."¹⁵ When he saw another opportunity to secure that peace without recourse to declared war, he seized it, demonstrating the primacy of national over partisan interests in his

¹⁵ John Adams, "Second Annual Message," 8 December 1798, in *Ibid.*, 273.

thinking.¹⁶ In many ways, the course of Adams's entire presidency acted as a strong confirmation of the wisdom of Washington's warnings about the dangers of foreign attachments, as American judgments were consistently clouded by allegiance to or antipathy for Britain or France, rather than being purely guided by American interest.¹⁷

Washington's Death and the Growing Significance of the Farewell Address

Given that war was ultimately avoided and a treaty with France was signed (though not until Jefferson had taken office), the single most important event for the country during Adams's presidency did not take place in the nation's capital, but instead at Mount Vernon, where on 14 December 1799, George Washington died. Upon his retirement from the presidency, Washington threw himself back into the life of a private citizen, daily overseeing the work being carried out on his several plantations. The major exception was when he consented to take charge of the American army being formed in the event of war with France. Washington embraced this new challenge, but it often seemed like he was enjoying reliving past military glories more than he was actually

¹⁶ For more on Adams's presidency and the quasi-war with France, see Alexander DeConde, *The Quasi-War; Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France 1797-1801* (New York: Scribner, 1966); Stephen G. Kurtz, *The Presidency of John Adams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957); Manning J. Dauer, *The Adams Federalists* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953); and Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), chapters 12-15.

¹⁷ Adams's non-partisanship is discussed in Ralph Ketcham, *Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789-1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 93-99.

concerned for the outbreak of war.¹⁸ Throughout his retirement he also continued to reiterate the principles he had espoused in the Farewell Address. He urged that “No policy, in my opinion, can be more clearly demonstrated than that we should do justice to *all* but have no political connexion with *any* of the European Powers, beyond those which result from, and serve to regulate our Commerce with them,” and that the country needed to “maintain a strict Neutrality, to keep the United States out of the vortex of European Politics, and to preserve them in Peace.”¹⁹ Writing to the Marquis de Lafayette in December 1798, he declared his politics to be “plain & simple. I think every Nation has a right to establish that form of government under which *It* conceives It shall live most happy, provided it infracts no Right, or is not dangerous to others. And that, no governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of another, except for the security of what is due to themselves.”²⁰ Even in retirement, he was still dedicated to the principles of his Farewell Address.

By December 1799, Washington was no longer active on the public stage, but he was still prominent in Americans’ lives. By this time, there were already eight different biographies that had been written about him, and he was still regularly the subject of toasts and orations throughout the country, especially

¹⁸ Washington famously invested a great deal of time and effort putting together an exact replica of the uniform he wore during the Revolution. See Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 253-54.

¹⁹ George Washington to William Heath, 20 May 1797, and George Washington to Thomas Pinckney, 28 May 1797, in *The Papers of George Washington: Retirement Series*, 4 vols., Dorothy Twohig, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998-99), 1:149, 158.

²⁰ Emphasis in original. George Washington to Lafayette, 25 December 1798, in *Ibid.*, 3:284.

during annual celebrations of his birthday and American independence.²¹ A tourist from Great Britain noted in 1796 that “Not one town of any importance was there in the whole union, where some meeting did not take place in honor” of Washington’s birthday.²² His continued presence in the popular mind made news of his death all the more unexpected. Washington had not suffered from a protracted illness, and he was only 67 when he died. On 12 December he went on his normal tour of his plantations, spending several hours on horseback in the midst of a storm of snow and freezing rain, he fell ill, and two days later he was dead.²³ The suddenness of Washington’s death is important in that the widespread expressions of grief and sorrow that swept the nation were not filtered through a period of expectation or preparation; rather, they were the heartfelt outpourings of a grieving nation. John Marshall of Virginia expressed the sentiments of the nation best when he stood before the House of Representatives and declared that “Our Washington is no more! The Hero, the Sage, and the Patriot of America – the man on whom in times of danger every eye was turned and all hoped were placed – lives now only in his own great actions, and in the hearts of an affectionate and afflicted people.”²⁴ Congress officially declared 22 February 1800, Washington’s birthday, to be a national day of remembrance, but

²¹ Birthday celebrations of Washington had occurred as early as 1781, but increased in popularity once he became president. Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 33. For a discussion of these early biographies, see Catherine L. Albanese, *Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 152.

²² Isaac Weld, 22 February 1796, quoted in Morton Borden, ed., *George Washington* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1969), 98.

²³ For the primary account of his illness and death, see “Tobias Lear’s Narrative Accounts of the Death of George Washington,” in Washington, *Papers: Retirement Series*, 4:542-55.

²⁴ John Marshall, Virginia, 19 December 1799, in *Annals of Congress*, 6th Cong., 1st sess., 203.

cities and towns, churches and civic organizations, held services throughout December, January, and February.²⁵

In Boston, 9 January was set aside as a day of “solemn Tribute” to Washington. Organized around a grand procession involving one-fifth of all Bostonians and the delivery of a eulogy at the Old South Meeting-House, all business in the city was suspended for the day, and men and women were instructed to wear black crape or ribbons from that day through Washington’s birthday as a sign of mourning.²⁶ Historian Gary Laderman described the ceremonies in Providence, Rhode Island, where “A funeral procession began on the morning of the seventh [of January], accompanied by the firing of sixteen cannons in quick succession. After the initial military display, a cannon was discharged every half-hour. Throughout the course of the procession minute guns were fired, and muffled bells tolled from morning until evening. The cortege included various military orders, a bier supported by four pallbearers, a riderless white horse, members of the local government, representatives from local trade associations and other societies, and officials from several agencies and organizations.” At the end of the procession, “the empty bier was then deposited underneath the Episcopal church.” Such “simulations of real burial” were a central part of many funeral services held for Washington throughout the

²⁵ Both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed unanimously passed a resolution to that effect on 30 December 1799, in *Ibid.*, 223, 22. For an extended discussion of how Americans commemorated Washington’s passing, see Gerald E. Kahler, *The Long Farewell: Americans Mourn the Death of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

²⁶ Boston Committee on the Death of Washington, *Boston, January 6, 1800. The Committee Chosen By the Town* . . . (Boston, 1800); Schwartz, *George Washington*, 96.

country.²⁷ From the perspective of this dissertation, these public services are significant not just for what they say about the place Washington held in American hearts, but for the impact they had on the place the Farewell Address held in the American mind. As François Furstenberg has argued, it was the civic texts that emerged after Washington's death, and specifically the eulogies and funeral orations pronounced during these services, that "made the Farewell Address a statement of inviolable political principles" and turned it into a "sacred text."²⁸

Indeed, his comment that such texts were "instructions on how to read Washington's writings" is particularly insightful, as the eulogies inculcated the idea that the Farewell was Washington's great legacy to the American people, and that their nation's future depended on adherence to it.²⁹ Orators described the Farewell as being "worthy to be written in letters of gold, or, rather, to be inscribed on the hearts of an enlightened, free, and grateful people;" as the "polar star" that should guide America's policy makers; or as laying out America's "true policy as a nation."³⁰ Daniel Dana, speaking in Newburyport, Massachusetts,

²⁷ Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 15-16. For descriptions of many other funeral services, see Franklin B. Hough, *Washingtoniana: Or, Memorials of the Death of George Washington, Giving an Account of the Funeral Honors Paid to His Memory, with a List of Tracts and Volumes Printed Upon the Occasion, and a Catalogue of Medals Commemorating the Event*, 2 vols., (Roxbury, MA: Elliot Woodward, 1865).

²⁸ François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 39, 44.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁰ Samuel West, *Greatness the Result of Goodness: A Sermon, Occasioned By the Death of George Washington, Late Commander in Chief of the Armies, and First President, of the United States of America, Who Died December 14, 1799, Aged 68* (Boston: Manning & Loring, [1800]), 16-17; Abiel Abbot, *An Eulogy On the Illustrious Life and Character of George Washington; Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Haverhill, On His Birth Day, 1800, At the Request*

called on his listeners to “Read his Legacy. *There* is the wisdom, the counsel, the heart, the soul of your WASHINGTON. There are the precious rules for making our nation wise and great and happy. Treasure it in your memories. Let it live in your hearts. Let it shine in your conduct. And from the moment that your children begin to lisp the honored name of their country’s Father, endeavor to prepare their minds for the reception of these invaluable maxims; that they may be handed down to the latest posterity.”³¹ This idea of the importance of the Farewell to future generations was frequently repeated. A speaker in Boston urged people to “Read, preserve the sacred deposit; and lest posterity should forget the truth of its maxims, engrave them on his tomb, that they may read them when they weep before it.” Another hoped that it would “descend, unsullied as its purity, to the wonder and instruction of succeeding generations; and, should the mild philosophy of its maxims be ingrafted into the policy of nations, at no distant period will the departed hero, who now lives only in the spotless splendour of his own great actions, exist in the happiness and dignity of mankind.” And another asked those assembled to “Teach it to your children, in the house, and by the way, lying down and rising up, going out and coming in. It is an invaluable legacy.” One orator predicted that continued “Obedience” to Washington’s maxims “will

of Their Committee (Haverhill, MA: Seth H. Moore, 1800), 21; John D. Blair, *A Sermon On the Death of Lieutenant General George Washington. Delivered in the Capitol in Richmond* ([Richmond, VA]: Meriwether Jones, 1800), 12.

³¹ Emphasis in original. Daniel Dana, *A Discourse on the Character and Virtues of General George Washington: Delivered On the Twenty-Second of February, 1800: The Day of National Mourning for His Death* (Newburyport, MA: Angier March, 1800), 27.

lead us to the highest pinnacle of national glory.”³² Hundreds of these eulogies were printed as pamphlets and were either sold or freely distributed in communities throughout the United States; quite a few of them included complete copies of the Farewell Address as well.³³ Collections of eulogies were also bound together and sold as a way to spread the thoughts and ideas they expressed beyond the towns they were first pronounced in.³⁴ The eulogies, both as oratorical performances and as texts to be read and studied by private citizens, elevated the importance of Washington’s maxims in the popular mind to the point that the Farewell was frequently held up as a sort of foundational document, alongside the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.³⁵

³² Quotes from eulogies given by George Richards Minot, Thomas Paine, David Ramsay, and Jonathan Mitchel Sewall, included in the collection, *Eulogies and Orations on the Life and Death of General George Washington, First President of the United States of America* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1800), 25, 66, 88.

³³ See, for example, the eulogy of Jedidiah Morse, the inscription to which called for “a copy [to be] delivered to the respective families in town. A frequent perusal of its contents, was earnestly recommended, as containing the life, character, opinions and advice, of the greatest patriot, statesman, and hero of the age; and as a most valuable legacy to their children’s children, and their successors, to the latest period of time.” Also see that of Aaron Bancroft, of which the town voted that “each head of a family should be furnished with one.” Jedidiah Morse, *A Prayer and Sermon, Delivered at Charlestown, December 31, 1799; On the Death of George Washington; Late President; and Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States of America; Who Departed This Life, at Mount Vernon, in Virginia, On the 14th of the Same Month, in the 69th Year of His Age: With an Additional Sketch of His Life* (Charlestown, MA: Samuel Etheridge, 1800), 10; Aaron Bancroft, *An Eulogy on the Character of the Late Gen. George Washington. Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Worcester, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on Saturday the 22d of February 1800* (Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, Jun., 1800), title page.

³⁴ *Eulogies and Orations; A Selection of Orations and Eulogies, Pronounced in Different Parts of the United States, in Commemoration of the Life, Virtues, and Pre-eminent Services of Gen. George Washington, Who Died, at Mount Vernon, December 14, 1799; in the 68th Year of His Age* (Amherst, NH: Samuel Preston, 1800); and *The Washingtoniana: Containing a Sketch of the Life and Death of the Late Gen. George Washington; With a Collection of Elegant Eulogies, Orations, Poems, &c., Sacred to His Memory. Also, an Appendix Comprising All His Most Valuable Public Papers, and His Last Will and Testament* (Lancaster, PA: William Hamilton, 1802).

³⁵ Examples include *A Political Primer, For the Use of Schools in the State of Maryland* (Abingdon, MD: Ruff, 1806), which contained Washington’s Farewell Address and the constitutions of the United States and Maryland; as well as *The Constitution of the State of*

This elevation of the Farewell Address continued even after the nation stopped publicly mourning Washington's death. Historian Michael Kammen argued in *Mystic Chords of Memory* that Americans before the Civil War took very little interest in the nation's history, except as the occasional tool for illuminating present or even future concerns. Daniel Webster, for one, was famous for giving orations that somewhat mythicized America's past to address present circumstances.³⁶ The one genuine exception to this historical disinterest was George Washington, who was a central character in the celebration of Independence Day, and whose birthday was the only other widely accepted national holiday. As with the eulogies, all of these occasions featured oratory dedicated to praising Washington and the fundamental importance of his Farewell Address to the ongoing progress of the United States.³⁷ As one modern observer put it, "The importance of Washington oratory lies in its impact upon the American people. . . . February 22 and the Fourth of July were annual occasions upon which he was sure to be eulogized in towns and hamlets all over the country, and public speakers found many other opportunities to focus attention upon him."³⁸ The lack of interest in the nation's history but a continued interest in Washington was further manifested in the realm of biography. Where

Massachusetts, and That of the United States; the Declaration of Independence, with President Washington's Farewell Address (Salem, MA: Cushing & Appleton, 1811).

³⁶ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), part one.

³⁷ For a discussion of the increasingly important role that the celebration of civic holidays held for Americans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

³⁸ William Alfred Bryan, *George Washington in American Literature, 1775-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 83-84.

Washington had a new or revised biography published virtually every year from before his death through the 1850s, Thomas Jefferson's first real biography was not written until 1857.³⁹ Due to the work done by all of these civic texts focusing on Washington – eulogies, orations, biographies, etc. – the Farewell Address was taken out of the realm of American history and was seen as having ongoing significance. It would frequently be published with the nation's founding documents, with state laws and constitutions, with local orations for civic holidays, and even in children's books for use in schools.⁴⁰ It was both part of the nation's great past, and a vital element in what would surely be its glorious future.

“Entangling Alliances with None” and the Jeffersonian Reconceptualization

Whether through oratory or in print, Americans of all ages, occupations, and political leanings were thus very familiar with Washington's Farewell Address in the years after his death. This meant that when Thomas Jefferson promised “peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none” in his first inaugural address, people saw it as an allusion to Washington and his principles.⁴¹ One editorialist, for example, after extensively

³⁹ For example, Catherine Albanese determined that Mason Locke Weems's *Life of Washington* had gone through fifty-nine editions by 1850. Forrest McDonald discusses the lack of a Jefferson biography before 1857 in his survey of Jefferson's presidency. Albanese, *Sons of the Fathers*, 174; and McDonald, *Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*, 167.

⁴⁰ In addition to the examples given in footnote 35, also see Noah Webster, *Elements of Useful Knowledge. Volume II. Containing a Historical and Geographical Account of the United States. For the Use of Schools*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Increase Cooke & Co., 1808); and Samuel Temple, *The Child's Assistant in the Art of Reading. Being a Collection of Pieces, Suited to the Capacities of Children, In the Early Stages of Education. Designed as a Medium between the Spelling-book, and the American Selection of Lessons, American Preceptor, and Other Books of a Similar Kind*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1802).

⁴¹ Historian Garry Wills argued in his study of Washington that “By the time of his own presidency, Jefferson was teaching the Washington doctrine on neutrality so emphatically that he

quoting from the Farewell, stated that “Such is the emphatic advice of our departed friend: in correspondence with which the present Chief Magistrate on his induction into office, in enumerating what he considered the essential principles of our government and such as ought to shape its administration, declares as one, ‘peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.’”⁴² As previously mentioned, “entangling alliances with none” was a fundamentally important phrase in the history and development of the Farewell Address. The phrase itself almost immediately entered the American lexicon as the shorthand to describe the principles underlying American foreign policy. Newspapers were strewn with references to it throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century. Often times such references were to celebrations involving toasts given to “Foreign intercourse; ‘Commerce and honest friendship with all, entangling alliances with none,’” or to “The king of Great-Britain and the chief consul of France; ‘Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations – entangling alliances with none.’”⁴³ Another toast was offered to “Commerce and friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none,” and was followed by a poem hailing the “Full twenty years we’ve pass’d in peace,/And like so to

gave to it the catchphrase some still mistakenly attribute to Washington himself: ‘no entangling alliances.’” Wills’s assertion is interesting both because he draws a more direct connection between Washington and Jefferson, and because he misquotes Jefferson’s actual phrase. Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 91. For an extended discussion of Jefferson’s first inaugural address, see Browne, *Jefferson’s Call for Nationhood*.

⁴² Curtius [John Taylor], *A Defence of the Measures of the Administration of Thomas Jefferson* (Providence, RI: William Olney, 1805), 61-62.

⁴³ “For the Bee. Better Late Than Never,” *The Bee* (New Haven, CT), 26 August 1801; and “At a numerous and respectable meeting of republicans and others assembled at Stewart’s Inn, Fell’s Point, to celebrate the anniversary of American independence . . .,” *Democratic Republican; and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore), 6 July 1802.

remain;/While Europes clime by bloody wars,/May count her thousands slain.”⁴⁴

One newspaper in Boston even adopted the phrase as part of its masthead.⁴⁵ In these early years “entangling alliances with none” was recognized as Jeffersonian in origin, but it was also generally seen as relating to Washington’s Farewell Address.

The distinction between the Jeffersonian phrase and the Washingtonian principles began to blur over time, and by the end of the decade people had begun to directly attribute it to Washington. This was certainly never universally the case – even in 1852, the end point of this study, there were people who correctly pointed toward its Jeffersonian origins – but as time passed, an increasing majority of Americans saw the phrase as belonging to Washington. As early as 1810, there are examples of orators laying the phrase at Washington’s feet. Tristram Burges, speaking in Providence, Rhode Island during a 4 July celebration, discussed the establishment of the nation’s government under Washington, and stated that “When the French, whose revolution, at first presented all the allurements of freedom . . . when they would have coiled us within the contaminating embrace of this revolution, the preserving angel of our country [Washington] said to the many headed faction, ‘Peace; be still;’ ‘We will have honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none.’ And it was so.

⁴⁴ “Select Toasts Given on the 4th of July,” *Alexandria Expositor, and the Columbian Advertiser*, 22 July 1803.

⁴⁵ *The Independent Chronicle* (Boston) started using “‘Peace, Commerce, and honest Friendship, with all Nations – entangling ALLIANCES, with none.’ – Jefferson” at the bottom of its masthead on 21 December 1801.

France, then, respected our neutrality.”⁴⁶ What is perhaps most interesting about this speech was that the phrase was not even attributed to the Farewell Address, but rather to the Proclamation of Neutrality. Even before this time, though, there were many instances where the phrase was incorrectly quoted and not attributed to anyone, signifying that it had become less grounded in its original Jeffersonian context and could, as a result, be more easily reappropriated, consciously or not, to Washington.⁴⁷ By 1812, printers began referring to “Washington’s Policy” of “Peace with all nations, entangling alliances with none.”⁴⁸

If this were only a question of the misattribution of Jefferson’s phrase to Washington’s pen, it would only warrant minor consideration, but there proved to be much more at stake. As discussed in some detail in the first chapter, the principles Washington laid out in the Farewell were not intended to prescribe a permanent foreign policy for the nation to follow, but rather were aimed at guiding the construction of the wisest policies possible to meet evolving circumstances. Washington urged the preservation of peace so as to allow the nation the time necessary to mature and prosper, he warned against foreign influences and attachments because they could bind the nation to courses of action detrimental to the public good, and he stressed the fundamental importance of

⁴⁶ Tristram Burges, *Liberty, Glory and Union, or American Independence: An Oration, Pronounced Before the People of Providence, July 4th, A.D. 1810* (Providence, RI: Dunham & Hawkins, 1810), 16.

⁴⁷ For example, in 1809, David Allen, in discussing America’s place in the world, declared that he would “adopt the sentiment of ‘impartial justice to all nations, entangling alliances with none.’” David Allen, *An Oration Delivered in the Brick Church in Lansingburgh, July 4th, 1809* (Lansingburgh, [NY]: Tracy & Bliss, 1809), 21.

⁴⁸ James A. Bayard, *Speech of the Hon. James A. Bayard, In the Senate of the United States, Upon His Motion, Made on the 16th of June, to Postpone the Further Consideration of the Bill Declaring War Against Great Britain, to the 31st of October* (Wilmington, DE: Riley, 1812), 2.

always maintaining the freedom to act in the nation's best interest. Washington recognized that this national interest in 1796 was different from what it would be ten or twenty years later. He expected the nation to grow in territory, population, and might, thus while he discussed policy ideas that were essential in the short term, he understood that they might not be eternally so; he was more concerned with larger, more enduring principles. The point here is to reiterate that the Farewell Address was not simple in its conception of American foreign policy; it could be boiled down to a few basic ideas, but wholly conceived its long term wisdom and utility derived from its nuanced approach. In contrast was "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none," the great appeal of which was that it pithily laid out America's basic foreign policy principles at the outset of Jefferson's presidency. The problem was that while "entangling alliances with none" nicely described American interests in the short term, it overshadowed the real wisdom of the Farewell in the long term; rather than representing principles to guide thoughtful policy construction, it became a rigid prescription for a permanent foreign policy. Most troubling, "entangling alliances with none" became more closely associated with Washington as its rigidity became less necessary and even less wise, and when the warning to act in America's best interests would have resulted in a broader foreign policy than what was ultimately pursued.⁴⁹

As will be seen in the next chapter, once "entangling alliances with none" had been given greater legitimacy due to the added authority of its association

⁴⁹ Examples of this will be discussed in future chapters.

with Washington's Farewell Address, it became nearly impossible to convince Americans that there were better alternatives to the virtual isolation it produced. Realistically, though, as much as "entangling alliances with none" subverted Washington's original meanings, it also likely facilitated the transmission of the Farewell Address's fundamental importance across the generations. Washington was of ongoing significance and his clear and succinct foreign policy principles were seen as having shepherded the nation to great heights. As Francis Scott Key noted in 1814, "In this address we have every thing to excite our veneration and affection. . . . No evil can befall [*sic*] us, against which, he has not guarded us – no temptation can come upon us, where his monitory voice has not supplied us with a caution. The remotest of our descendants, to whom the political blessings we have received, may be allowed to be transmitted, will find these parental counsels sanctioned by experience, and the impartial historian will note the invariable connection between the happiness of the nation and the observance of these hallowed precepts."⁵⁰ Here he was making clear the link between the Farewell and the nation's rising glory. Without "entangling alliances with none," it is an open question if the Farewell would have carried such great weight in public and policy debates over the ensuing decades. In introducing this Jeffersonian reconceptualization of the Farewell Address – that is, the reassociation of "entangling alliances with none" with Washington and the resulting shift in meaning of the Address – it is important to emphasize that these long-term ramifications were not necessarily intended by Jefferson when he

⁵⁰ Francis Scott Key, *An Oration* (Alexandria, VA, 1814), 6.

introduced the phrase in his inaugural address, but were rather unintended consequences of the initial popularity of his phrasing. Jefferson certainly believed in a foreign policy defined by “entangling alliances with none,” but he was not necessarily consciously recalling Washington, and he could not have anticipated the reconceptualization of the Farewell Address as would produce.

Republican Foreign Policy

While many contemporaries saw a uniformity of principle from Washington to Jefferson when it came to the nation’s foreign policies, the latter’s Republicanism clashed with the Federalist policies of the previous administrations; larger foreign policy principles may have been consistent, but how they were put into practice was a different question. Two specific policy changes pursued by Jefferson deserve brief consideration in this study. Both changes stemmed, at least in part, from Jefferson’s extreme concern for economy in the operations of the federal government. He believed that the government had grown too big, was responsible for a great deal of unnecessary spending, and that the people had been taxed too much to support it. One way he sought to reduce spending was by dismantling much of the military and naval establishment built up during the quasi-war with France. Americans had had a long-held distrust of standing armies, so while Jefferson’s insistence that state militias could defend the country until the moment of crisis when a national army would be necessary proved shortsighted in the War of 1812, there was a certain logic to it based on the nation’s past experience. The navy was a different question, though, as the

nation's recent history of British and French abuses on the oceans had demonstrated the utility of a strong navy. George Washington, in his final annual message to Congress, preached that neutrality alone "is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression."⁵¹ Likewise, John Adams had repeatedly pointed to the importance of a strong navy and oversaw the creation of the Department of the Navy in 1798. Jefferson, though, believed that the importance of U.S. commerce to Europe was enough to regulate relations between nations, rendering a navy a waste of resources. As he put it in 1801, "The interest which European nations feel, as well as ourselves, in the mutual patronage of commercial intercourse, is a sufficient stimulus on both sides to insure that patronage."⁵²

Large armies and navies were also unnecessary in Jefferson's view because the nation needed to put the maintenance of peace as its primary concern above all others. While he was vice president in 1798 he had recommended that it would be better for the United States to "keep together as we are, hawl off from Europe as soon as we can & from all attachments to any portions of it, and if we feel their power just sufficiently to hoop us together, it will be the happiest situation in which we can exist. if the game runs sometimes against us at home, we must have patience, till luck turns, & then we shall have an opportunity of

⁵¹ George Washington, "Eighth Annual Address," 7 December 1796, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:201.

⁵² Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 3 October 1801, in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 12 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5), 9:309.

wining [*sic*] back the *principles* we have lost. for this is a game where principles are the stake.”⁵³ Shortly after his inauguration, he similarly declared that “determined as we are to avoid, if possible, wasting the energies of our people in war & destruction, we shall avoid implicating ourselves with the powers of Europe, even in support of principles which we mean to pursue. they have so many other interests different from ours, that we must avoid being entangled in them.”⁵⁴ A temporary sacrifice of principle in order to preserve peace was preferable to a costly and dangerous war.

A second area Jefferson believed greater economy could be achieved was the diplomatic establishment, or the number and extent of America’s missions overseas. This was also more than a question of money, for he believed that despite Federalist adherence to the Farewell Address, the United States had become overly involved in European affairs, specifically as a result of the ministers it had in foreign nations. In giving to Elbridge Gerry “a profession of my political faith” in 1799, Jefferson declared that “I am for free commerce with all nations, political connection with none, & little or no diplomatic establishment: and I am not for linking ourselves, by new treaties with the quarrels of Europe.”⁵⁵ Near the end of 1801, he expressed a “wish to let every treaty we have drop off without renewal. We call in our diplomatic missions,

⁵³ Jefferson had a habit of not capitalizing the first word at the beginning of a new sentence. Emphasis in original. Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, 4 June 1798, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd, 36 vols. to date (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-), 30:389.

⁵⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Paine, 18 March 1801, in *Papers*, 33:358.

⁵⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 26 January 1799, in *Ibid.*, 30:646.

barely keeping up those to the most important nations. There is a strong disposition in our countrymen to discontinue even these; and very possibly it may be done.”⁵⁶ Jefferson was not the only one who felt this way. Near the end of John Adams’s term in office, John Fowler, a Republican congressman from Kentucky, complained that “For the diplomatic department, near 130,000 dollars are required. When General Washington wrote his Valedictory, we had ministers at Paris, Hague, London, Madrid, and Lisbon, and he lamented that we had so many, and cautioned the future government against an increase. . . . How has his successor regarded this wise and prudent council? Why by projecting embassies to the most despotic powers in Europe with whom we can never have any or but little commercial intercourse.”⁵⁷ That Washington did not actually warn against an increase in the diplomatic establishment is a separate question from the main sentiment expressed by Fowler. Just two years later Representative Thomas Sumter of South Carolina wrote proudly to his constituents that the administration was “Desirous also, in the spirit of a true American, to detach the United States from a dangerous union by diplomatic ties with European powers,” and had worked to suppress “two appointments of Ministers, the one to the Hague and the other to Berlin; suffering only three to remain, viz. those to London, Paris, and Madrid.”⁵⁸ In February 1807, James Holland of North Carolina hailed Jefferson for the “soundness of the course adopted” at the outset of his administration,

⁵⁶ Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 3 October 1801, in *Works*, 9:309.

⁵⁷ John Fowler, 15 May 1800, in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 1:210-11.

⁵⁸ Thomas Sumter, 1 May 1802, in *Ibid.*, 304.

principally “a ‘strict impartiality to all nations, entangling alliances with none, a discontinuance of useless institutions and offices, and an economical expenditure of the public money.’”⁵⁹

John Adams had addressed the specific issue of the diplomatic establishment in his first message to Congress. He argued that in order to maintain America’s separation from Europe, “early, punctual, and continual information of the current chain of events and of the political projects in contemplation is no less necessary than if we were directly concerned in them. It is necessary, in order to the discovery of the efforts made to draw us into the vortex, in season to make preparations against them. . . . It is a natural policy for a nation that studies to be neutral to consult with other nations engaged in the same studies and pursuits.”⁶⁰ Jefferson disagreed with Adams’s assessment, though, believing that even purely diplomatic connections threatened to entangle the United States in European affairs and represented an unnecessary expense in violation of Republican economy. As far as Jefferson was concerned, the only connection the United States should have with Europe was a commercial one.⁶¹

⁵⁹ James Holland, 26 February 1807, in *Ibid.*, 500.

⁶⁰ John Adams, “Special Session Message,” 16 May 1797, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:238.

⁶¹ Even international commerce pushed Jefferson’s limits, though, as in 1784 he revealed to George Washington his distaste for the fact that “All the world is becoming commercial. Was it practicable to keep our new empire separated from them we might indulge ourselves in speculating whether commerce contributes to the happiness of mankind. But we cannot separate ourselves from them. Our citizens have had too full a taste of the comforts furnished by the arts and manufactures to be debarred the use of them. We must then in our own defence endeavor to share as large a portion as we can of this modern source of wealth and power.” Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 15 March 1784, in *Papers*, 7:26.

Jefferson's attempt to eliminate even diplomatic ties to Europe raises an important historiographical question relating to the intent of his foreign policy. One of the basic questions historians have debated relating to Jefferson's foreign policy was whether or not it was isolationist. As Louis B. Wright set up the question in his study of the "Founding Fathers and 'Splendid Isolation,'" "Of all political dogmas, the one that Americans have clung to with the greatest tenacity and the least success is the doctrine of isolation from international entanglements and responsibility. . . . The two statesmen who have been most often quoted – and misquoted – in defense of political isolation are Washington and Jefferson."⁶² For example, Marie-Jeanne Rossignol argued that "Washington's Farewell Address laid the foundations of isolationism," and that Jefferson's "entangling alliances with none" "ensured continuity between George Washington, John Adams, and himself. Political isolationism had been recommended by the first president and had been applied by the second, . . . it was also in Jefferson's credo."⁶³ Such conclusions were also reached by Lawrence Kaplan, who argued that "the United States sought to maintain its independence by isolating itself from the political life of the Old World. The warnings of George Washington in his Farewell Address, the aspirations of Thomas Jefferson in his First Inaugural Address, and the challenge of John Quincy Adams in the Monroe Doctrine, all

⁶² Louis B. Wright, "The Founding Fathers and 'Splendid Isolation,'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 6 (Feb. 1943): 173-74.

⁶³ Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, *The Nationalist Ferment: The Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1792-1812*, trans. Lillian A. Parrott (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004), 98, 106.

speak to the benefits of isolationism from and the dangers of involvement with Europe.”⁶⁴

Alexander DeConde, on the other hand, did not see continuity from the Federalists to Jefferson, instead arguing that “Leaders such as Adams realized that the politics of Europe’s rulers, particularly of France and Britain, could vitally affect the United States. Adams, and those close to him, therefore, were not isolationist in their thinking. Isolationism, in the sense of the American government seeking to sever political, and even diplomatic, connections to Europe, became the governmental policy after Jefferson took office.”⁶⁵ As has already been discussed, Jefferson’s efforts clearly represented a break from Adams and Washington, as “entangling alliances with none,” in Jeffersonian practice, meant something much closer to isolation than did the Farewell Address, further highlighting the problem of the contemporary conflation of the two. Historians such as Rossignol and Kaplan placed too much emphasis on later interpretations of the Farewell in seeing a continuity of principle and practice from Washington to Adams to Jefferson. The question still remains, though, of was Jefferson isolationist? Albert K. Weinberg thought not, suggesting that “the counsel of Washington and Jefferson became known as the principle of avoiding foreign entanglements, or more briefly as the doctrine of non-entanglement. . . . What is really envisaged in non-entanglement is freedom of action in so far as it is

⁶⁴ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *Entangling Alliances with None: American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1987), xi.

⁶⁵ DeConde, *Quasi-War*, 335.

preserved through the avoidance of certain relationships with others.”⁶⁶ This was echoed by Wright, who contended that “There is no indication in Jefferson’s actions or utterances . . . that his efforts to remain insulated from the Napoleonic Wars betokened the hope or desire to institute a permanent foreign policy of complete isolation.” He further argued that “Whenever the national interest could be advanced by discarding isolationist policies, Jefferson was ready to throw them overboard.”⁶⁷ Indeed, he was correct, in that it was only through a diplomatic connection with France that Jefferson was able to achieve the unprecedented success of the Louisiana Purchase. More importantly, America’s ongoing commercial relationship with a Europe embroiled in war plagued America’s diplomats and Jefferson throughout his presidency. Theory and practice, though, are two different things, and these exceptions do not disprove that Jefferson’s ideal foreign policy would have been as isolationist as possible.

At the start of his presidency, Jefferson clearly wanted to focus the nation’s energy and resources on internal rather than external development; as the Connecticut Federalist Griswold had put it, he wanted to look west instead of east. The course of human events in Europe prevented him from fully dedicating himself to this task and a largely isolationist foreign policy. This is important in that succeeding generations, at least rhetorically, increasingly moved toward the isolationist ideal that Jefferson could not achieve. For Jefferson himself, it was a sad irony that his Republican economy and insistence on the reduction of the

⁶⁶ Albert K. Weinberg, “International Affairs: The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation,” *American Political Science Review* 34 (Jun. 1940): 541-42.

⁶⁷ Wright, “The Founding Fathers and ‘Splendid Isolation,’” 180, 183.

domestic tax burden actually made the United States more rather than less dependent upon Europe. Forrest McDonald pointed out that the elimination of internal taxes “relieved the farmers and planters of an onerous tax burden and arrested the proliferation of hated excisemen, but it also made national revenues almost totally dependent upon duties on imports – which meant dependent upon the uninterrupted flow of international commerce, which in turn depended upon the will of Napoleon Bonaparte and the ministers of King George III.”⁶⁸ This dependence continually threatened to pull the United States into the European war as depredations on the high seas increased.

Jefferson’s Success and Failure: The Louisiana Purchase and the Embargo

Unquestionably the greatest success Jefferson achieved in the realm of foreign policy was the Louisiana Purchase. The fact that it came on the heels of the great fear of news that the territory had been transferred from Spain to France and the ramifications this would have for American security only multiplied the feeling of exuberance at the feat.⁶⁹ Not only did the Purchase permanently eliminate France as a colonial power from mainland North America, but, with the exception of the Floridas, it also moved Spain much further away from the population centers of the United States. Representative Joseph Winston of North Carolina informed his constituents that “The advantages of this acquisition are too

⁶⁸ McDonald, *Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*, 163-64.

⁶⁹ On American fears of the ramifications of French possession of Louisiana, see Thomas Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, 18 April 1802, in *Works*, 9:363-68; and James Madison to James Monroe, 29 July 1803, in *The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, ed. Robert J. Brugger, 8 vols. to date (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986-), 5:240-44.

many to be enumerated, and too precious not to be a just cause of congratulation to every friend of America and free government; it secures us from the danger of ambitious neighbors and consequent wars – it prevents troublesome disputes, and saves our frontier from the troubles sometimes attempted to be fomented by the emissaries of foreign powers – it rescues us in a great measure from European connexions and jealousies, and obtains for us the respect of European nations, as much on account of the wisdom and vigor of our measures, as the pacific system by which our government is regulated.”⁷⁰ The dilemmas that had plagued Washington during the Nootka Sound Controversy in 1790 were now largely and permanently removed.

Notwithstanding its obvious advantages, the Purchase was not entirely unattended by difficulties, as there were constitutional and legal questions involved with acquiring and incorporating foreign territories and the peoples living in them. Diplomatic tensions also arose with Spain that underscored the practical difficulties with territorial transfers in this time period.⁷¹ For almost two decades after 1803 the United States found itself in a dispute with Spain that focused on the boundaries of the Louisiana territory it had bought from France. Louisiana had originally been ceded from France to Spain in 1763 as part of the settlement of the Seven Years’ War, back to France in 1800, and on to the United

⁷⁰ Joseph Winston, 20 March 1804, in Cunningham, *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1:369-70.

⁷¹ For more on the Louisiana Purchase, see Peter J. Kastor, *The Nation’s Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Thomas J. Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase* (Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley, 2003); Everett Somerville Brown, *The Constitutional History of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803-1812* (Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2000).

States in 1803. In none of the treaties carrying out these cessions were the precise boundaries specified, creating obvious problems for the United States as it sought to occupy its newly acquired territory. While Spain unsuccessfully contested France's right to sell Louisiana to the United States at all, at specific issue were Texas and a relatively small piece of territory located between the Mississippi and Perdido Rivers along the Gulf of Mexico known as West Florida. West Florida had been transferred from France to Spain in 1763, which led the United States to believe that it had retroceded to France in 1800 and was thus part of the Purchase; however, Spain contended that this was not the case. Jefferson repeatedly attempted to negotiate a settlement aimed at securing undisputed title to both West and East Florida, and went so far as to secretly have Congress allocate money to carry out a purchase, all to no avail. In 1810, President James Madison issued a proclamation declaring that "possession should be taken of [West Florida] in the name and behalf of the United States."⁷² The United States felt that it had just cause to believe that West Florida had been purchased from France in 1803 and was no longer going to wait for a negotiated acquisition of a territory it already owned. The following January Madison looked on to East Florida as Congress passed the no-transfer resolution, which declared "That the United States, under the peculiar circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot, without serious inequitude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power; and that a due regard to their own safety compels them to provide,

⁷² James Madison, "A Proclamation," 27 October 1810, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:481.

under certain contingencies, for the temporary occupation of the said territory; they, at the same time, declare that the said territory shall, in their hands, remain subject to future negotiation.”⁷³ While no recourse was taken under the auspices of the no-transfer resolution, the principle it espoused would become important a decade later when President James Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams contemplated what would be known to history as the Monroe Doctrine. In the end it took the United States and Spain until 1821 to negotiate and ratify a final solution to the Florida controversy.⁷⁴

The long-term disruption caused by the Floridas aside, the Louisiana Purchase was the high point of Thomas Jefferson’s foreign policy, as the renewal of war in Europe shortly after its execution meant the escalating harassment of American shipping by both Britain and France. Historians and contemporaries alike argued that what troubled Jefferson and the nation most by this treatment was that it revealed that these European powers did not see the United States as an equal on the world stage. As historian Marie-Jeanne Rossignol put it, “Americans felt that the hostile attitude of the British navy and government since 1805 proved

⁷³ The no-transfer resolution was passed during a secret session of Congress in association with “An act to enable the President of the United States, under certain contingencies, to take possession of the country lying east of the river Perdido, and south of the State of Georgia and the Mississippi Territory, and for other purposes.” The resolution was first proposed on 5 January 1811, and passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 70 to 42 on 8 January. It was amended by the Senate on 12 January by a vote of 23 to 6, and the amended version of the resolution was passed by the House by a vote of 78 to 21 on the same day. President James Madison signed the associated act into law on 15 January. 3-15 January 1811, in *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 3rd sess., 369-80, 1117-48. In 1918 the Department of State issued a confidential memorandum detailing the secret passage of this act and resolution, which contained an appendix that included all of the pertinent debates. See David Hunter Miller, *Secret Statutes of the United States: A Memorandum* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918).

⁷⁴ The resolution of the Florida question will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

that the former colonizing power did not accord the United States its true value.”⁷⁵ Joseph Desha, a congressman from Kentucky, believed that “Britain, revengeful in her temper, has never forgiven our independence, and apparently yet entertains the mad design of reducing the United States to colonial subjection.”⁷⁶ The best demonstration of how Britain and France valued the United States could be seen in the fact that both nations were willing to prey upon and ultimately sacrifice American shipping in order to achieve larger goals in the Napoleonic wars. The real problem for the United States and for Jefferson was that he was not in a position to force Europe to respect American rights. International trade was the main source of revenue for the government and was the livelihood of merchants up and down the eastern seaboard. Jefferson was in the impossible situation of needing to see that trade continue and even grow while also needing to do something to prevent American shipping from being harassed, cargoes from being lost, and sailors from being impressed into service in the British navy. The lack of a navy only further limited Jefferson’s options. A treaty negotiated with Great Britain by James Monroe and William Pinkney represented an opportunity to ease tensions with that nation, but Jefferson rejected it out of hand in 1806 without even sending it to the Senate because it failed to address the issue of impressment, which had been the greatest ongoing sign of British disrespect for the United States. Jefferson believed that there had to be a solution that would be beneficial to both American principles and shipping, possibly including the formation of an

⁷⁵ Rossignol, *The Nationalist Ferment*, 179.

⁷⁶ Joseph Desha, 25 February 1809, in Cunningham, *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 2:623.

alliance with one of the European powers against the other, but he could never find that solution.⁷⁷ His best option was brought to him by Secretary of State James Madison in 1807 and it was the embargo. Both men believed that the importance of U.S. commerce to Britain and France would cause one, if not both of the nations to reform their policies to see it resume.

The measure was hailed by Jefferson's supporters in Congress. John Rea of Tennessee described it as "a cautious provident measure of internal police, to preserve the liberty of seafaring citizens, to save the property of citizens from capture on the ocean, to manifest neutrality, and to maintain peace."⁷⁸ Burwell Bassett of Virginia argued that it "makes us more secure by making our opponents less able to agress [*sic*] upon us."⁷⁹ Another Virginian, William A. Burwell, firmly believed that it would "produce serious effects on France and England" as well as beneficial effects at home, as it would "force us to manufacture the articles we want, and while she [England] loses for ever the most profitable branch of export, we shall become really independent, and furnish within our country every requisite for convenience and comfort. It will no longer be in the power of a foreign nation to disturb our prosperity."⁸⁰ All of this hopeful confidence proved misplaced, though, as, in the words of historian Forrest McDonald, "it was all for naught: as a result of the embargo, some Nova Scotia fishermen and a good many West Indian slaves went hungry during much of the

⁷⁷ See McDonald, *Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*, 100-103.

⁷⁸ John Rea, of Tennessee, to his constituents, 15 March 1808, in Cunningham, *Circular Letter of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 2:531.

⁷⁹ Burwell Bassett, 23 March 1808, in *Ibid.*, 534.

⁸⁰ William A. Burwell, 23 April 1808, in *Ibid.*, 583.

year, and there was some unemployment in English factory towns, but the general effect upon the international economy was so slight that the French and British could regard the American policy with contemptuous amusement.”⁸¹

Jefferson’s main failing throughout this period was that he forgot the warnings Washington’s Farewell Address and grossly overestimated the importance of the United States to Europe. The United States was still an infant compared to the old giants that were the European powers, but this had not stopped Jefferson from seeing America as being equal to, if not greater than, any Old World nation. Jefferson’s messages to Congress overflowed with language on the rising tide of American greatness and the wisdom of a republican government that valued peace, especially when compared to the “exterminating havoc” of Europe.⁸² In his Farewell Address, George Washington had likewise described the United States as a rising power, but intrinsic in his prediction of future greatness was the admission that the nation was not yet great, and that it was actually quite weak. Part of his warning to always act in the nation’s best interests was the constant need to honestly assess and recognize what those interests were, even if they clashed with American hopes and ideals. For example, Washington had not seen the Jay Treaty as being a good one for the United States – it did not address most of the causes of conflict between the two nations – but the fact that it secured peace more than made up for any deficiencies and was actually of greater importance to the country at that point in time.

⁸¹ McDonald, *Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*, 152.

⁸² Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address,” 4 March 1801, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:323.

Jefferson was faced with a similar decision in 1806 when presented with the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty and chose principles over peace. In the decade after the Jay Treaty and the Farewell Address the United States had grown in stature, had doubled in size, and was prosperous; but it was also still a weak nation with no real army or navy for which the assurance of peace, especially in the short term, might have been more valuable than the adherence to a principle the nation could not defend in the first place. The embargo Jefferson pursued in 1807 was likewise the policy of a much stronger nation that would be better able to enforce it at home and give meaning and weight to it abroad. Not only was this attempt at economic coercion not effective in achieving its stated object, it was also devastating domestically as American revenues suffered and it further alienated much of the northeastern population that was already distrustful of the Jeffersonian program.

Washington and the War of 1812

Many of these same themes carried over into the presidency of Jefferson's successor, James Madison. While the embargo was abandoned on the last day of Jefferson's term, Madison also pursued a foreign policy that repeatedly risked entanglement with Britain or France and ultimately fell back on policies of economic coercion better suited to a more powerful nation.⁸³ A level of national unease or dissatisfaction began to set in mid-way through Madison's first term, as over half of the House of Representatives was turned over in the election of 1810,

⁸³ Robert Allen Rutland, *The Presidency of James Madison* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 62-66.

ushering in a new generation of political leadership in that body. Historian Robert Rutland argued that the new leadership to emerge in this period was significant because “These men had no memory of the Revolution; they had not helped to found the new nation, but they intended to preserve it” in the face of the current crisis.⁸⁴ By the summer of 1812, though, Madison felt that war could no longer be avoided and he asked Congress for an official declaration, an outcome that had become somewhat inevitable from the moment the embargo had first been declared.

Despite the fact that their attempts at economic coercion had failed for the past five years, many Americans, in what has become a recurring theme in pre-war discourse that has endured to the present day, were supremely confident that the war with Great Britain would be relatively quickly won. The fact that when war was declared the United States had almost no substantial military or naval establishment in place, poorly trained and ill-equipped troops, a dearth of capable or experienced field commanders and tacticians, and would be pitted against the unmatched strength of the British army and navy seemed to matter little in contemporary projections of American success. This overconfidence was present at the highest levels of government, as well. Robert Rutland argued that “In

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 86. Among this new generation of leaders to emerge in this period were three men who would have a sustained impact on the shape and direction of U.S. foreign policy into the 1850s, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster. While Webster’s rise to prominence was gradual after his election in 1812, Clay and Calhoun made an impact almost immediately. Clay was chosen Speaker of the House in his first session in that body, and Calhoun was appointed Secretary of War under James Monroe after only having served in the House for six years. These three men will play a prominent role in the rest of this dissertation. For more on their intertwined careers, see Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Madison's mind the war with Britain would be fought on American terms with more diplomacy than marching, with more talking than shooting, and ultimately – and this was the whole point – with the British backing down. Madison wanted no British territory, no reparations, no humble surrender. His war aims were limited. All he desired was an admission by British leaders that the United States was not a second-cousin dependent but an honest-to-God sovereign power in the world family of nations.”⁸⁵ As is often the case in matters of such consequence, though, expectation did not match reality. By the summer of 1814, the story of the war featured three failed and abortive attempts to invade Canada, the loss of territory in Maine, a series of embarrassing military defeats, and only sporadic examples of American success.⁸⁶

The domestic impact of the war was further complicated by a sharp increase of interest in and public discussion of George Washington and his Farewell Address; developments in part spurred by the creation of Washington Benevolent Societies throughout the northern half of the country that dedicated themselves to his example and wisdom.⁸⁷ The first organization to take Washington's name in this manner was the Washington Society of Alexandria, Virginia, which was formed in 1800, just a month after Washington's death; four

⁸⁵ Rutland, *Presidency of James Madison*, 105.

⁸⁶ For more on the War of 1812, see J. C. A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812* (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1957); Henry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); and David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *The War of 1812* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

⁸⁷ Fursetenberg demonstrated that the years leading up to and during the War of 1812, roughly 1809 to 1815, saw the longest sustained publication of new editions of the Farewell Address, peaking in 1812, when more editions were published than in any other year, including the year it was issued and the year of Washington's death. Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father*, 43.

years later it was emulated by a group of young Federalists in Augusta, Maine. The first official Washington Benevolent Society was founded in 1808 in New York City, and within four years there were Societies in eleven states. Historian David Hackett Fischer has calculated that by 1816 there were 208 documented Societies, but expected that “there were probably many more.”⁸⁸ The timing of the rise of these Societies was directly related to the foreign policy failures of the Madison administration; while membership was open to all citizens, they were primarily Federalist organizations. It was thus not surprising that these groups achieved the best traction in those areas hit hardest economically by the Republican restrictions on commerce (Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston), and that had historically been most devoted to the Federalist cause (New England). Part of what makes these Societies so interesting is the rich literature they left behind as a testament to their beliefs and goals. The Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania, for example, was formed in the fall of 1812 by people who had “avowed their attachment to the character and principles of Washington,” and who formally declared “that we are firmly attached to the Constitution of the United States and to that of Pennsylvania; to the principles of a free Republican Government, and to those which regulated the publick conduct of George Washington.”⁸⁹ To facilitate this ongoing attachment, the Pennsylvania

⁸⁸ David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 116; for a complete list, see 117-19.

⁸⁹ Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania, *A Summary Statement of the Origin, Progress, and Present State of the Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania: With an Account of the Opening and Dedication of the Washington Hall, on the First of October, 1816* (Philadelphia: United States' Gazette, 1816), 3, 9.

Society provided each new member with a copy of the Society's constitution and of Washington's Farewell Address.⁹⁰

While they met fairly regularly throughout the year, most Societies organized major public events on Washington's birthday, the anniversary of Washington's first inauguration as president (30 April), and Independence Day. The Federalist membership of the Societies often produced a partisan undercurrent, if not overt partisanship, in the course of these events. This held especially true after the American declaration of war against Great Britain. Throughout the war, these annual celebrations regularly featured lengthy orations sometimes aimed at decrying the Republican abandonment of Washington's principles, but always focused on reminding listeners of his enduring wisdom and significance. One orator speaking before the commencement of war in 1812, reminded his audience that "Towards foreign nations, the maxim of Washington was, *A liberal intercourse with all; alliances, with none,*" while another warned that "It is neither manly or profitable to condemn the course of national, or individual conduct, without showing that a better conduct might have been pursued. We look to the counsels of WASHINGTON."⁹¹ This speaker heavily criticized Jefferson, specifically for his rejection of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty, believing that it would have adjusted the nation's difficulties with Britain. The

⁹⁰ Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania, *Constitution and By-Laws of the Washington Benevolent Society, of Pennsylvania* ([Philadelphia]: Thomas T. Stiles, 1813), 10.

⁹¹ Emphasis in original. Isaac C. Bates, *An Oration, Pronounced Before the Washington Benevolent Society of the County of Hampshire, On Their First Anniversary, 1812. In Commemoration of the Nativity of Washington* (Northampton, MA: William Butler, 1812), 15; William Sullivan, *An Oration Delivered Before the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts On the Thirtieth day of April, 1812, Being the Anniversary of the First Inauguration of President Washington*, 2nd ed. (Boston: John Elliot, Jun., 1812), 20.

following year a speech delivered at a celebration of Washington's birthday called on those assembled to "Let us be Americans, and impress on the minds of our children the love of virtue and patriotism. Teach them to pronounce the name of Washington: and as soon as they can read, let them study the history of the Father of his country. Teach them, like him, to be guarded against foreign influence: and, like him, to love their country, and to be brace in its defence."⁹² A plethora of orations like these, and many that took a much harsher view of Jefferson and Madison's conduct, were subsequently printed as pamphlets to increase the impact of their ideas.

After two years of conflict the war was shaping up to be a catastrophic failure for the United States, with the lowest points still to take place. The illicit trade some New Englanders had been carrying on with Great Britain on a limited basis throughout the war increased as the region's support for the federal government decreased.⁹³ The nation's military faced its most demoralizing and embarrassing moment when, in August 1814, it failed to prevent British forces from marching into Washington, D.C. and burning half of the city down, including the White House and the Capitol. The end of the year also witnessed the gathering of the Hartford Convention and New England's consideration of

⁹² *An Address Delivered Before the Washington Benevolent Society, Brimfield, February 22d, 1813* (Brookfield, [MA]: E. Merriam & Co., 1813), 19.

⁹³ Contemporary Republican accounts of this illicit trade alleged that "The [Washington] Benevolent Society men have been detected in aiding the enemy. Nine tenths of all the evasions of law have been committed by Washington Benevolents; nine tenths of all the smugglers are members of that society." The veracity of such statements are difficult to assess, but they are interesting nonetheless. Excerpt from "The Fourth Book of the Washington Benevolents," quoted in William A. Robinson, "The Washington Benevolent Society in New England; A Phase of Politics during the War of 1812," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 49 (1916), 284.

secession from the Union.⁹⁴ As the darkest clouds were gathering over the nation, a stunning but decisive American naval victory on Lake Champlain during the Battle of Plattsburgh and the successful repelling of British forces from the city of Baltimore provided a hint of blue sky. Both of these events contributed to a British desire to see the war brought to an end. In Ghent, where peace negotiators had already been hard at work but were achieving little forward progress, the British backed off of their original harsh demands and a treaty was signed on Christmas Eve 1814.⁹⁵ The war was already over when General Andrew Jackson led the United States to its most convincing and overwhelming military victory of the entire war in the Battle of New Orleans in mid-January 1815. News of Jackson's victory arrived in Washington only days before news of the Ghent peace treaty did, suddenly turning America's depressing failure into a spectacular success.

That the Federalists published the proceedings of the Hartford Convention only days before America's final "victory" in the war was declared proved to be the death knell of the party. The popularity and influence of the Washington Benevolent Societies quickly waned after 1815 as well. While many of them persisted into the middle of the next decade, and the Society of Pennsylvania remained active into the 1830s, their moment had clearly passed.⁹⁶ These

⁹⁴ For more on the Hartford Convention, see James M. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815* (New York: Knopf, 1970).

⁹⁵ The peace negotiations will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

⁹⁶ Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 128. The crowning achievement of the Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania did not occur until October 1816 with the opening of their Washington Hall in Philadelphia. Five thousand people gathered in the Hall in

Societies may not have left a large mark on history, but their rise and spread was still significant. The Washington Benevolent Societies were more than two hundred local movements of people organizing around the idea that the United States needed to rededicate itself to the principles of George Washington and specifically to his Farewell Address. They were largely partisan organizations to be sure, but that did not diminish the genuineness of their attachment to these principles or the importance they placed on them. If anything, the multitude of speeches they had printed revealed how deeply dedicated they were to seeing the country return to the path staked out by the Father of his Country. Washington oratory through the end of the War of 1812 had been primarily Federalist in nature as a result of the Benevolent Societies, but this would not long remain the case as the nation began to confront new problems and challenges.⁹⁷

Everywhere the news of peace was received enthusiastically. Coming on the heels of Jackson's victory at New Orleans, even though the treaty had actually been signed three weeks before the battle took place, it served to eliminate two years of disastrous results and to elevate the accomplishment in the minds of most Americans. Letters written by two congressmen to their constituents best exemplify this view. Israel Pickens of North Carolina was gratified to be writing that "peace has been concluded with Great Britain, on terms highly honorable to

what the Society claimed was "a larger number than was ever before assembled, in one room, in the city of Philadelphia." Fischer expanded the claim to suggest that event featured what was "in all probability the largest crowd ever gathered under one roof in the country up to that time." A lengthy discussion of Washington Hall's construction and opening celebration can be found in Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania, *Summary Statement. Ibid.*, 40-41; Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 125.

⁹⁷ Bryan, *George Washington in American Literature*, 15.

the United States. . . . Thus gloriously has terminated this second war for our independence.”⁹⁸ John Rhea of Tennessee heaped even more praise on the United States, declaring that in the short duration of the war “the American character has unfolded itself in a blaze of effulgent glory not excelled by any nation, and has raised itself to the highest rank of nations.” He described the treaty itself as “an honorable treaty of peace” that “confirmed their independence never to be shaken.”⁹⁹ For these observers, the results justified the long and costly war.

The terms of the treaty were not universally greeted with such acclaim. Of central concern was that it did not address many of the issues that had caused the war in the first place, most notably impressment. Joseph Pearson, a Federalist from North Carolina, for example, did not forget that “The impolitic and disastrous war in which we were involved, had progressed for more than two years, without producing any other effect, than apparently removing farther and farther, from attainment, the objects for which it was professedly declared and prosecuted.” While he thought that the treaty was “peculiarly beneficial to the country, because *peace* had become almost indispensable to our existence as a nation,” he also felt an obligation to acknowledge that “To say what we have obtained is impossible, unless it be *peace*, and that we had before the war; but to say what we have *not* obtained, is easy – we have *not obtained one single solitary object, for which the war was professedly declared and prosecuted*. On the contrary, those rights and those objects, held by the administration to be so

⁹⁸ Israel Pickens, 20 February 1815, in Cunningham, *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 2:912.

⁹⁹ John Rhea, 27 February 1815, in *Ibid.*, 925-26.

important and so indispensable to our national independence, are, by the doctrines of those very men, *abandoned* and forever lost to the nation.” Impressment was the key issue here, as it had been one of the central points of contention between the two nations for over twenty years. Republicans had taken Washington to task for signing the Jay Treaty when it failed to address the issue, and Jefferson had rejected the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty for the same reason, but the Treaty of Ghent, which was cheered throughout the nation, was silent on it. Pearson marveled that “It is perhaps the first and only treaty that ever was made, which did not contain some reference, some distant allusion to the causes which produced the war, and the objects intended to be effected.” Indeed, the main object of the treaty was to return both nations to the status quo that had existed before the war and to leave open to future negotiation all other concerns. Such a treaty was possible because the Napoleonic wars in Europe were over and there was no longer any need to harass American shipping. Pearson concluded that despite the treaty’s silence on many issues, it was still “a blessing to the nation – it has saved us from impending destruction, and whatever may be the *condemnation* it seals on the *administration and their war*, the people have cause to rejoice.”¹⁰⁰

In a war and era filled with ironies, perhaps the greatest one is the impact the War of 1812 had on the place Washington’s Farewell Address occupied in the American mind. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had made a number of foreign policy decisions that flew in the face of Washington, culminating in the decision to forego peace in favor of war. Republican policies led Federalists to

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Pearson, 10 March 1815, in *Ibid.*, 953, 963-64.

bemoan the abandonment of Washington's principles and to found Societies dedicated to seeing their return. Despite all of this, the American "victory" in the war ultimately produced the stronger national union that Washington had called for much quicker than it might otherwise have been achieved. As Albert Gallatin put it in 1816, "The war has renewed and reinstated the national feelings and character which the Revolution had given, and which were daily lessened. The people have now more general objects of attachment with which their pride and political opinions are connected. They are more American; they feel and act more as a nation; and I hope that the permanency of the Union is thereby better secured."¹⁰¹ The end of the war also marked the return of normal commercial relations with Europe, and many of the Washingtonian foreign and domestic policies abandoned by Jefferson over a decade earlier. Orators also continued to view the Farewell Address as explicating the ideal American approach to foreign policy. In perhaps the best indication of where the Address stood in America's consciousness, Jerome Loring, speaking on 4 July 1815, warned that "The clouds of war are again thickening in Europe, portending a fearful storm. . . . No doubt every art will be employed to draw us into the vortex." He urged his audience to "hear the monitory voice of Washington and beware," and he concluded a long passage summarizing the Farewell Address by calling on the nation to "cultivate peace with all nations, entangling alliances with none."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Albert Gallatin to Matthew Lyon, 7 May 1816, in *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, ed. Henry Adams, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879), 1:700.

¹⁰² Jerome Loring, *An Oration Pronounced at Hingham, July 4, 1815, in Commemoration of American Independence* (Boston: Rowe and Hooper, 1815), 13.

Three: John Quincy Adams and the Legacy of the Farewell Address

As President James Monroe prepared to leave Washington, D.C. for his home in Loudoun County, Virginia in October 1823, the United States was at a crossroads. Mainland Spanish America had almost entirely shed the yoke of colonialism and the United States had officially recognized the independence of several former Spanish colonies. In Europe the army of France had overrun Spain to put down a popular revolution and restore King Ferdinand VII to the throne. The expectation in the United States was that once France achieved victory it would send its forces to Spanish America to either institute monarchical rule or entirely resubjugate the former colonies, an outcome greatly opposed by most people living in the American continents. A possible solution presented itself to Monroe before he departed the capital that October in the form of a series of dispatches from the United States Minister to Great Britain, Richard Rush. These dispatches outlined several conversations Rush had had with British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs George Canning on the potential for French intervention in Spanish America. In the course of these conversations, Canning asked Rush what the United States government “would say to going hand in hand with his” in expressing a mutual opposition to any intervention. He believed that “the simple fact of our being known to hold the same sentiment would, . . . by its moral effect, put down the intention on the part of France, admitting that she should ever

entertain it.”¹ This proposal was completely unexpected, and Rush, feeling himself unable to give a definitive answer to Canning, immediately wrote to his government for guidance. Canning’s proposition and Rush’s dispatches stepped off a debate in the president’s cabinet that culminated in the enunciation of what history have come to know as the Monroe Doctrine.

The Doctrine was intended as a bold declaration of American principles, and not just any principles, but an expanded conception of those originally laid down by George Washington in his Farewell Address. While Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was on his father’s farm in Quincy, Massachusetts when Rush’s dispatches first arrived in the United States, it was his voice and his interpretation of American principles that came to shape the Doctrine that bears Monroe’s name. This chapter explores the evolution of Adams’s foreign policy thought and specifically his lifelong defense of Washingtonian principles unclouded by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization. Beyond gaining a better understanding of the original meaning and significance of the Monroe Doctrine, an understanding necessary to fully appreciate its domestic and international reception, this chapter also illuminates the impending conflict between those who conceived of the Farewell Address as Adams did and those who believed in “entangling alliances with none.”

The Education of John Quincy Adams

¹ Richard Rush to John Quincy Adams, no. 323, 19 August 1823, in William R. Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925), 3:1476-77.

John Quincy Adams, born in 1767 to John and Abigail Adams, was expected to accomplish great things. Too young to take up pen or arms during the American Revolution, he was able to contribute in a way no other American adolescent could, traveling to France in 1778 with his father as he negotiated the treaty of alliance that brought that nation into the war. After serving the elder Adams at postings in Spain and the Netherlands, in 1781 he became Francis Dana's secretary on a mission to Russia. When John Quincy returned to the United States in 1785 to enroll at Harvard University, he had already seen more of the world than most Americans would during their entire lives. He graduated second in his class in 1787, trained to become a lawyer, and in 1790 he opened his own law practice in Boston. He had no designs on political office during his first years in Boston, but this did not stop him from taking an interest in political events. One of the earliest to draw his attention was the 1791 publication of Thomas Paine's defense of the French Revolution, *The Rights of Man*, and Thomas Jefferson's introductory note to the American edition. Jefferson's note lauded the work and criticized the "political heresies which have sprung up among us," a phrase many readers interpreted to be a condemnation of the Federalists in general and Vice President John Adams in particular. Feeling the need to defend his father and his own political views, Adams published a series of eleven articles in the Boston *Columbian Centinel* under the pseudonym "Publicola" that were highly critical of both Paine and Jefferson.²

² Many readers of the Publicola letters believed them to have been written by John Adams. The first Publicola letter was published on 8 June 1791 and successive letters were published every

Despite the notoriety achieved by this first publishing effort, even if his authorship did not become widely known, Adams still preferred maintaining a private life. He remarked early on that “I have been really apprehensive of becoming politically known, before I could establish a *professional* reputation. I knew that my independence and consequently my happiness in life depended upon this, and I have sincerely wished rather to remain in the shade than to appear as a politician without any character as a lawyer.”³ With the publication of President Washington’s Proclamation of Neutrality in April 1793, though, Adams once again took up his pen in defense of the administration. Writing as “Marcellus,” Adams aimed to demonstrate “what line of conduct ought to be pursued by the United States as a nation, and by their citizens as individuals, in relation to” France and Great Britain.⁴ Adams believed that it was the “duty” of the United States to maintain “an impartial and unequivocal neutrality,” and that “as the citizens of a nation at a vast distance from the continent of Europe; of a nation whose happiness consists in a real independence, disconnected from all European interests and European politics, it is our duty to remain, the peaceable and silent, though sorrowful spectators of the sanguinary scene.”⁵ Later in the year, as “Columbus,” he voiced his approval of the administration’s handling of

few days through 27 July 1791. John Quincy Adams, *The Writings of John Quincy Adams*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford, 7 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913-17), 1:65-110. A brief summary of the American publication of *The Rights of Man* and its aftermath can be found in Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 237-39.

³ John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 16 December 1792, in *Writings*, 1:126-27.

⁴ John Quincy Adams, “Marcellus I,” 24 April 1793, published in the Boston *Columbian Centinel*, in *Ibid.*, 135.

⁵ John Quincy Adams, “Marcellus II,” 4 May 1793, published in the Boston *Columbian Centinel*, in *Ibid.*, 139-40, 142. “Marcellus III” was published on 11 May 1793. See *Ibid.*, 142-46.

the Genet affair, lamenting the evils of foreign influence and praising the president for having the French minister recalled.⁶ At the age of twenty-five, and three years before Washington would publish his Farewell Address, Adams was already defending what would become its core principles.

Whether aiming for a career in politics or not, Adams came to the president's attention when his father shared these pseudonymous letters with him. Washington approved of what he read and appointed Adams as the United States Minister to the Netherlands in May 1794. Stationed in Europe until the end of his father's administration, Adams was in a position to see the other side of U.S. foreign policy decisions and principles. This perspective gave him a greater appreciation for the wisdom of neutrality and it became a frequent thread of his ongoing correspondence. Writing to his father in 1795 he observed that "The President of the United States has so decidedly adopted and maintained the policy of neutrality, and it has proved so advantageous to the country, that it is perhaps an idle apprehension that can imagine it will again be endangered."⁷ In a letter to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering he declared that "The system of policy pursued by the President since the commencement of the present European war has been encountered by so many difficulties and embarrassments, which the wisdom of his government has removed and overcome, that I feel encouraged in the hope that it will be successfully pursued to the end."⁸ Neutrality was

⁶ John Quincy Adams, "Columbus I" was published on 30 November 1793; II, 4 December 1793; and III, 7, 11, and 14 December 1793; all in the Boston *Columbian Centinel*. *Ibid.*, 148-76.

⁷ John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 22 May 1795, in *Ibid.*, 360.

⁸ John Quincy Adams to Timothy Pickering, 15 November 1795, in *Ibid.*, 428.

important not just in principle but also in practice, as his European vantage point made it clear to him that France was actively attempting to draw the United States into a war with Great Britain. He believed that “the policy of the French government at present is to make *use* of the United States . . . as an instrument for the benefit of France, as a passive weapon in her hands against her most formidable enemy;” that it was the intention of the French government “to involve the United States in a war with Britain.”⁹ Only a strict adherence to Washington’s neutrality was saving the United States from this French threat.

Valuing both the intelligence and the keen insights his son frequently sent him from Europe, John Adams would often pass John Quincy’s letters on to the president. Washington at one point confided to his vice president that his son “must not think of retiring from the walk he is now in: his prospects if he pursues it are fair: and I shall be much mistaken, if in as short a time as can well be expected, he is not found at the head of the Diplomatique Corps.”¹⁰ Such approbation was not unidirectional, either, as Adams repeatedly defended not just the wisdom of the president’s foreign policy, but also how essential Washington was to its maintenance and success. Writing to one confidante late in 1795, Adams asserted that “At the present moment if our neutrality be still preserved, it will be due to the President alone. Nothing but his weight of character and reputation, combined with his firmness and political intrepidity, could have stood

⁹ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 22 May 1795, in *Ibid.*, 356, 358.

¹⁰ George Washington to John Adams, 20 August 1795, in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), 34:279.

against the torrent that is still tumbling with a fury that resounds even across the Atlantic.” Adams believed that in a time when “men who court popularity in America, dare to speak openly of their devotion to the interests of France as they have done for years back, and lose none of their influence by the barefaced avowal of such a partial foreign attachment,” it was only through Washington’s strength that the nation could persevere.¹¹ So much faith did Adams put in Washington and his principles, he predicted that “If his system of administration now prevails, ten years more will place the United States among the most powerful and opulent nations on earth.”¹² While the timeframe for this prediction was optimistic, it clearly revealed that Adams saw Washington’s principles as being not just important for America’s present but also critical for its future.

Given his consistent endorsement of Washington’s foreign policy approach, it should come as no surprise that Adams believed his Farewell Address to be a vital legacy to a wise administration. Upon reading it for the first time, Adams wrote directly to Washington to express his fervent prayer that the people of the United States “may not only impress all its admonitions upon their hearts, but that it may serve as the foundation upon which the whole system of their future policy may rise, the admiration and example of future time; that your warning voice may upon every great emergency recur to their remembrance with an influence equal to the occasion; that it may control the fury of domestic factions and check the encroachments of foreign influence; that it may cement

¹¹ John Quincy Adams to Sylvanus Bourne, 24 December 1795, in *Writings*, 1:468; and John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 21 July 1796, in *Ibid.*, 2:3-4.

¹² John Quincy Adams to Sylvanus Bourne, 24 December 1795, in *Ibid.*, 1:468.

with indissoluble force our national Union, and secure at once our dignity and our peace.”¹³ That Adams would passionately approve of Washington’s Farewell Address was not surprising; he had been an outspoken proponent of Washington’s foreign policy throughout his administration and understood the importance of that policy to America’s growth and prosperity. Washington’s valedictory also enunciated principles that Adams himself had expressed in his Marcellus and Columbus essays, not to mention his correspondence, especially as regarded the dangers of foreign influence and the importance of neutrality for a weak nation.

So much did their principles of foreign policy overlap, that historian Samuel Flagg Bemis suggested that “John Quincy Adams’s contributions to the American press and his subsequent letters from The Hague to his father had an appreciable influence upon the mind of the President as he thought over what he desired to say in the Address. . . . So clearly do the thoughts of the younger Adams, even little traces of his phraseology, appear in the Farewell Address that one may wonder whether Washington may not have had still before him the letters of ‘Columbus’ when he drew up the first draft of that document.” Bemis did not point out these similarities in principle to claim any sort of credit for Adams for the Address, as it “would have been given out, in somewhat the same form, if Adams had never lived.” Instead he believed that “John Quincy Adams shared these principles of foreign policy [with Washington] and validated them from his observation, on the spot, of the wars of the French Revolution. Thus validated, they had reinforced Washington’s own opinions and even shaped their

¹³ John Quincy Adams to George Washington, 11 February 1797, in *Ibid.*, 2:119-20.

expression a little.”¹⁴ To extend Bemis’s argument, it can be said that Washington and John Quincy Adams had mutually reinforced and validated each other in their conception of the principles of American foreign policy. This viewpoint is critical in understanding Adams’s future use of the Farewell Address.

Upon returning to the United States in 1801, Adams found a very different country than that which he had departed seven years earlier. George Washington was dead; his father was retired from public life for the first time since the Revolution; Thomas Jefferson’s Republican party was ascendant virtually everywhere but New England; and the Federalists, the dominant party of his state and the nominative party of the first two presidents, were angrily in the minority. Adams returned to Boston as a private citizen to resume his legal practice, but was soon elected to the Massachusetts state legislature, and in 1803 was elected by that body to the United States Senate. Adams arrived in Washington, D.C. to take his seat in the Senate the day after the vote was taken to ratify the Louisiana Purchase, and had he arrived a day earlier he would have voted with the majority.¹⁵ While other Federalists had both principled and partisan reasons to oppose the treaty, Adams believed that the treaty-making power of the Constitution gave the president the ability to acquire any territory he could successfully negotiate for, and Louisiana in the hands of the United States was

¹⁴ Samuel Flagg Bemis, “John Quincy Adams and George Washington,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1945): 377, 381.

¹⁵ Adams would later recall that upon first arriving in Washington to take his seat in the Senate, he “passed by the Secretary of the Senate, who was going from the Capitol to the President’s house, with the advice and consent of that body to the ratification” of the Louisiana Purchase treaty. “Reply of John Quincy Adams to the Letter of Massachusetts Federalists, dated 30th December, 1828,” in Henry Adams, ed., *Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1905), 54.

certainly preferable to French or Spanish control. At the same time, he argued that a Constitutional amendment would be needed before the government could legitimately dispose of the acquired territory, a point he pressed in the Senate into early 1804 to no avail.¹⁶ In holding firm to his principles and his understanding of the Constitution, Adams had effectively alienated himself from both political parties.

From the Federalist perspective, his behavior only worsened when he became the only Federalist senator to vote in favor of Jefferson's Non-Importation Agreement against Great Britain in 1806 and for the Embargo in December 1807.¹⁷ Adams viewed the Embargo as the only way to keep the United States out of the war between Great Britain and France and to guarantee the maintenance of neutrality. Just days after voting in favor of the measure, Adams wrote to his father that "we had no other alternative left but this, or taking our side at once in the war. I do not believe indeed that the embargo can long be continued; but if we let our ships go out without arming them and authorizing them to resist the decrees, they must go merely to swell the plunder of the contending parties."¹⁸ The following August, he still believed that "the true and only alternative was this – embargo or war; and I remain unshaken in that opinion. Now, although embargo is beyond all question a distressing calamity to

¹⁶ Adams discussed his beliefs on Louisiana and the need for a constitutional amendment in a letter to his father, as well as in an extended rebuttal to New England Federalists in the 1820s over his supposed abandonment of the party. See John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 31 August 1811, in *Writings*, 4:204-7; and Adams, ed., *New-England Federalism*, 52-55.

¹⁷ The Non-Importation Agreement was passed by a vote of 19 to 9 and the Embargo was passed 22 to 6. 15 April 1806, in *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 1st sess., 240; and 18 December 1807, in *Ibid.*, 10th Cong., 1st sess., 50-51.

¹⁸ John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 27 December 1807, in *Writings*, 3:168.

this country, yet in comparison with *war*, either with Britain or France, I still esteem it as no more than the bite of a flea to the bite of a rattlesnake.” He also remained hopeful that before long Great Britain or France would stop preying on American shipping and that the United States would be “released from the pressures of the embargo, without being driven into the war.” This would not only provide for the easing of heavy economic burdens, but would also allow for the preservation of “the great system of American neutrality in European wars, which Washington with so much difficulty established, and which it has always been so difficult to maintain.”¹⁹ Adams recognized the damage caused by the embargo, but viewed the question through the lens of Washington’s principles and concluded, just as Washington had when considering the Jay Treaty, that the maintenance of neutrality and the preservation of peace were the primary interests at stake that needed to be protected.

Adams resigned his Senate seat in June 1808 after the Federalists in the Massachusetts legislature implicitly condemned his record.²⁰ His private respite

¹⁹ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Orchard Cook, [22] August 1808, in *Ibid.*, 240-41. Being from Massachusetts, Adams understood the hardships that the Embargo caused for merchants throughout the nation, and as early as January 1808 he introduced a resolution declaring “That a committee be appointed, with leave to report by bill or otherwise, and instructed to inquire at what period the present embargo can, consistently with the public interest, be removed; and whether, in what manner, and to what extent, upon its removal, the merchant vessels of the United States shall be permitted, in defence of their lawful commerce, to be armed against, and to resist, foreign aggression.” The Embargo would not be repealed until 1 March 1809. 11 January 1808, in *Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 1st sess., 79.

²⁰ On 2 June 1808, eight months earlier than normal, the state legislature elected the man who would replace Adams in the Senate. The legislature also passed resolutions opposing the Embargo, an act Adams felt he could not support. Adams resigned his seat six days later. For the election of Adams’s successor and passage of the anti-Embargo resolutions, see the *Boston Gazette*, 6 June 1808. For Adams’s resignation, see the *Boston Gazette*, 13 June 1808; John Quincy Adams to the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, from Boston, 8 June 1808, in *Writings*, 3:237-38; and “Reply to the Appeal of the

was once again short-lived, though, as soon after being sworn in as president, James Madison appointed him as America's first minister to Russia. While this new commission allowed Adams to return to the diplomatic service to which he was best suited, it also meant that he had to watch from afar as his country progressed towards war with Great Britain. Adams fervently hoped for peace, but understood that war was becoming increasingly unavoidable. Should war come, Adams prayed "That we may not undertake it presumptuously, nor impelled by passion, nor without a precise and definite object for which to contend."²¹ Adams wanted victory, but he was also greatly concerned with both the nature and the perception of America's conduct during the war. For example, after the failure of a campaign against Canada, he lamented that "The acquisition of Canada . . . was not and could not be the object of this war. . . . This misfortune, considered by itself, is not a very heavy one to the nation," but it was still "a deep mortgage of reputation to redeem."²² Adams believed that an American victory in the war was inconsequential if it carried with it a diminution of global respect for the United States. When Great Britain rejected a Russian offer to mediate, Adams fumed at the show of disrespect. According to Adams, "It has been so uniformly and invariably the policy of the United States to keep themselves aloof from all the political combinations of Europe, that the British government seems to have taken it for granted that their controversies with us might always be managed upon

Massachusetts Federalists, by John Quincy Adams," in Adams, ed., *New-England Federalism*, 203.

²¹ John Quincy Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, 31 July 1811, in *Writings*, 4:163, 162.

²² John Quincy Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, 14 November 1812, in *Ibid.*, 406-7.

principles not applicable to their intercourse with other powers, and that what they might be compelled to submit to as law of nations with the rest of Europe, they might break through with impunity in their relations with America.” He was especially critical of the fact that “as a motive for declining the Russian mediation they have alleged that it was a dispute involving principles of internal administration, as if the United States were a mere appendage to the British dominions.”²³ This war had been caused, at least in American eyes, by Britain’s refusal to respect American principles and rights and now its leaders were quite literally adding insult to injury.

When Britain finally did agree to peace negotiations at Ghent, Belgium, Adams, who was appointed as a peace commissioner along with James Bayard, Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin, and Jonathan Russell, wanted to ensure that the United States would achieve a just and honorable peace that would reflect well upon the United States in the eyes of the world.²⁴ His view of the war had changed dramatically between 1808 and 1814. Before it began he believed that America’s best interests would be served by pursuing peace, but once it had commenced, and especially in light of British insults, peace could only be agreed to if it was on positive terms. “I would sooner look forward to the chance of ten successive wars, to be carried on ten times more weakly than we have the present one,” he raged to his father, “than concede one particle of our principle by a treaty

²³ John Quincy Adams to James Monroe, 14 July 1813, in *Ibid.*, 494-95.

²⁴ For a more extensive discussion of the Ghent negotiations, see Bradford Perkins, *Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964); and Frank Updyke, *The Diplomacy of the War of 1812* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1915).

stipulation.”²⁵ When negotiations began in August 1814, the British presented extreme demands that would have forced the United States to give up much in territory and principle. By November any of the most onerous demands had been dropped, but the British commissioners still clung to several points that Adams felt the United States could not concede. Writing to his wife in late November, he admitted that “The objects upon which they still insist, and which we cannot yield, are in themselves so trifling and insignificant that neither of the two nations would tolerate a war for them. We have everything but peace in our hands. But in these trifles, in the simple consideration of interest, they have left involved principles to which we cannot accede.” America’s core interests were at stake and thus the principle could not be sacrificed for the sake of peace. The British had “given up without qualification all demand for a cession of territory . . . but they have attempted to secure by an article ambiguously drawn, the possession of perhaps a few hundred acres of land, which we can no more give up, than we could a whole state in our union. There are other points totally unimportant, but implicating our national honor, to which they still adhere. We cannot agree to them, and if they finally persist in requiring it of us, the negotiation must break off.”²⁶ Adams would rather risk the continuation of the war than give up his nation’s principles.

²⁵ John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 17 February 1814, in *Writings*, 5:22. Adams echoed such sentiments after the treaty negotiations began. See John Quincy Adams to William Harris Crawford, 29 August 1814, in *Ibid.*, 104-6.

²⁶ John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, 29 November 1814, in *Ibid.*, 219-20.

Adams's persistence on this point, along with the efforts of his fellow commissioners, resulted in a treaty that protected American interests and preserved American principle by leaving unresolved most of the issues at stake in the war, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Despite this, Adams was still proud of the treaty, as the United States had "abandoned no essential right, and if we have left everything open for future controversy, we have at least secured to our country the power at her own option to extinguish the war."²⁷ Writing to his wife he admitted that "We have obtained nothing but peace, and we have made great sacrifices to obtain it. But our honor remains unsullied; our territory remains entire. The peace in word and in deed has been made upon terms of *perfect reciprocity*, and we have surrendered no one right or pretension of our country."²⁸ Reflecting on the war and the peace more than a year later, Adams echoed the judgments of many Republicans back home in declaring the war to have been "much more beneficial than injurious to our country. It has raised our national character in the eyes of all Europe. It has demonstrated that the United States are both a military and a naval power, with capacities which may hereafter place them in both these respects on the first line among the nations of the earth."²⁹ For this diplomat, the lasting victory of the War of 1812 was the principles defended at Ghent rather than the triumph at New Orleans. After the successful completion of the treaty, Adams moved on to Great Britain as the

²⁷ John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, 24 December 1814, in *Ibid.*, 248.

²⁸ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, 3 January 1815, in *Ibid.*, 261.

²⁹ John Quincy Adams to Alexander Hill Everett, 16 March 1816, in *Ibid.*, 537-38.

United States' representative there, before being recalled by incoming President James Monroe to take charge of the State Department.³⁰

America's Post-War Foreign Policy Challenges

From the time John Quincy Adams first left the United States for France at the age of ten until his return from Britain at the age of fifty to take up his position as secretary of state, he had spent more time in Europe than he had in America.³¹ When he returned from his first European trip to enroll at Harvard he feared "that by having received so large a share of my education in Europe, my attachment to a republican government would not be sufficient for pleasing my countrymen; but I find on the contrary that I am the best republican here, and with my classmates, if I ever have any disputes on the subject, I am always obliged to defend that side of the question."³² Being a firsthand witness to the operation of different political systems and different political principles had given Adams a unique appreciation for both republican principles and the wisdom of George Washington's foreign

³⁰ Monroe had determined to appoint a secretary of state from the North in response to the "belief of the country north and east of this, that the citizens from Virginia, holding the Presidency, have made appointments to that Department [of State] to secure the succession from it to the Presidency of the person who happens to be from that state." James Madison had served as Thomas Jefferson's Secretary of State, and James Monroe had held the position under Madison. Monroe feared that the appointment of another Virginian, or any southern or western man for that matter, would exacerbate such complaints. Monroe thus settled on Adams, "who by his age, long experience in our foreign affairs, and adoption into the republican party, seems to have superior pretensions" to any other easterner. James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, 23 February 1817, in *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of his Public and Private Papers and Correspondence now for the First Time Printed*, ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, 7 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898-1903), 6:2-4. Monroe expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Andrew Jackson. See Monroe to Jackson, 1 March 1817, in *Ibid.*, 4-6.

³¹ Adams left for France in February 1778 and did not return to Massachusetts until July 1785; he then departed for the Netherlands in September 1794 and stayed in Europe until September 1801; on what would prove to be his final mission to Europe he left for Russia in August 1809 and returned in August 1817. All told, Adams had spent twenty-two-and-a-half of the previous forty years in Europe.

³² John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, 30 December 1786, in *Writings*, 1:29.

policy. Whether it be observing the European side of America's Quasi-War with France in the 1790s, or attempting to uphold American principles in peace negotiations with Great Britain in the 1810s, Adams came into the State Department with a clear understanding of the importance of Washington's principles and especially his Farewell Address to the future peace and prospects of the United States. This was especially true given the new global challenges the United States was facing in the wake of the War of 1812 and the close of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe.

The year 1815 was a pivotal one for Europe, as it saw the final defeat of Napoleon and a concerted effort by the various European heads of state to ensure a permanent restoration of order. Two decades of war wrought by the French Revolution and Napoleon had alerted the sovereigns of Europe to the dangers of popular uprising and the need to reassert legitimate authority over the continent. This led to the creation of new alliances that aimed to preserve the post-war reordering. The first of these – completed in September 1815 between the sovereigns of Austria, Prussia, and Russia and termed the Holy Alliance – was a declaration of a mutual belief in the nature of legitimate authority in government, and specifically the divine right of kings.³³ Ultimately signed by all of the

³³ One analyst of the Holy Alliance suggested that the nations involved had committed themselves both to the precepts of religiously guided rule and “to the principles of an all-embracing international system,” while another described the Alliance as a “police body, to assure the peace of the civilized world” by giving “a full and combined support . . . to legitimate or monarchical governments as against any revolutionary movement originating from the people.” Walter Alison Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813-1823 as an Experiment in the International Organization of Peace* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914), 150; Worthington C. Ford, “John Quincy Adams and the Monroe Doctrine,” *American Historical Review* 7 (July 1902): 676.

sovereigns of Europe except for those of Great Britain, Turkey, and the Vatican (as those governments did not feature traditional monarchical sovereigns), the Holy Alliance quickly became a driving force in European politics. A second alliance, the Quadruple Alliance, was formed between Great Britain and the founding members of the Holy Alliance just two months later, and was tasked with maintaining peace and a “just balance of power” in the wake of decades of upheaval.³⁴ These alliances posed interesting new challenges for the incoming U.S. secretary of state. This was especially the case with the Holy Alliance, which he described as “of a character entirely new and unexampled in the history of the world.”³⁵

Of more immediate interest and concern to the United States were the ongoing revolutions throughout Spanish America. The process of revolution had commenced slowly in that corner of the globe in 1808, but by 1815 had picked up a full head of steam throughout mainland Spanish America.³⁶ They were also becoming increasingly problematic for the United States. Privately, the government strongly approved of these revolutionary movements, as the replacement of Spanish colonies with independent nations represented a

³⁴ “Treaty of Union, Concert, and Subsidy, between His Britannic Majesty and His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty the Emperor of Austria,” 1 March 1814, in Great Britain, Foreign Office, *British and Foreign State Papers*, 170 vols. (London: James Ridgway and Sons, 1834-1977), 1:121-29; “Treaty of Alliance and Friendship between Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia,” 20 November 1815, in *Ibid.*, 3:279.

³⁵ John Quincy Adams to George Washington Campbell, 28 June 1818, in *Writings*, 6:374.

³⁶ For more on the revolutions in Spanish America, see Timothy E. Anna, *Spain and the Loss of America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Jay Kinsbruner, *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions, and Underdevelopment*, 2nd ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

significant opportunity for the growth of American commerce and the elimination of a far-reaching European colonial presence from much of the American continents. The United States did not exist in a vacuum, though, and as much as it inwardly approved of the revolutions, it could not outwardly support them. As one historian put it, “America had to subordinate the possible advantages of an active policy in Latin America to the need to avoid antagonizing Spain, with whom a number of border questions were pending, or provoking Britain, still her major trading partner.”³⁷ These pending border questions with Spain included both recent and future negotiations over the potential acquisition of the Floridas by the United States.

After the War of 1812, the United States hardly wanted to risk war with Spain or Great Britain over support for Spanish America. President Madison pursued a policy of “scrupulous neutrality” in the conflict between Spain and its colonies, and in September 1815 he issued a proclamation calling for this neutrality to become national policy.³⁸ Secretary of State James Monroe saw the revolutions as becoming “daily more interesting to the United States,” and in a dispatch to Minister to Great Britain John Quincy Adams, he expressed his belief that the colonies would successfully “separate from the mother country.” In Monroe’s estimation, these emerging nations required “the acknowledgement of

³⁷ D. A. G. Waddell, “International Politics and Latin American Independence,” in *The Independence of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 202.

³⁸ James Madison, “A Proclamation,” 1 September 1815, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols. (New York: National Bureau of Literature, 1908), 1:561-62.

their governments by the United States, and when it is considered that the alternative between governments, which in the event of their independence would be free and friendly, and the relation which, reasoning from the past, must be expected from them, as colonies, there is no cause to doubt in which scale our interest lies.”³⁹ Unquestionably that interest was American continents largely free of European colonies. By the end of 1815, though, such assessments were more optimistic thinking than realistic expectation, given that it would be another seven years before the United States would finally deem any of them to have achieved a lasting independence.

Regardless, Monroe brought this positive outlook with him into his presidency, and raised the possibility of recognizing Buenos Aires at one of Adams’s first cabinet meetings upon his return from Europe.⁴⁰ Adams “explicitly avowed” his opinion that such a course of action was “not now expedient,” as he believed that a premature recognition of Spain’s former colonies would yield no economic or political gains for the United States.⁴¹ Historian Dexter Perkins agreed with Adams’s viewpoint in arguing that the potential trade lost from Europe was worth far more than could possibly be gained from the new nations of Latin America. More importantly, the central political objective of recognition – seeing “European interests, and European ambitions and rivalries, banished from

³⁹ James Monroe to John Quincy Adams, 10 December 1815, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1:18.

⁴⁰ Monroe was sworn in as president on 4 March 1817, but Adams did not assume responsibility for the State Department until September.

⁴¹ 30 October 1817, in John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-77), 4:15-16.

the New World” – could not be achieved by recognition itself. Perkins concluded that “acknowledgement of the independence of the new states was fundamentally a matter of political sympathies; it was not, certainly as matters stood in 1817, a matter of American interest.”⁴² Adams would later expand upon his conception of the American interests at stake in an early recognition as being a violation of U.S. neutrality; more than just standing up for Latin America, it would be interjecting the United States into the ongoing conflict between Spain and its colonies. As Adams saw it, “In every question relating to the independence of a nation two principles are involved, one of *right*, and the other of *fact*; the former depending upon the determination of the nation itself, and the latter resulting from the successful execution of that determination.” In the ongoing revolutions the United States had maintained an “impartial neutrality” and would continue to do so until such time as recognition was “the mere acknowledgment of existing facts.”⁴³ Thus, despite Monroe’s sympathy, since Buenos Aires had failed to adequately demonstrate that it had permanently secured independence, Adams wondered, “by what *right* could we take sides?”⁴⁴ Until such time as independence was an established fact, official expressions of support for the Spanish American cause, let alone recognition, would be a violation of neutrality.

⁴² Dexter Perkins, “John Quincy Adams,” in *The American Secretaries of States and Their Diplomacy*, ed. Samuel Flagg Bemis, 20 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927-85), 4:38-39.

⁴³ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Don Joaquin de Anduaga, 6 April 1822, in *Writings*, 7:217-18.

⁴⁴ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Alexander Hill Everett, 29 December 1817, in *Ibid.*, 6:281.

In taking this stance on recognition – by seeing it for its relationship to American neutrality and interests – Adams was once again demonstrating how Washington’s principles continued to shape his approach to U.S. foreign policy. Of course, Adams’s was not the only definition of America’s best interests. Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives and one of the nation’s most vocal supporters of Spanish American independence, advocated recognition as being in the best interests of the United States. Clay expressed his first interest in the progress of Spanish American independence as early as January 1813 and issued his first extended call for American support just three years later, when the revolutionaries were still struggling to gain significant traction.⁴⁵ During a debate only indirectly concerned with America’s foreign affairs, Clay “boldly declared” that should the United States “be called on to decide the question whether we would or would not lend them our aid,” that it would “undoubtedly be good policy to take part with the patriots of South America.” He argued that, “on the strictest principles of public law, we have a right to take part with them, that it is our interest to take part with them, and that our interposition in their favor would be effectual.” Specifically on the question of interest, he “considered the release of any part of America from the dominions of the old world, as adding to the general security of the new.”⁴⁶ Clay’s was a vision of American interest entirely antithetical to that of John Quincy Adams, a fact that the secretary of state

⁴⁵ For Clay’s earliest efforts, see his “Speech on Bill to Raise an Additional Military Force,” [8, 9 January 1813], in *The Papers of Henry Clay*, ed. James F. Hopkins, 10 vols. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-91), 1:758-59.

⁴⁶ “Speech on Direct Tax and Public Affairs,” [29 January 1816], in *Ibid.*, 155-56.

acknowledged at the end of 1817 when he bemoaned that the Speaker had “already mounted his South American great horse.”⁴⁷ Clay represented a perpetual thorn in Adams’s side on the question of recognition, repeatedly opposing attempts to enact stronger neutrality laws, and in early 1818 attempting to force the administration to recognize Buenos Aires as an independent nation. That his measures were defeated in every congressional vote until 1822 and the narrow passage of a somewhat generic resolution declaring support for some future move towards recognition by the administration did not deter Clay from this cause.⁴⁸

Despite Clay’s persistence and the widespread popular support for liberal revolution wherever it should occur, Adams remained undeterred in his assessment of American interest and in the necessity of maintaining U.S. neutrality. Likewise, despite strong opposition to the cause of revolution, the allied sovereigns of Europe had maintained their own neutrality as well, leaving Spain to deal with its colonial problems on its own. Word reached Adams in early 1818, though, that the Allies were considering a proposal of mediation

⁴⁷ 6 December 1817, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 4:28. Clay complained to one confidante that, “in regard to the Patriots – all the premises of the President point to the conclusion of recognizing them & yet strange to tell he concludes by recommending further laws to enforce our neutrality! in other words further laws against the Patriots.” Henry Clay to John J. Crittenden, 14 December 1819, in *Papers*, 1:732. For further arguments against U.S. neutrality in Spanish America, see [William Cobbett], *Our Anti-Neutral Conduct Reviewed* ([1817]).

⁴⁸ The resolution read, “Resolved, That the House of Representatives participates with the people of the United States in the deep interest which they feel for the success of the Spanish provinces of South America which are struggling to establish their liberty and independence; and that it will give its Constitutional support to the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it expedient to recognise the sovereignty and independence of any of the said provinces.” The resolution was divided into two clauses for the purposes of voting, separated at the semi-colon. The first clause passed by a vote of 134 to 12; the second clause passed 87 to 68. 10 February 1821, in *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 1081-82, 1091-92.

between the colonies and Spain, a development that greatly concerned the secretary of state. In terms of principle, he believed that the avowal of a neutral position entailed the recognition of “the cause of both parties to the contest *as just* – that is, it avoids all consideration of the merits of the contest.” As such, it did not matter that Europe inwardly sided with Spain because neutrality meant acknowledging the rights of both sides. Adams wondered if “the proposed mediation [was] to be a departure from that line of neutrality? If it is, which side of the contest are the allies to take? The side of Spain? On what principle, and by what right? As contending parties in a civil war, the South Americans have rights, which other powers are bound to respect as much as the rights of Spain; and after having by an avowed neutrality admitted the existence of those rights, upon what principle of justice can the allies consider them as forfeited, or themselves as justifiable in taking side with Spain against them?”⁴⁹

On a more practical level, Adams was angered that the United States had not been consulted. In writing instructions to the U.S. minister to Russia about any potential mediation, Adams emphasized that the European courts were to “understand that the interests of this nation are so deeply concerned, and the feelings of the country are so much excited on this subject that we have a just claim to be informed of the intentions as well as the acts of the European alliance concerning it.” He stressed that the United States hoped “to pursue a course for the future in harmony with that of the allies,” but it would not “participate in and

⁴⁹ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Albert Gallatin, 19 May 1818, in *Writings*, 6:316-17.

cannot approve any interposition of other powers” in Spanish American affairs “unless it be to promote the total independence, political and commercial, of the colonies.” He believed that “it must eventually come to this result, and that it is rendering no service to either of the parties to endeavor to prevent or to retard it.”⁵⁰ While Adams was advancing a somewhat hypocritical position in arguing that a mediation was inappropriate unless it favored Spanish American independence, the larger point that he was making was that the United States had a greater interest in the success of these revolutions than did Europe. Regardless of Adams’s view, the Allies viewed Spanish America as strictly a European concern. In a meeting with the Portuguese minister to the United States in May 1818 it was made “obvious” to Adams “that he wished me to consider the South America business as entirely settled by the European alliance. I told him that if they thought of settling affairs of such importance, and in which we have so deep an interest, without consulting us, they must not complain if we pursued our course concerning it without consulting them. He fully admitted our right, but in the course of our discussion there was something like acerbity in the collision of our opinions.”⁵¹ This would not be the last time the United States and Europe would collide over Spanish America.

Reordering the Western Hemisphere

This is a critical moment in the explication of John Quincy Adams’s understanding of America’s principles of foreign policy. The potential European

⁵⁰ John Quincy Adams to George Washington Campbell, 28 June 1818, in *Ibid.*, 379.

⁵¹ 2 May 1818, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 4:86

mediation led Adams to concretely state that, Spain excepted, the United States had an equal, if not a greater interest in the disposition of Spanish America than did Europe. In his Farewell Address, George Washington had counseled that “Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation,” but he said nothing about Spanish America, which at the time was firmly ensconced as a European colony.⁵² By 1818, with Spanish America striving for independence and the potential and dramatic reduction of European influence in the Americas this would bring, Adams had to reassess the primary interests of the United States. As a result, for the first time an American policymaker was extending the sphere of U.S. interests to include a territory and people beyond its own borders. At this point in time this interest only ran as far as ensuring that Europe did not intervene politically on Spain’s behalf, but it was still the recognition that the United States had a deeper interest in the fate of Spanish America than it did in Europe. Likewise, in asserting the importance of U.S. interests, Adams was implicitly arguing for the inferiority of European interests in the New World (at least outside of their own colonies). One sees in Adams’s thinking at this point in time the nascent development of the ideas that would form the foundation of the Monroe Doctrine five years later.

Despite American protests, and without American participation, the Quadruple Alliance held a congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, France in October 1818 with mediation on the agenda; however, the more pressing motive for the congress was the admittance of France to the Quadruple Alliance, and the

⁵² George Washington, “Farewell Address,” 19 September 1796, in *Writings*, 35:234.

determination of what role the expanded Alliance would play in Europe.

According to historian Leonard Axel Lawson, Russia favored a plan “to construct a political system which would . . . preserve the territorial *status quo* as created by the peace treaties” that ended the Napoleonic Wars. Great Britain objected to Russia’s proposals, fearing that they “foreshadowed [a] policy of intervention,” and arguing that “under no circumstances was [the treaty for the Quadruple Alliance] intended to give the Allies the right to interfere in the internal affairs of . . . any other country, unless the internal disturbance was of such a nature as to threaten the safety of other states.”⁵³ For the time being, at least, Great Britain’s objections swayed the other powers and no interventionist system was enacted. When discussion turned to Spanish America, all five powers quickly agreed that there was little likelihood of permanently reducing Spain’s revolting colonies to their previous status, and, as one delegate to the Congress put it, “force could under no circumstances be employed.”⁵⁴ In the end the Allies could agree on little else, though, and the question of mediation fell apart. Spain was on its own.⁵⁵

With no European intervention or mediation in the offing, Spain turned its attention to the United States in the hopes of staving off any recognition of the revolutionaries by that country by reopening negotiations on the Floridas. Little

⁵³ Leonard Axel Lawson, *The Relation of British Policy to the Declaration of the Monroe Doctrine* (New York: Columbia University, 1922), 38-39.

⁵⁴ Viscount Castlereagh to Earl Bathurst, no. 22 confidential, 2 November 1818, in C. K. Webster, ed., *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830: Select Documents from the Foreign Office Archives*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 2:57.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, see Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe*, 254-58 and Waddell, “International Politics,” 205.

had changed since the previous failed negotiations and the seizure of West Florida by James Madison until 1818 when General Andrew Jackson led an American invasion of East Florida in pursuit of a group of Seminole Indians who had attacked Fort Scott in Georgia.⁵⁶ Jackson's invasion, along with Henry Clay's continued pressure in Congress to recognize Spanish American independence, provided the impetus Spain needed to return to the negotiating table, but these factors also gave the United States the upper hand as talks commenced. While Luis de Onís, the Spanish minister to the United States, originally held firm to the same demands that had sunk previous negotiations, Adams was able to leverage the entire reversal of Spain's fortunes in the Americas into significant Spanish concessions and ultimately a treaty. The basic framework of the treaty called for the United States to gain clear title to the Floridas and control of all Spanish claims north of the 42nd parallel; Spain would be relieved of all existing claims against it by American citizens and would be guaranteed a mutually agreed upon border running from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean in order to prevent future annexations and skirmishes as had previously occurred in the Floridas.

Within this basic framework, two points proved more difficult to settle. First was determining the precise boundary between U.S. and Spanish territory. The United States, claiming Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase, called for a boundary at the Rio del Norte (the modern southwestern border of Texas), while

⁵⁶ For more on Jackson's invasion, see David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1996); and Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

Onís demanded that the Sabine River (the southern portion of which currently defines the border between Texas and Louisiana) be accepted as the boundary. Accepting the Sabine would mean relinquishing American claims to virtually all of Texas, a concession Adams was not willing to make. He continued to insist on the Rio del Norte until the very end of the negotiations, when pressure from President Monroe and the rest of the cabinet to conclude the treaty led him to begrudgingly accept the Sabine. Even once the particular rivers were agreed to, Adams and Onís still differed on how the borders would be defined. Onís argued that the center of the rivers in question should mark the boundaries, as this would preserve unimpaired Spanish navigation rights on these rivers. Adams wanted each of the rivers ceded entirely to the United States, as in his mind the question of Spanish navigation rights was only a theoretical proposition, for “there was not the remotest probability of there ever being any Spanish settlers there,” whereas the United States “would have extensive settlements upon them within a very few years.”⁵⁷ By ceding all of the rivers to the United States it meant that questions of use would not need to be revisited or renegotiated at any point in the future, an argument that Onís ultimately gave in to. The final question at stake in the negotiations was recognition of Spanish American independence by the United States. Onís insisted that a condition of any treaty be that the United States not recognize any of Spain’s former colonies as independent nations, a condition that Adams rejected out of hand. He would later record in his diary the opinion that any such “stipulation not to recognize the South Americans would be a breach of

⁵⁷ 15 February 1819, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 4:255-56.

neutrality, and as such we could not accede to it.”⁵⁸ Just as any European mediation on behalf of Spain would have been a violation of neutrality, so too would have been any agreement by the United States to withhold recognition simply because Spain demanded it. There was no room for negotiation on this point, forcing Onís to give it up to save the larger treaty.

With these final points settled, the Adams-Onís Treaty was signed on 22 February 1819, bringing an end to a dispute over the Floridas that began with the Louisiana Purchase more than fifteen years earlier, and giving the United States clear title to territory running across the continent to the Pacific Ocean; and how fitting that it should be signed on the anniversary of George Washington’s birth. Adams considered the treaty to be one of his greatest triumphs, and described the day it was signed as “perhaps, the most important day of my life.” He was glad to have finally completed the acquisition of the Floridas, which had “long been an object of earnest desire to this country,” and he considered the “acknowledgment of a definite line of boundary to the South Sea [Pacific Ocean]” as forming “a great epocha in our history.” He recognized that “There is some discontent at the acceptance of the Sabine as our boundary from the Gulf of Mexico to the Red River,” and he expected that “The Floridas will be found, in all probability, less valuable in possession than when merely coveted,” but he still considered the treaty to be a magnificent success for the United States.⁵⁹ Historians have generally agreed with Adams’s assessment of the treaty’s import. For example,

⁵⁸ 29 April 1820, in *Ibid.*, 5:81.

⁵⁹ 22 February 1819, in *Ibid.*, 4:274-76.

Samuel Flagg Bemis described it as the “greatest diplomatic victory ever won by an American Secretary of State,” and Dexter Perkins called it “the most successful negotiation ever carried on in the annals of American diplomacy.”⁶⁰ Adams would ultimately have to wait two long years before finally attaining his great victory; while the United States Senate unanimously ratified the treaty on 24 February, Spain refused to ratify until October 1820. On 16 February 1821, the Senate reratified the treaty by a vote of 40 to 4, and official ratifications were exchanged on 22 February 1821.⁶¹

Not all Americans were as impressed with the Adams-Onís Treaty as was the secretary of state. A year after the treaty was signed and the administration and Congress were grappling with Spain’s refusal to ratify, William Archer, a Representative from Virginia, expressed to Adams his belief that “it was the worst treaty the country had ever made.” When asked why, Archer responded that “we should get by it nothing but Florida, and gave away for it a country worth fifty times as much.”⁶² A few weeks later, Representative David Trimble of Kentucky echoed Archer’s Texas complaint and argued that Adams should “set the treaty aside and . . . insist upon the Rio del Norte as the western boundary,” thus

⁶⁰ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States, an Historical Interpretation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), 37; and Perkins, “John Quincy Adams,” 7.

⁶¹ 24 February 1819, in *Senate Executive Journal*, 15th Cong., 2nd sess., 177-78. Notice of Ferdinand’s ratification on 24 October 1820, United States Congress, *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States*, Class I: Foreign Relations, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-61), 5:132; 19 February 1821, in *Senate Executive Journal*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 244. For the text of the treaty, see “Treaty of amity, settlement, and limits, between the United States of America and his Catholic Majesty [Spain],” [1819], in *ASP:FR*, 5:127-32.

⁶² 27 March 1820, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 5:42.

restoring Texas to the United States. Adams responded that “In the negotiations with Spain we had a just claim to the Mississippi and its waters, and our citizens had a fair though very precarious claim to indemnities. We had a mere color of claim to the Rio del Norte, no claim to a line beyond the Rocky Mountains, and none to Florida, which we very much wanted. The treaty gives us the Mississippi and all its waters – gives us Florida – gives us an acknowledged line to the South Sea, and seventeen degrees of latitude upon its shores – gives our citizens five millions of dollars of indemnity – and barely gives up to Spain the colorable claim from the Sabine to the Rio del Norte.” With rising temperature, Adams continued by reminding that “negotiation implies some concession upon both sides. If after obtaining every object of your pursuit but one, and that one weak in principle and of no present value, what would you have offered to Spain to yield that also?”⁶³ Stated in these terms, it is easy to understand why the cabinet pressured Adams to give up on Texas in order to ensure these other gains. This treaty laid the legal groundwork for America’s westward expansion to the Pacific, but it also opened the door for future conflict over Texas.

Spain’s delayed ratification produced no changes in the terms of the treaty, but it did cause the United States to delay making a final decision to recognize the independence of Spanish America. Between 1819 and 1821 Henry Clay continued to push for recognition in Congress, and at various points the administration gave it serious consideration, or at least debated support for the

⁶³ 13 April 1820, in *Ibid.*, 67, 69.

revolutionaries.⁶⁴ Despite an increasing prevalence of sentiments favorable to the Spanish American cause, and regardless of how justifiable they may have been by on-the-ground realities, Adams persisted in his belief that any public discussion of recognition would only succeed in antagonizing Spain and seeing the treaty permanently put aside. In considering Monroe's annual message to Congress for 1820, Adams objected to passages expressing support for Spanish America on the grounds that as the "system" of the United States was one of "professed neutrality, any avowal of partiality for the South Americans was inconsistent with it, and liable to raise doubts of our sincerity." As he confided to his diary, "I believe that these paragraphs of the message have been the principal real cause of the delay of Spain to ratify the Florida Treaty."⁶⁵ In weighing America's interests and obligations while the treaty remained unratified, Adams determined that preserving good relations with Spain took precedence over the question of recognition.

Adams took tremendous pride in his strict adherence to Washington's call for American neutrality as a means of protecting American interests. On the fourth of July 1821, Adams delivered what was arguably his most famous speech during an Independence Day celebration in Washington, D.C. On that occasion he hailed the fact that the United States had, "in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations while

⁶⁴ See Henry Clay, "Remarks on Recognition of South American Independence," [10 February 1819]; Clay, "Resolutions on South American Independence," [4 April 1820]; and Clay, "Speech on South American Independence," [10 May 1820], in *Papers*, 2:667-68, 817, and 853-59.

⁶⁵ 12 November 1820, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 5:200.

asserting and maintaining her own.” Alluding to both the French Revolution of decades earlier and the ongoing revolutions in Spanish America, he pointed out that the nation “abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart. She has seen that probably for centuries to come, all the contests of that Aceldama the European world, will be contests of inveterate power, and emerging right. Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence, has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be.” Despite these sympathies, the United States “goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example.” He asserted that Americans understood “that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign Independence, [the U.S.] would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom.” In such an event, “The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from *liberty to force*.”⁶⁶ This was both a forceful and an eloquent discourse on the wisdom of Washington’s principles for America’s rising glory,

⁶⁶ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams, *An Address Delivered at the Request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington; on the Occasion of Reading the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1821* (Washington, D.C.: Davis and Force, 1821), 28-29.

as it was a strong defense of not just neutrality but of a foreign policy approach defined by the protection of America's fundamental interests.

The great irony of Adams's 4 July 1821 speech was that it was delivered less than a year before the United States took its first steps in a new foreign policy direction. With the final ratification of the Adams-Onís Treaty in February 1821, it placed the recognition of Spanish American independence back on the table as a viable policy choice. By the early months of 1822 even Adams could think of no legitimate reason to forestall an acknowledgment of what by that point had become an established fact. On 8 March President James Monroe declared to Congress that when the government considered "the great length of time which this war has been prosecuted, the complete success which has attended it in favor of the Provinces, the present condition of the parties, and the utter inability of Spain to produce any change in it, we are compelled to conclude that its fate is settled, and that the Provinces which have declared their independence and are in the enjoyment of it ought to be recognized."⁶⁷ The first formal act of recognition was carried out three months later when Adams formally presented Manuel Torres to Monroe as Chargé d'Affaires from the republic of Colombia.⁶⁸ Recognition was in many ways a bold departure for American foreign policy given that, regardless of the actual progress of Spanish American independence, Spain and the Holy Allies still viewed it as a question of colonies in revolt. In

⁶⁷ James Monroe, "Special Message," 8 March 1822, in Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers*, 2:117-18.

⁶⁸ For a description of this first recognition, see 19 June 1822, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:23. Also see William Spence Robertson, "The Recognition of the Hispanic American Nations by the United States," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (Aug. 1918): 239-69.

receiving official representatives from Spanish America, the United States believed that it was fulfilling its duties as a neutral nation by acknowledging the established fact of independence, and it prioritized this obligation ahead of any concerns that Europe could interpret such actions as a violation of its neutrality. For men like Clay, recognition represented a victory for liberal and republican principles, but for Adams it was primarily a question of American interest; in this case seeing European rule and influence eliminated from most of the American continents while also staying true to the obligations of neutrality. By waiting until independence was an established fact, recognition represented a declaration by the United States that European rule over Spanish America was at an end. The open question, of course, was how would Europe respond?

An overarching objective of John Quincy Adams's foreign policy had been the elimination of European influence in the Americas, and in North America in particular, where he looked to protect the ability of the United States to expand territorially across the continent, believing such expansion to only be a question of time. The Adams-Onís Treaty and the recognition of Spanish-American independence had been two important steps in this process, as had been the Convention of 1818 with Great Britain, which stipulated that the citizens of both nations could make full use of a wide swath of land claimed by both countries along the northwest coast of North America. While all of these foreign policies fell under the broad umbrella of protecting America's best interests, they were also the more specific embodiment of Washington's warning that the United

States and Europe had distinct and separate interests. An unwavering neutrality was one way to preserve this separation, but the actual removal of Europe from the Americas was a more effective long-term strategy. Given Adams's expansionist view of America's future, the elimination of European rivalry throughout North America was especially important. So devoted was Adams to this project that in 1821, despite the Convention of 1818, he famously got into a heated argument with Stratford Canning, the British minister to the United States, over British claims along the northwest coast, in which he informed Canning that Great Britain should "Keep what is yours, but leave the rest of this continent to us."⁶⁹

A new challenge emerged to both the United States and Britain's claims along the northwest coast in September 1821 with the issuance of an imperial ukase by Tsar Alexander I of Russia. The ukase extended his country's territorial claims "from [the] Behring Straits down, to the 51° of Northern Latitude," and prohibited "all Foreign Vessels, not only to land on the Coast and Islands belonging to Russia, as stated above, but also to approach them within less than

⁶⁹ The argument took place over two days, and culminated when Adams asked Canning "Have you any *claim* . . . to the mouth of Columbia River [in modern day Washington state]?"

"Why, do you not *know*," replied he, "that we have a claim?"

"I do not *know*," said I, "what you claim nor what you do not claim. You claim India; you claim Africa; you claim —"

"Perhaps," said he, "a piece of the moon."

"No," said I; "I have not heard that you claim exclusively any part of the moon; but there is not a spot on *this* habitable globe that I could affirm you do not claim; and there is none which you may not claim with as much color of right as you can have to Columbia River or its mouth."

"And how far would you consider," said he, "this exclusion of right to extend?"

"To all the shores of the South Sea," said I. "We know of no right that you have there." Emphasis in original. 27 January 1821, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 5:252-53. For the entire debate, see 26 and 27 January 1821, in *Ibid.*, 243-59.

100 Italian miles.”⁷⁰ Upon hearing of the ukase, Adams protested to Russian minister Pierre de Poletica that “This ordinance affects so deeply the rights of the United States and of their citizens that I am instructed to inquire whether you are authorized to give explanations of the grounds of right, upon principles generally recognized by the laws and usages of nations, which can warrant the claims and regulations contained in it.”⁷¹ Adams exchanged letters with the Russian minister to little effect, until a dispatch arrived in August from the U.S. minister to Russia, Henry Middleton, asserting that “the provisions of the ukase would not be persisted in. It appears to have been signed by the Emperor without sufficient examination, and may be fairly considered as having been surreptitiously obtained. There can be little doubt, therefore, that with a little patience and management it will be molded into a less objectionable shape.”⁷² In early 1823 the new Russian Minister to the United States, Baron von Tuyll, proposed that the two countries’ differences be “terminated by means of a friendly negotiation,” to which Adams freely consented, informing Tuyll that Middleton would be given instructions on how to proceed.⁷³

⁷⁰ “Rules established for the limits of navigation and order of communication along the coast of the Eastern Siberia, the northwestern coast of America, and the Aleutian, Kurile, and other islands,” 4/16 September 1821, in *ASP:FR*, 4:857-61.

⁷¹ John Quincy Adams to Pierre de Poletica, 25 February 1822, in *Writings*, 7:213.

⁷² Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, *Proceedings of the Alaskan Boundary Tribunal: convened at London, under the treaty between the United States of America and Great Britain, concluded at Washington, January 24, 1903, for the settlement of questions . . . with respect to the boundary line between the territory of Alaska and the British possessions in North America*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1904), 2:42.

⁷³ Baron von Tuyll to John Quincy Adams, 12/24 April 1823, in *ASP:FR*, 5:435; John Quincy Adams to Baron von Tuyll, 7 May 1823, in *Ibid.*

On 17 July 1823, Tuyll approached Adams to discover the general contents of Middleton's instructions, and was greeted by the boldest declaration of American principles issued by a U.S. secretary of state to that point in the nation's history. Adams informed Tuyll that the United States "should contest the right of Russia to *any* territorial establishment on this continent, and that we should assume distinctly the principle that the American continents are no longer subjects for *any* new European colonial establishments."⁷⁴ This non-colonization principle did far more than dispute Russian claims on the Pacific coast of North America, but warned all of Europe out of both American continents. Adams expanded on this principle in his instructions to Middleton, observing that "the future peace of the world, and the interests of Russia herself, cannot be promoted by Russian settlements upon any part of the American continent. With the exception of the British establishments north of the United States, the remainder of both the American Continents must henceforth be left to the management of American hands."⁷⁵

In instructions to Richard Rush, the American minister to Great Britain, Adams observed that "it is not imaginable that, in the present condition of the world, *any* European nation should entertain the project of settling a *colony* on the Northwest Coast of America. That the United States should form establishments there, with views of absolute territorial right and inland communication, is not

⁷⁴ Emphasis in original. 17 July 1823, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:163.

⁷⁵ "Observations on the claim of Russia to territorial possessions on the continent of North America, communicated with Mr. Adam's [*sic*] letter to Mr. Middleton of July 22, 1823," in *ASP:FR*, 5:445.

only to be expected, but is pointed out by the finger of nature, and has been for many years a subject of serious deliberation in Congress.” He concluded that “the American continents, henceforth, will no longer be subjects of colonization. Occupied by civilized independent nations, they will be accessible to Europeans and to each other on that footing alone, and the Pacific Ocean in every part of it will remain open to the navigation of all nations, in like manner with the Atlantic.”⁷⁶ This non-colonization principle as it was expressed to Tuyll, Middleton, and Rush represented a dramatic step forward for the United States in the cause of eliminating European influence in the Americas. U.S. statesmen had long believed that the United States would eventually expand westward to the Pacific Ocean, but this declaration by Adams was the first instance that it was put forward as a matter of principle, directly to the European powers, that they should abstain from future colonization of the Americas. What made the non-colonization principle especially surprising was that it pertained to both American continents – to the United States and the new nations of Spanish America – in recognition that Europe had an obligation to respect American independence in its entirety.

For as bold a statement as the non-colonization principle was, this boldness owed more to its form than it did to the principle itself. Its roots can be traced to the no-transfer resolution of 15 January 1811 (discussed in the previous

⁷⁶ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush, 22 July 1823, in *ASP:FR*, 5:446-48.

chapter) and to Washington's Farewell Address.⁷⁷ The no-transfer resolution, while secret in its declaration, proclaimed American opposition to the transfer of existing European colonies from one power to another, thus expressing opposition to the establishment of new colonial powers in the Americas. The non-colonization principle was simply a broader and more forceful enunciation of this idea. And as previously stated, both ideas can be traced directly from the Farewell Address. As much as Adams was concerned with expansion, his primary objective in much of his foreign policy even beyond the non-colonization principle was using negotiation in times of peace to eliminate future points of controversy. This was the argument Adams used to convince Onís to cede the entirety of the riverine boundaries to the United States and it was as much his focus with the non-colonization principle. Europe was never going to settle North America to the extent that the United States eventually would, so rather than waiting for a conflict to arise at some point in the future that could threaten to entangle the United States in war or require a protracted negotiation to resolve, Adams hoped the non-colonization principle would prevent the sources of that

⁷⁷ The no-transfer resolution read:

Taking into view the peculiar situation of Spain and of her American provinces; and considering the influence which the destiny of the territory adjoining the southern border of the United States may have upon their security, tranquility, and commerce: Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the United States, under the peculiar circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot, without serious inequitude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign power; and that a due regard to their own safety compels them to provide, under certain contingencies, for the temporary occupation of the said territory; they, at the same time, declare that the said territory shall, in their hands, remain subject to future negotiation.

3-15 January 1811, in *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 3rd sess., 369-80, 1117-48.

conflict in the first place. Washington had counseled Americans in his Farewell Address to be wary of foreign influence, to remain neutral in European political concerns, and to preserve peace as the surest protection for unfettered American development – all of which were ideas embodied in the non-colonization principle. Even the choice to present it as applying to both North and South America was aimed at preventing European influence in the United States' new and weak neighbors, thus reducing the likelihood of controversy with them in the future. On the most basic level, Adams also understood what the Nootka Sound Controversy had made so clear to Washington in 1790 – that it was in America's best interests to be surrounded by free nations and not European colonies.⁷⁸

By early 1823 another challenge to American continents free of European influence was emerging with French military intervention in Spain. While unwilling to assist Spain regain its colonies in 1818, the outbreak of civil war between liberals and royalists in 1820 led the Holy Alliance to favor armed intervention in Spain to restore the king's authority. At the Congress of Verona, assembled in November 1822, it was determined that the French army would invade early the next year. The Congress was technically a meeting of the Quadruple Alliance, but Great Britain refused to consent to any intervention in Spain. The decision of the other Allies, all members of the Holy Alliance, to push forward over British objections resulted in an open and irreversible split between

⁷⁸ It should be emphasized that the non-colonization principle did not deal with existing colonies (such as Great Britain's Canada and Spain's Cuba) but rather with the establishment of new colonies in the Americas. Both the non-colonization principle and the no-transfer principle would object to the transfer of any of these existing colonies to new colonial powers, but did not challenge European control of their existing colonies.

Britain and the rest of the Alliance.⁷⁹ Incensed by the Allies' willingness to violate the territorial sovereignty of another country, British Foreign Minister George Canning sent a dispatch to France on the eve of invasion in March 1823 threatening war if that country should attempt to permanently occupy Spain, extend its invasion into Portugal, or move to appropriate any of Spain's American colonies for itself.⁸⁰

Canning did not actually believe that France would seek to establish a permanent military occupation of Spain or to undertake an invasion of Portugal, but he was distressed by the possibility of French intervention in Spanish America. In this case his concern for Spanish America was less ideological than it was economic, as he feared the potential impact a French invasion would have on Britain's commercial interests. The existing Spanish American trade was profitable, and Canning expected significant growth upon a formal recognition of independence, which had only been withheld to that point in order to maintain good relations with Spain.⁸¹ In his dispatch to France, Canning argued that since the Spanish American colonies had "thrown off their allegiance to the Crown of Spain, time and the course of events appear to have substantially decided their separation from the Mother Country. . . . Disclaiming in the most solemn manner any intention of appropriating to Himself the smallest portion of the late Spanish Possessions in America, His Majesty is satisfied that no attempt will be made by

⁷⁹ Lawson, *British Policy*, 46-48; Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, 280.

⁸⁰ George Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, 31 March 1823, in Great Britain, Foreign Office, *State Papers*, 10:69. Also see Bemis, *Latin American Policy*, 52-53.

⁸¹ Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, 262.

France, to bring under Her Dominion any of those Possessions, either by Conquest, or by Cession, from Spain.”⁸² The dispatch, which was widely published throughout Europe and the United States, was significant not only for the message that it sent to France and the Holy Alliance, but also for the message that it sent American statesmen, as it made clear Britain’s opposition to European intervention in Spanish America.

For John Quincy Adams the French invasion of Spain on 6 April 1823 represented the end of Spain’s dominion in the New World, save for Puerto Rico and Cuba. He saw it as a critical turning point in the trans-Atlantic relationship between Europe and the Americas. In a letter to the U.S. minister to Spain explaining the importance of the events taking place in Europe, Adams stressed the continuance of American neutrality in foreign wars, regardless of any sympathies Americans might have for Spaniards liberals. His main concern moving forward was the disposition of Cuba and Puerto Rico, as Spain could still transfer “her own dominion over them, together with the possession of them, to others.” In Adams’s estimation, the islands were “natural appendages to the North American continent; and one of them, Cuba, . . . from a multitude of considerations has become an object of transcendent importance to the political and commercial interests of our Union. Its commanding position . . . gives it an importance in the sum of our national interests, with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared.” He believed that “in looking forward to the

⁸² George Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, 31 March 1823, in Great Britain, Foreign Office, *State Papers*, 10:69.

probable course of events for the short period of half a century, it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our federal republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union itself.”⁸³ Adams identified Cuba as having transcendent importance for America’s future security and commercial growth. Under the control of a weak Spain, it posed no threats, but should the island be transferred to a stronger power, its position at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico could prove disastrous for American commerce flowing through the port of New Orleans. Adams wanted to avoid this at all costs, and hoped that by sending instructions to Spain disapproving of any transfer the United States might once again be able to ward off a point of future controversy.

As spring turned to summer and as the French invasion of Spain progressed, the United States looked on with great interest even before word started to circulate that France intended to send its army on to Spanish America once it achieved victory in Spain. As a neutral nation the proverbial hands of the United States were tied when it came to the events taking place in Europe. That was, at least, until Richard Rush’s first dispatches reached James Monroe’s hands in October 1823.

The Monroe Doctrine

⁸³ John Quincy Adams to Hugh Nelson, 28 April 1823, in *Writings*, 7:369-79.

From the beginning, Rush understood the importance of Great Britain's position on Spanish America and thus the gravity of Canning's proposal.⁸⁴ Great Britain's naval power on the side of Spanish America would surely stave off any interference by the Holy Alliance. Rush made the decision that he would assent to Canning's joint declaration if Great Britain would immediately recognize the independence of Spanish America, but Canning was not willing to commit to anything more than being "upon the eve of taking" a step towards recognition that was "not final, but preparatory, and which would still leave [Great Britain] at large to recognize or not according to the position of events at a future period."⁸⁵ Canning's unwillingness to budge on recognition, and Rush's great hesitancy to commit the United States to a joint declaration without it, ultimately prevented the two statesmen from coming to any agreement; but while these positions were staked out from the beginning of their conversations, it would still take more than a month for their dialogue to break down entirely. On the heels of their first

⁸⁴ Many excellent works have been written detailing the creation of the Monroe Doctrine from the Canning-Rush exchanges to the almost-daily cabinet meetings focused on constructing a response to Canning's proposed joint declaration. This chapter focuses primarily on the development of the larger principles enunciated in the Doctrine and their relation to Washington's Farewell Address rather than providing a deeper analysis of the ins-and-outs of the process. For that more detailed discussion, see Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927); *A History of the Monroe Doctrine: A New Revision of the book originally published under the title HANDS OFF: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963); Thomas B. Davis, Jr., "Carlos de Alvear and James Monroe: New Light on the Origin of the Monroe Doctrine," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 23 (Nov. 1943): 632-49; T. R. Schellenberg, "Jeffersonian Origins of the Monroe Doctrine," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 14 (Feb. 1934): 1-31. For a comprehensive collection of primary sources relating to the development of the Doctrine, see J. Reuben Clark, *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930). For an alternative interpretation of the development of the Doctrine, see Ernest R. May, *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁸⁵ Richard Rush to John Quincy Adams, no. 323, 19 August 1823, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 3:1475-78.

discussion of a joint declaration in mid-August, Canning presented Rush with five points that would form the framework for it. Britain viewed “the recovery of the Colonies by Spain to be hopeless” and “the question of the Recognition of them, as Independent States, to be one of time and circumstances.” Even still, it would not “throw any impediment in the way of an arrangement between them, and the mother country by amicable negotiation.” Perhaps the most important points from the American perspective were Canning’s final two, which declared that Britain aimed “not at the possession of any portion of [the colonies] ourselves” and that it “could not see any portion of them transferred to any other Power, with indifference.”⁸⁶ Based on his interpretation of U.S. policy, Rush largely agreed with these points. The United States had already recognized Spanish American independence, thus negating one of the points, and Rush highly doubted that a negotiated solution between Spain and its former colonies was possible.

The most interesting difference in their positions dealt with Canning’s final point and was really one of style rather than substance, as Rush declared that the United States “would regard as highly unjust, and fruitful of disastrous consequences, any attempt on the part of any European power to take possession of them by conquest, or by cession; or on any ground or pretext whatever.”⁸⁷ Rush wanted to make abundantly clear that the United States opposed all efforts to extend European influence in the Americas. Discussing Canning’s five points and the joint declaration, Rush would later write that “seldom, perhaps, at any

⁸⁶ George Canning to Richard Rush, 20 August 1823, in *Ibid.*, 1478-79.

⁸⁷ Richard Rush to George Canning, 23 August 1823, in *Ibid.*, 1479-80.

time among nations, had an opportunity occurred when so small an effort of two friendly governments might produce so unequivocal a good, and prevent such extensive calamities.”⁸⁸ This was the idea that lingered in Rush’s mind as his discussions with Canning continued into September and even October.

Throughout that time Canning pushed Rush to agree to a joint declaration, especially once word reached Britain of French victory in Spain and the growing likelihood of a new Congress being called to determine Allied intervention in Spanish America. Rush’s primary concern was pledging his government to a joint declaration against its long-standing, Washingtonian policy of non-involvement “in the political connexions of Europe.” Canning repeatedly waved off such concerns, arguing in mid-September that the question of Allied intervention was “as much American as European. . . . It concerned the United States under interests as immediate and commanding, as it did or could any of the states of Europe.”⁸⁹ Rush remained unwilling to commit until he had heard back from his government but hoped to keep the dialogue with Canning open so that when he did receive instructions they could immediately move forward.

Rush was surprised in early October when Canning suddenly ended all substantive discussions of Spanish America. In a dispatch to John Quincy Adams dated 10 October, Rush expressed the conviction that the negotiations were at an

⁸⁸ Richard Rush, *Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London, Comprising Incidents Official and Personal from 1819 to 1825. Including Negotiations on the Oregon Question, and Other Unsettled Questions between the United States and Great Britain* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845), 414.

⁸⁹ Richard Rush to John Quincy Adams, no. 331, 19 September 1823, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 3:1487-93.

end. He felt that the “termination of the discussion” was “sudden, not to say abrupt, considering how zealously as well as spontaneously it was started” by Canning, and he concluded that from Britain’s perspective, “it is France that must not be aggrandized, not South America that must be made free.”⁹⁰ As far as Rush was concerned, the prospects for a joint declaration were closed. What he would not find out until weeks later was that Canning had grown tired of waiting for an American response and on 9 October had entered into discussions directly with the French minister to Great Britain, the Prince de Polignac, over the views of each government on Spanish America. Their dialogue lasted just three days and resulted in the Polignac Memorandum, in which Britain reiterated its belief in Canning’s five points, and France pledged to not “appropriate to herself any part of the Spanish possessions in America” and foreswore “any design of acting against the Colonies by force of arms.”⁹¹ The Polignac Memorandum brought the crisis of European intervention in Spanish American to an end, and obviously made any joint declaration between Great Britain and the United States unnecessary. Less than a week after Canning’s conversations with Polignac concluded, Rush’s first dispatches outlining the proposed joint declaration with Britain and Canning’s five points reached President Monroe. As far as he knew, not only was a Congress of the Holy Alliance and armed intervention in Spanish

⁹⁰ Richard Rush to John Quincy Adams, no. 336, 10 October 1823, in *Ibid.*, 1500-1503.

⁹¹ “Memorandum of a Conference between the Prince de Polignac, French Ambassador to Great Britain, and Mr. Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, begun Thursday, October 9, and concluded Sunday, October 12, 1823,” in *Ibid.*, 1495-1500.

America seemingly imminent, but he also faced the added pressure that at any point in time Rush might commit the United States to the joint declaration.⁹²

From the moment Rush's dispatches arrived in the United States, American statesmen saw the larger questions at stake as bearing directly on the principles of foreign policy laid down by George Washington in his Farewell Address. Unable to communicate more immediately with his secretary of state, Monroe sought advice from former presidents and fellow-Virginians Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Monroe frequently sought out Jefferson's advice, most recently during the previous summer when he viewed the situation of the United States to be "peculiarly critical, as respects the present state of the world, & our relations with the acting parties in it, in Europe, & in this hemisphere."⁹³ Jefferson, as if channeling Washington's Farewell, replied that the United States should not take part "in the quarrels of Europe. Their political interests are entirely distinct from ours. Their mutual jealousies, their balance of power, their complicated alliances, their forms and principles of government, are all foreign to us."⁹⁴ In October, Monroe forwarded Rush's dispatches on to the former

⁹² In one of his early dispatches, Rush disclosed that "Should I be asked by Mr. Canning, whether, *if the recognition be made by Great Britain without more delay*, I am, on my part, prepared to make a declaration in the name of my government that it will not remain inactive under an attack upon the independence of those states by the Holy Alliance, the present determination of my judgment is, that I will make this declaration, explicitly, and avow it before the world." Emphasis in original. Richard Rush to John Quincy Adams, no. 326, 28 August 1823, in *Ibid.*, 1483-85.

⁹³ James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, 2 June 1823, in *Writings*, 6:308-11.

⁹⁴ Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, 11 June 1823, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 10 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-99), 10:256-59. Monroe's habit of turning to Jefferson for advice aggravated Adams to no end. For example, in December 1818, after learning of the influence a letter from Jefferson was having on the president's thinking, Adams confided to his diary that "There is what in vulgar language is called an undertow always working upon and about the President – what used in English to be called a back-stairs influence –

presidents and revealed his great hesitancy over how to proceed. Monroe saw consideration of the joint declaration as boiling down to three questions, all of which were concerned with how this specific issue and this particular crisis related to America's larger and long-standing principles of foreign policy. First, he questioned if the United States should "entangle ourselves, at all, in European politicks, & wars, on the side of any power, against others . . . ?" To do so would clearly be a departure from Washington's Farewell Address, which led him to ask, "If a case can exist in which a sound maxim may, & ought to be departed from, is not the present instance, precisely that case?" Finally, he wondered if the "epoch" had not arrived "when G. Britain must take her stand, either on the side of the monarchs of Europe, or of the UStates, & in consequence, either in favor of Despotism or of liberty & may it not be presum'd that, aware of that necessity, her government has seiz'd on the present occurrence, as that, which it deems, the most suitable to announce & mark the commenc'ment of that career[?]" Monroe concluded that the United States "ought to meet the proposal" and declare that "we would view an interference on the part of the European powers, and especially an attack on the Colonies, by them, as an attack on ourselves."⁹⁵ Strictly speaking, agreeing to the joint declaration may have been a violation of Washington's call for neutrality – not to mention Jefferson's "entangling alliances with none" – but in this instance such a departure was necessary in order to defend the larger principle of protecting American interests and security.

of which he never says anything to me, and which I discover only by its effects." 8 December 1818, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 4:187.

⁹⁵ James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, 17 October 1823, in *Writings*, 6:323-25.

Jefferson saw nothing but positive outcomes in Britain's proposed joint declaration. He agreed with Monroe's (and Adams's) assessment that the United States should never "entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe," or "suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs." Once again recalling the Farewell Address, he declared that "America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicil of despotism, our endeavor should surely be, to make our hemisphere that of freedom." Here, stated quite explicitly, the author of "entangling alliances with none" was emphasizing the concurrence of interests in the American continents and was arguing for an American sphere separate from Europe. As a result, Jefferson argued that Monroe should not fear joining with Great Britain, as to do so would be "to maintain our own principle, not to depart from it." He acknowledged that by agreeing to Canning's five points the United States would be making a pledge against a future acquisition of Cuba, but it also meant that Great Britain would likewise be pledged; this assurance alone would be significant for America's future security.⁹⁶ Madison believed that the United States was practically obligated to join with Britain in warning against European intervention given the nation's consistent support of Spanish America's "liberties & independence." Echoing Canning's original premise, he further asserted that while American cooperation "must ensure success, in the event of an appeal to force, it doubles the chance of success

⁹⁶ Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, 24 October 1823, in *Writings*, 10:277-79.

without that appeal.”⁹⁷ With this encouragement from Jefferson and Madison in hand, Monroe returned to Washington, D.C. in early November believing that Rush should be instructed to agree to Canning’s joint declaration and that to do so would be to defend American principles and American interests.

While Monroe was seeking the advice of Jefferson and Madison, John Quincy Adams was once again exchanging principled communications with Baron von Tuyll. The Russian minister informed Adams that the tsar of Russia had derived great “satisfaction” from the news that when the United States recognized the independence of Spanish America it had also “declared that it was not their intention to deviate from the neutrality which they had until then observed, in the contests between Spain and her American Colonies.” The Tsar hoped that the United States would “persevere in that course of neutrality.” Given the widespread discussion of Allied intervention, Adams took Tuyll’s statement as a not-too-subtle urging that the United States should cling to that neutrality regardless of what took place in Spanish America. In response Adams warned that America’s policy of neutrality “had been made under the observance of a like neutrality by all the European Powers to the same contest.” If, however, “one or more of the European powers should depart from their neutrality, that change of circumstances would necessarily become a subject of further deliberation in this Government, the result of which it was not in my power to

⁹⁷ James Madison to James Monroe, 30 October 1823, in *The Writings of James Madison, Comprising His Public Papers and His Private Correspondence, Including Numerous Letters and Documents Now for the First Time Published*, ed. Gaillard Hunt, 9 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1900-1910), 9:157-59.

foretell.”⁹⁸ Adams was issuing his own not-too-subtle rejoinder that the United States would not sit idly by should Europe act in Spanish America.

When Adams finally learned of Canning’s proposal, and as cabinet discussions of it commenced on 7 November, these dealings with Russia and a distrust of Canning led him to take an entirely different view of how the United States should respond.⁹⁹ From the beginning Adams doubted the validity of the reports that the Allies would intervene in Spanish America, or even if they did that they would be successful, at one point declaring that “I no more believe that the Holy Allies will restore the Spanish dominion upon the American continent than that the Chimborazo will sink beneath the ocean.”¹⁰⁰ Instead Adams believed that Canning’s real purpose was to “obtain some public pledge from the Government of the United States . . . against the acquisition . . . of any part of the Spanish-American possessions,” and especially Cuba.¹⁰¹ As far as Adams was concerned, by joining with Great Britain “we give her a substantial and perhaps inconvenient pledge against ourselves, and really obtain nothing in return.” The rest of the cabinet, and especially Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, was hesitant to accept Adams’s view until the arrival of Rush’s early October dispatches

⁹⁸ “Adams’s Account of his Communications with Baron Tuyll,” in Worthington C. Ford, “Some Original Documents on the Genesis of the Monroe Doctrine,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 2nd ser., 15 (1902): 394-95. Also see Baron von Tuyll to John Quincy Adams, 4/16 October 1823, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 3:1868.

⁹⁹ Monroe’s cabinet consisted of five men: Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Navy Samuel L. Southard, and Attorney General William Wirt. Crawford was absent from the cabinet meetings in November 1823 due to severe illness.

¹⁰⁰ 15 November 1823, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:186. The Chimborazo is an inactive volcano, and the highest summit, in modern-day Ecuador.

¹⁰¹ 7 November 1823, in *Ibid.*, 177.

notifying that Canning had broken off negotiations over a joint declaration. Monroe saw this as a sign that Canning “was less alarmed” and that “probably some inducements had been presented, after the triumph of the French in Spain, to quiet his apprehensions” of a possible European congress on Spanish America. For Adams, the dispatches only bolstered him in his initial distrust of Canning, as they were “confirmation that the alarm was affected” and that Canning’s “object was to obtain by a sudden movement a premature commitment of the American Government against any . . . acquisition of [Cuba] by ourselves; and, failing in that point, he has returned to the old standard of British belligerent policy.”¹⁰²

From the beginning of the cabinet discussions, Adams wanted the administration to see Canning’s proposal, Tuyll’s recent communications, and the Russian ukase of 1821 within the bigger picture of Euro-American relations. He argued that the Russian communications “afforded . . . a very suitable and convenient opportunity for us to take our stand against the Holy Alliance, and at the same time to decline the overture of Great Britain.” Besides offering an opportunity to “avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France,” it would also be “more candid, as well as more dignified” for the United States to take independent action rather than “to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war.”¹⁰³ Besides, he argued, as any good Washingtonian would, the United States needed to be “free to act as emergencies may arise, and not tie ourselves down to any principle which might immediately afterwards be brought

¹⁰² 16-17 November 1823, in *Ibid.*, 187-88.

¹⁰³ For previous instances of Adams attempting to avoid appearing weak compared to Britain, see 2 January 1819 and 23 December 1820, in *Ibid.*, 4:207, 5:218.

to bear against ourselves.”¹⁰⁴ For Adams, the convergence of circumstances presented an opportunity to announce to the world America’s true principles of foreign policy as they had evolved in his mind in recent years, thus rather than agreeing to Canning’s proposal he recommended bringing a reply to Tuyll, a reply to Canning, diplomatic instructions to various foreign ministers, and the non-colonization principle together as “parts of a combined system of policy.”¹⁰⁵

Adams best summarized the intent of this system of policy later in November after Tuyll presented him with another communication from the Russian government espousing the principles of the Holy Alliance. He described the communication in his diary as “an exposition of principles . . . in a tone of passionate exultation” in response to “the impending success of the French army in Spain; an ‘Io Triumphe’ over the fallen cause of revolution; with sturdy promises of determination to keep it down.”¹⁰⁶ Adams wanted the reply to this communication to be the cornerstone of his system of policy. “In a moderate and conciliatory manner, but with a firm and determined spirit,” he wanted to “declare our dissent from the principles avowed in those communications; to assert those upon which our own Government is founded, and, while disclaiming all intention of attempting to propagate them by force, and all interference with the political affairs of Europe, to declare our expectation and hope that the European powers will equally abstain from the attempt to spread their principles in the American

¹⁰⁴ 7 November 1823, in *Ibid.*, 6:177-78.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 178-79. Also see H. U. Addington to George Canning, no. 25 confidential, 1 December 1823, in Webster, ed., *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, 2:503.

¹⁰⁶ 17 November 1823, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:190.

hemisphere, or to subjugate by force any part of these continents to their will.”¹⁰⁷

In this brief passage Adams made clear that the various components of this system of policy, as well as what would ultimately come to be known as the Monroe Doctrine, was intended as a forceful restatement of the principles of Washington’s Farewell Address with regards to the separation of the European and American spheres.¹⁰⁸ It also represented an expansion of them to recognize a community of interest between the independent nations of both American continents.

Despite the strength of Adams’s convictions, President Monroe and members of the cabinet were hesitant to frame the U.S. responses to Russia, France, and Great Britain as such bold declarations of American principles, especially declarations that could ultimately involve the United States in war if the Allies should disregard them.¹⁰⁹ Adams would not relent, and on 27 November the enactment of his system of policy began with the reply to Tully and his communication of Russian principles. Adams informed Tully that “the sphere of [European] operations was not intended to embrace the United States of America, nor any portion of the American Hemisphere,” and warned “that the United States of America, and their Government, could not see with indifference, the forcible interposition of any European Power, other than Spain, either to

¹⁰⁷ 21 November 1823, in *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁰⁸ Dexter Perkins noted that the Monroe Doctrine was not referred to as such until 1853; to that point, “the references are invariably to [the] ‘principles’ of Mr. Monroe, or to the ‘Monroe declaration.’” For ease of reference, though, it will simply be referred to as the Monroe Doctrine throughout this dissertation. Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine*, 99. Also see Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 223.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the discussion between Adams and Attorney General William Wirt on 25 November 1823, Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:199-202.

restore the dominion of Spain over her emancipated Colonies in America, or to establish Monarchical Governments in those Countries, or to transfer any of the possessions heretofore or yet subject to Spain in the American Hemisphere, to any other European Power.”¹¹⁰ On 29 and 30 November Adams sent instructions to Richard Rush outlining the government’s official position on Canning’s proposed joint declaration, in which he linked the interests of the United States to the stability of Latin America. “American affairs,” he stated, “whether of the Northern or of the Southern Continent, *can*, henceforth, not be excluded from the interference of the United States. All questions of policy relating to them, have a bearing so direct upon the rights and interests of the United States themselves, that they cannot be left at the disposal of European Powers, animated and directed, exclusively, by European principles and interests.”¹¹¹ The sphere of U.S. interests had officially been extended to both American continents.

On 2 December 1823 the final portion of the administration’s system of policy, President Monroe’s address to Congress, was issued to the nation. In discussing American foreign relations during the course of the preceding year, Monroe reiterated the non-colonization principle, announcing that “the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are

¹¹⁰ “Observations on the Communications recently received from the Minister of Russia,” in Ford, “Some Original Documents,” 405-8.

¹¹¹ Emphasis in original. John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush, no. 77, 30 November 1823, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1:213-16. Also see John Quincy Adams to Richard Rush, no. 76, 29 November 1823, in *Ibid.*, 210-12.

henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”¹¹² Later in the address Monroe brought together the pronouncement Adams had made to Tuyl and Rush in what can be termed the doctrine of two spheres. He began by restating America’s policy of neutrality, declaring that “In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense.” The situation was fundamentally different with regards to “the movements in this hemisphere” with which the United States was “immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America.”¹¹³

Given these facts, Monroe proceeded to issue an exposition of American principles and expectations unparalleled in the nation’s history to that point. “We owe it,” he began, “to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers [in Europe] to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.” He was quick to point out that “With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great

¹¹² James Monroe, “Seventh Annual Message,” 2 December 1823, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:209. Monroe’s entire message can be found in *Ibid.*, 207-20.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 218.

consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.” The country would remain neutral “In the war between those new Governments and Spain” so long as “no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.”¹¹⁴ The meaning of this language was clear: from this point forward, Europe was to abstain from all involvement in American affairs, and if it failed to do so it would be met with resistance by the United States.

The non-colonization principle and the doctrine of two spheres, which together form the Monroe Doctrine, simultaneously represented the reiteration of America’s traditional principles as well as a bold new direction for U.S. foreign policy. The new principles clearly emerged out of Adams’s understanding of Washington’s Farewell Address and the recognition that its core ideas must evolve over time to meet new global challenges. As Washington had understandably never conceived of an independent Spanish America, Adams adapted existing principles to protect America’s best interests moving forward. In this case, that interest was seeing the American continents made free of European influence. Adams was not swayed by the increasingly pervasive “entangling alliances with none” view of the Farewell Address, but at the same time, as he

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* The complete text of the Monroe Doctrine can be found in appendix B.

repeatedly pointed out, he was also not advocating the abandonment of America's long-standing neutrality. Instead he simply argued that the United States shared greater common interests with Spanish America than it ever could with Europe and that it needed to approach foreign policy accordingly. The bold new direction of the Monroe Doctrine was not the reversal of America's traditional principles, but rather the explicitly declared lengths the government would go to defend them. Whereas in the past American principles were framed as strictures for American actions, the Doctrine and the larger system of policy it was a part of was an announced expectation for European behavior and a warning of the American response if Europe did not comply.

Popular Response

As soon as Monroe's annual message to Congress was published it was greeted with overwhelming positivity by the American press throughout the nation. The *New York Evening Post* applauded the message for "its wisdom as well as its spirit," while the *Boston Gazette* praised Monroe, who "speaks the language of a patriot, statesman, and philanthropist," and the message, whose "impulse will be felt by every worthy American who shall read it."¹¹⁵ The *National Gazette* of Philadelphia predicted that the Doctrine would be "hailed by the *liberal* politicians of Europe as shedding from an exalted spring of light principles and lessons not only just and appropriate, in reference to their source, but general and inspiring and luminous for civilized society in general. . . . Such

¹¹⁵ *New York Evening Post* and *Boston Gazette*, extracted in the *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), 15 December 1823.

language will serve to apprise the Allies that we are alive, *feelingly* alive, to their probable designs on this hemisphere here, and that they would experience from this republic, a kind of resistance very different from that which the French met in Spain.”¹¹⁶ The *Richmond Enquirer* anticipated that the “conclusion of the Message will rivet every one’s attention. The policy chalked out towards South America breathes a generous and lofty spirit, which is worthy of the Chief Magistrate of the nation.”¹¹⁷ These positive responses were especially understandable given that they were often accompanied by reports of imminent intervention. The day before Monroe delivered his message the *Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C. published a report that the “opinion seems to be gaining ground that France, Spain, and Portugal, have it in contemplation to restore the American colonies of the two latter to the *legitimate* sway of their respective mother countries. Transports, it is said, were preparing at Lisbon, to carry troops to Brazil, and Governors have been appointed for Maranhão and Pará.”¹¹⁸ The editors of the *Richmond Enquirer* argued that the “strong language” of the message “induces us to believe, that the President is actuated to use it, at this time, by some extraordinary information which he has received.”¹¹⁹ The message was enthusiastically greeted, but also served to increase the fears of at least some that intervention was inevitable.

¹¹⁶ Emphasis in original. *National Gazette* (Philadelphia), extracted in the *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), 15 December 1823.

¹¹⁷ “The President’s Message,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 6 December 1823.

¹¹⁸ Emphasis in original. “European Intelligence,” *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), 1 December 1823.

¹¹⁹ “The President’s Message,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 6 December 1823.

Private individuals had a similarly positive view of the Monroe Doctrine as well. William Plumer of New Hampshire, a former United States Senator and Governor of his state, described Monroe's message as "the best communication he has ever made to Congress. The sentiments are manly and independent. As an individual, I am proud of such language from the Chief Magistrate of the nation to the Legislature."¹²⁰ Hezekiah Prince of Maine remarked in his journal that the message was a "paper of much interest" for its assertions, which were "responded, yea, by every true-born American – that any interference of the Holy Alliance with the concerns of the Mexican and South American governments, whose independence we acknowledged by our last Congress, or any attempts of the powers of Europe to establish the Spanish authority over those countries would be considered as hostile to the peace and happiness of this government and would be resisted as such."¹²¹ This was a declaration to take pride in. Even Henry Clay, the Monroe administration's main antagonist on Spanish American affairs, conceded that "the part [of Monroe's address] relating to foreign affairs was . . . the best part of the message."¹²² So much did Clay approve of the Monroe Doctrine that in January 1824 he introduced a resolution in Congress reiterating its principles. The resolution declared "that the people of these States could not see, without serious inquietude, any forcible interposition by the Allied powers of Europe, in behalf of Spain, to reduce to their former subjection those parts of the

¹²⁰ Extract from Plumer's diary, dated 15 December 1823, in William Plumer, Jr., *Life of William Plumer*, ed. Andrew P. Peabody (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857), 512.

¹²¹ 31 December 1823, in Hezekiah Prince, Jr., *Journals of Hezekiah Prince, Jr.*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1965), 109.

¹²² 2 December 1823, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:224.

Continent of America which have proclaimed and established for themselves, respectively, Independent Governments, and which have been solemnly recognized by the U. States.”¹²³ Despite the popularity of Monroe’s message, Clay’s resolution was never brought to a vote.¹²⁴

As a direct response to impending intervention, the Doctrine, as historian Albert Bushnell Hart wrote, “was bound to be popular because it not only paid a pleasing tribute to the enlightenment of Americans, but because it expressed a national sense of importance in the new western world.”¹²⁵ Not everyone fully endorsed the ramifications of the Monroe Doctrine when it was first published, though. Writing a pamphlet related to the upcoming presidential election, “Philo-Jackson” declared that he was “opposed by the sanction and guarantee that was made by our government” in Monroe’s message. This opposition stemmed from “The recommendation of our immortal Washington, that we should form entangling alliances with no nation.” Philo-Jackson’s greater fear was that once recognition was granted, and based on the expectation of impending intervention by the Holy Alliance, the only logical step was to depart “from the counsels of our great political father” and to “form an alliance with our ancient enemy, Great

¹²³ 20 January 1824, in *Annals of Congress*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., 2463-64.

¹²⁴ The legislature of the state of Pennsylvania did pass a resolution favorable to the Monroe Doctrine in February 1824. It stated, in part, “That the magnanimous declaration of the President of the United States, in defence of the cause of liberty in this western hemisphere, meets the entire approbation of the General Assembly of this Commonwealth.” *Resolution of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, Approving of the Declaration of the President of the United States in Favor of the Cause of Liberty in the Western Hemisphere* (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1824), 4.

¹²⁵ Albert Bushnell Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916), 87.

Britain.”¹²⁶ Arguments such as this make clear that observers truly did think intervention was likely to take place and that at least some saw Monroe’s Doctrine as contravening Washington’s Farewell Address.

The hesitancy of Congress to give official sanction to the Doctrine makes sense in light of global developments during the early months of 1824, as within seemingly no time at all the interventionist fears had almost entirely dissipated. As the crisis the Doctrine was seemingly meant to meet passed away, some Americans began to question its long-term utility and to back away from its tenets. Rep. Lewis Williams of North Carolina wrote to his constituents that it would be with “extreme reluctance” that “I should see the United States engage in any contest not immediately and essentially connected with the defence of our own soil. The first duty of a nation is to itself, and upon this principle we should avoid all foreign collisions.”¹²⁷ Taking a bolder stance, Rep. John Long, Jr., also of North Carolina, in response to the “proposition to announce to the world that we would protect South America or espouse her quarrel under all circumstances of interference by Europeans to prevent the establishment of liberty in that part of our hemisphere,” deemed it his duty “to oppose every movement or inclination which might deprive us of the high stand of just and moderate neutrality. I cannot believe that my fellow citizens would be willing to bear the sufferings and

¹²⁶ Philo-Jackson, *The Presidential Election, Written for the Benefit of the People of the United States, but Particularly for Those of the State of Kentucky; Relating, Also, to South America, a War with the Holy Allies; and to an Alliance with Great Britain. Fifth Series* (Frankfort, KY: Printed for the author, 1824), v-vi, iv.

¹²⁷ Lewis Williams, North Carolina, 17 April 1824, in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 3:1196.

calamities of another war, for any thing short of the actual defence of their rights and liberties. It is our duty, then, to make no gratuitous pledges; to menace other nations with no threat of interference. Let us be watchful to preserve ourselves.”¹²⁸ Putting this evolving reaction against the Doctrine in perhaps the clearest light, Rep. John W. Taylor of New York urged his constituents to remember that “it is essential that our national motto should be verified to the people of all climes and religions. ‘Justice to all nations and entangling alliances with none,’ must be faithfully observed.”¹²⁹ Henry Clay himself readily acknowledged in May 1824 that in the current state of world affairs, with the Holy Alliance having determined not to intervene in Latin America, it was better to leave his resolution on the table. In Congress he declared that “to pass the resolution, after all that has occurred – in the absence of any sufficient evidence of their cherishing inimical designs on this continent – might be construed by them as unfriendly, if not offensive. . . . [I] should continue to abstain from pressing upon the attention of the House, this resolution; and should allow it to sleep where it now reposes, on the table.”¹³⁰ With the resolution remaining on the table, Congress never sanctioned the Monroe Doctrine.

This sea change of opinion on the Doctrine in the space of a little over half a year demonstrates how firmly embedded in the American mind were their views

¹²⁸ John Long, Jr., North Carolina, 15 May 1824, in *Ibid.*, 1209-10.

¹²⁹ John W. Taylor, New York, 4 June 1823, in *Ibid.*, 1236.

¹³⁰ Henry Clay, “Remarks on Resolution on European Intervention in America,” [26 May 1824], in *Papers*, 3:765. J. Reuben Clark, in his *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine* argued that a resolution passed by the House of Representatives on 4 April 1864 represented the first official approval of the Monroe Doctrine by Congress. Clark, *Memorandum*, 185.

of the principles of American foreign policy and specifically the Jeffersonian reconceptualization of Washington's Farewell Address. The Doctrine had been greeted enthusiastically, but once the threat had passed and cooler heads had prevailed, America's traditional principles took precedence. For most Americans the relationship the United States was to have with the rest of the world was not changed by the existence of free nations sharing the continent. More importantly, this quickly evolving view of the Doctrine made clear that most Americans did not conceive of it the same way that John Quincy Adams did. While Adams intended it as a bold statement of American principles and as an expansion of Washington's Farewell Address to meet the new challenges posed by an Allied Europe and a newly independent Spanish America, most people saw it as a strong response to a specific crisis but as threatening to undermine Washington's Farewell Address in the future. This disagreement over the proper interpretation of American principles portended future conflicts over the meanings of the Monroe Doctrine, the Farewell Address, and the relationship the United States was to have with the rest of the world.

Four: America's Fundamental Principles of Foreign Policy and the Panama Congress of 1826

On 6 December 1825, President John Quincy Adams, controversially elected the previous February by the House of Representatives on the heels of an allegedly “corrupt bargain” with new Secretary of State Henry Clay, delivered his first annual message to Congress. Historians have described it as “the most amazing annual message of the antebellum era, calling for the use of federal power in almost every area of American life,” and “a bold, courageous, and statesmanlike assertion of the government’s responsibility to assist the advancement of the nation’s intellectual and economic well-being.” At the same time, it also presented a program that “horrified states’ rights advocates” who saw it as “one gigantic grab for power.” Perhaps worst of all, the address had revealed Adams to be “closer to the Hamilton than to the Jeffersonian principles of government.”¹ Despite the far-reaching implications of the message, it was Adams’s discussion of the evolving relationship of the United States with the “independent South American States” that generated the most sustained national attention. He stated that “among the measures which have been suggested to them by the new relations with one another, resulting from the recent changes in

A version of portions of this chapter previously appeared as Jeffrey J. Malanson, “The Congressional Debate over U.S. Participation in the Congress of Panama, 1825-1826: Washington’s Farewell Address, Monroe’s Doctrine, and the Fundamental Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 30 (Nov. 2006): 813-38.

¹ James Lewis, Jr., *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 199; Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 284; Robert V. Remini, *John Quincy Adams* (New York: Times Books, 2002), 81; and Robert V. Remini, *Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 104.

their condition, is that of assembling at the Isthmus of Panama a congress, at which each of them should be represented, to deliberate upon objects important to the welfare of all. The Republics of Colombia, of Mexico, and of Central America have already deputed plenipotentiaries to such a meeting, and they have invited the United States to be also represented there by their ministers.” He then declared that “the invitation has been accepted, and ministers on the part of the United States will be commissioned to attend at those deliberations.” Adams assured Congress that the United States would participate only “so far as may be compatible with that neutrality from which it is neither our intention nor the desire of the other American States that we should depart,” but he provided no additional details or explanations of what issues would be discussed or what the United States specifically hoped to achieve. Most importantly he failed to illuminate how he expected to participate in a congress of nations still at war with Spain without violating American neutrality.²

The debate stepped off by Adams’s mission to Panama turned into, as one historian described it, “one of the severest parliamentary battles in [Congress’s] history.”³ It also became the first extended debate over the meaning of America’s foreign policy principles in the wake of Monroe’s Doctrine. And what had bubbled under the surface from almost the moment Thomas Jefferson first

² John Quincy Adams, “First Annual Address,” 6 December 1825, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols. (New York: National Bureau of Literature, 1908), 2:302.

³ Charles Wilson Hackett, “The Development of John Quincy Adams’s Policy with Respect to an American Confederation and the Panama Congress, 1822-1825,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8 (Nov. 1928): 526.

promised “entangling alliances with none” was now at the center of a highly principled as well as a highly partisan debate: what did Washington’s Farewell Address mean? This chapter begins with the international reactions to the Monroe Doctrine to understand how it shaped America’s relationship with Latin America as John Quincy Adams assumed the presidency, but takes as its main focus the debate carried out in the popular press and the United States Capitol over the mission to Panama. Adams saw the Panama Congress as an opportunity to see Washington’s principles as well as his own non-colonization principle adopted internationally and a venue at which he could clarify and reinforce America’s continued adherence to them. His opponents, taking an entirely different view of the Doctrine and seeing American principles defined by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, interpreted the Panama mission as the abandonment of sacred principles rather than the defense of them. The debate over Panama enabled the United States Congress to sit in judgment of John Quincy Adams’s system of foreign policy as well as to define the salient legacies of Washington’s Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine. In many ways this debate was the natural culmination of the debate that had been emerging during the previous quarter-century over the meaning of American principles and the role the nation should play in the world, and its outcomes would shape the directions and understandings of American foreign policy for the next quarter-century.

Europe and Latin America React to the Monroe Doctrine

One of the great ironies of the Monroe Doctrine and the larger system of policy it emerged from is that the portion of the world it was most directly concerned with – Europe – took the least notice of it. When it was first published there the occasional editorial appeared questioning by what right the United States could instruct European powers on how they would treat the Americas, but it relatively quickly disappeared from the public mind.⁴ This process of forgetting was also facilitated by the efforts of George Canning, who was concerned for how Monroe’s declarations would impact Britain’s relationship with the Holy Allies and with Latin America. His greatest fear was that his conversations with Richard Rush about a joint declaration would become public, as would Rush’s insistence upon British recognition of Spanish American independence and Canning’s refusal, and how this would impact British trade with that region. Canning was able to convince Rush to keep their conversations a secret, and when news of the Doctrine reached Europe he immediately published the Polignac Memorandum in an attempt to reframe the story; rather than the United States having boldly stood up to the Holy Alliance, Great Britain had held France in check and Monroe had simply “‘assisted’ [Canning] in safeguarding Latin America.”⁵ When in early

⁴ Harold Temperley, “Documents Illustrating the Reception and Interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in Europe, 1823-4,” *English Historical Review* 39 (Oct. 1924): 590-93.

⁵ Quoted in Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), 67. For his part, Rush later claimed credit for giving Canning the confidence to approach Polignac. As he put it, “It may also be inferred, that the moral certainty which England derived through my correspondence and conferences with her Foreign Secretary, that the United States would, in the end, go hand in hand with her in shielding those new States from European domination, even had the certainty of such a policy in the United States not been otherwise deducible, must have had its natural influence upon England in strengthening her in her line of policy laid down towards France and the Continental Powers.” Richard Rush, *Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London, Comprising*

1825 Great Britain officially recognized the independence of Mexico, Colombia, and Rio de la Plata, Canning once again deflected attention away from the United States by asserting that in “Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain ‘with the Indies.’ I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.”⁶

Despite the turn against the Doctrine in the United States by mid-1824, some American statesmen continued to believe in its positive impact. While Secretary of State, for example, Henry Clay regularly asserted that Monroe’s message “had a powerful effect in disconcerting and arresting [Allied] progress” towards intervention in Spanish America.⁷ This assertion was demonstrably untrue, as the Polignac Memorandum had clearly had a far greater impact on the approach of the Holy Alliance to Spanish America than the Monroe Doctrine ever could have. In this sense Canning was correct to prioritize his own efforts over

Incidents Official and Personal from 1819 to 1825. Including Negotiations on the Oregon Question, and Other Unsettled Questions between the United States and Great Britain (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845), 458-59.

⁶ Emphasis in original. “Mr. Canning’s Reply to the King’s Message Relative to the Affairs of Portugal,” 12 December 1826, in Robert Walsh, ed., *Select Speeches of the Right Honorable George Canning; with a Preliminary Biographical Sketch, and an Appendix, of Extracts from His Writings and Speeches* (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1835), 467. While the United States generally, and men like James Monroe and Henry Clay specifically, could dispute Canning’s claim, in the eyes of some Latin American countries, most notably Mexico, British recognition was substantially more important than that of the United States. See, for example, “Address of Guadalupe Victoria, President of Mexico, to the British Chargé d’Affaires,” 31 May 1825, in William R. Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925), 3:1623.

⁷ Henry Clay to Richard C. Anderson, Jr. and John Sergeant, 8 May 1826, in *The Papers of Henry Clay*, ed. James F. Hopkins, 10 vols. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-91), 5:317. Also see Henry Clay to John M. Forbes, 3 January 1828, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1:292-93.

those of the United States. The most direct impact the Monroe Doctrine had on Euro-American relations was on the planned tripartite negotiations between the United States, Great Britain, and Russia over the northwest coast of North America. When Canning first spoke with Rush after receiving the Monroe Doctrine, as the U.S. minister would later write, he informed him that he would likely “decline joining us in the negotiation with Russia, relative to the North West Coast, as we had proposed,” as he desired not to bring the non-colonization principle “into discussion at present, as England must necessarily object to it.”⁸ For its part, Russia gave so little notice to the Monroe Doctrine that it very willingly and amicably negotiated the Russo-American Treaty of 1824 to settle the northwest coast controversy. Britain and the United States could ultimately only agree to extend the Convention of 1818 that stipulated the joint occupation of the disputed region that would eventually be called Oregon. The dispute would remain unresolved until the signing of the Treaty of Washington on 15 June 1846.⁹

While the impact of the Monroe Doctrine in Europe was largely negligible, such was certainly not the case in Latin America. By the end of James

⁸ Rush, *Memorandum of a Residence at the Court of London*, 471-72.

⁹ For other works dealing with Europe’s reaction to the Monroe Doctrine, see Harold Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World*, second ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966); Temperley, “Documents Illustrating the Reception and Interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in Europe, 1823-4,” 590-93; D. A. G. Waddell, “International Politics and Latin American Independence,” in *The Independence of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell, 195-226 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Walter Alison Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813-1823 as an Experiment in the International Organization of Peace* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914); Dexter Perkins, “Europe, Spanish America, and the Monroe Doctrine,” *American Historical Review* 27 (Jan. 1922): 207-18; and William Spence Robertson, “The Monroe Doctrine Abroad in 1823-24,” *American Political Science Review* 6 (Nov. 1912): 546-63.

Monroe's presidency, the United States had officially recognized five former Spanish colonies as independent nations, as well as Brazil's independence from Portugal.¹⁰ Reaction to the Monroe Doctrine in these countries was mixed. Conservative factions, which were usually in the minority and distrusted both republicanism and U.S. motives, similarly distrusted the Monroe Doctrine. The more liberal elements generally greeted it with greater enthusiasm. Brazil and Colombia, for example, officially endorsed its tenets, and the government of the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata praised the United States for having ““made an appeal to our national honor by supposing us capable of contending single-handed with Spain; but it has constituted itself the guardian of the field of battle in order to prevent any foreign assistance from being introduced to the aid of our rival.””¹¹ This was the crux of why most Latin American governments had a favorable response to the Monroe Doctrine – they were either still at war with

¹⁰ In Monroe's initial message to Congress dealing with recognition on 8 March 1822, he specifically discussed Chile, Rio de la Plata, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico. The official recognition of each country was carried out by the reception of that nation's minister, or the dispatching of a minister to the country. Colombia was recognized on 19 June 1822, Mexico on 12 December 1822, Rio de la Plata on 27 January 1823, and Chile on 27 January 1823. A nomination was submitted for a minister to Peru on 13 January 1823, but was soon withdrawn until 11 April 1826 and approved 2 May 1826. A fifth nation was recognized during Monroe's presidency, though, as the United Provinces of the Center of America (Central America) separated from Mexico and declared its independence and was officially recognized on 4 August 1824. For Monroe's message on recognition, see James Monroe, "Special Message," 8 March 1822, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:116-18. For an extended discussion of the process of recognizing each of these countries, see William Spence Robertson, "The Recognition of the Hispanic American Nations by the United States," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (Aug. 1918): 259-62.

¹¹ Quoted in Samuel Guy Inman, "The Monroe Doctrine and Hispanic America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 4 (Nov. 1921): 641-42, more generally 640-43. For additional discussion of the reception of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America, also see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Latin American Policy*, 68; William Spence Robertson, "South America and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828," *Political Science Quarterly* 30 (Mar. 1915); and Joseph Byrne Lockey, *Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), chapter 6.

Spain or Portugal or feared the renewal of it – and in it they saw the potential for substantial U.S. assistance in the preservation of their independence.

James Monroe and John Quincy Adams were pleased with the positive reception of the Doctrine in Latin America, but they were not prepared for how this approval manifested itself. Despite Monroe's explicit declaration of neutrality in the ongoing conflicts between mother country and (former) colony, the Latin American governments saw in the Doctrine the potential for meaningful support; they saw the United States as having made an unconditional pledge to defend Latin American independence. In the three years after the Doctrine was first enunciated, five separate proposals were made under its auspices by Latin American governments looking for a more concrete commitment, often in the form of formal alliances, from the United States. The first such proposal was informally made to the U.S. Minister to Chile, Heman Allen, when it was suggested that once a Chilean minister was dispatched to the United States, "this government intended to propose an alliance with [the U.S.], to oppose any attempt upon the rights of either, by foreign powers."¹² In July, the Colombian minister to the United States communicated to Adams a similar hope. While asserting that "Colombia is resolved to defend at every hazard its independence and liberty against every foreign influence and power," he also admitted that his government "has seen with the greatest pleasure the Message of the President . . . that the Government of the United-States endeavours to oppose the policy and ultimate

¹² Heman Allen to John Quincy Adams, 29 April 1824, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:1091-94.

views of the Holy Alliance.” Should the Allies intervene in Colombia, his government wanted to know “in what manner the Government of the United States intends to resist on its part any interference of the Holy Alliance for the purpose of subjugating the new Republics or interfering in their political forms: if it will enter into a Treaty of Alliance with the Republic of Colombia to save America in general from the calamities of a despotic system.”¹³ In January 1825, as fears in Brazil grew of a potential war with Portugal, the Brazilian Chargé d’Affaires approached Adams to ask that if Portugal should “take possession of any point in the Brazil: Will the Government of the United States . . . declare himself allied with the Government of Brazil in an offensive and deffensive [*sic*] alliance, marching with his pourful [*sic*] means to the camp of Battle and help to extricate the intruders . . . ?”¹⁴ Mexico and Rio de la Plata made similar proposals in 1825 and 1826, respectively.¹⁵ The leaders of all of these countries read

¹³ José Maria Salazar to John Quincy Adams, 2 July 1824, in *Ibid.*, 1281-82. The previous March, the U.S. minister to Colombia, Richard C. Anderson, had attempted to dissuade the Colombian government from taking this view of the Doctrine. In his diary he recorded a conversation with Colombia’s Minister of Outer Relations in which the minister “urged that the US should consider any attempt from Spain against this Country as an attempt on the part of the *Holy Alliance*; considering the inability of Spain[,] and therefore [thought] that the US. shd. in that event interfere. I endeav[ore]d to show that the US. could not interfere between this country & Spain without violating their own principles of the laws of Nations.” Emphasis in original. 15 March 1824, in Richard Clough Anderson, Jr., *The Diary and Journal of Richard Clough Anderson, Jr., 1814-1826*, ed. Alfred Tischendorf and E. Taylor Parks (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964), 139.

¹⁴ José Silvestre Rebello to John Quincy Adams, 28 January 1825, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:808-10.

¹⁵ For Mexico, see Lucas Alaman to Joel Roberts Poinsett, 16 August 1825 and Joel Roberts Poinsett to Lucas Alaman, 17 August 1825, in *Ibid.*, 3:1628-29, 1629-30. For extracts from the proposals of Rio de la Plata, see Robertson, “South America and the Monroe Doctrine,” 101-3, and for the message transmitting those proposals to the United States, see John M. Forbes to Henry Clay, 5 September 1826, in Manning, *Messages and Papers*, 1:657-58.

Monroe's message and believed that alliances were the logical progression of the relationship between the Americas.

In responding to each proposal, the United States fell back on its declared neutrality and its standing policy of avoiding alliances. Days after receiving the Colombian dispatch, Adams noted in his diary the determination of the cabinet that Colombia was “to maintain its own independence. Hope that France and the Holy Allies will not resort to force against it. If they should, the power to determine resistance is in Congress. The movements of the Executive will be as heretofore expressed.”¹⁶ In his official reply, Adams expressed his long-held belief that no interference of the Holy Alliance was forthcoming, but remarked that if it should, “the ultimate decision of this question belongs to the Legislative Department of the Government.” He reassured the Colombian minister that “The Sentiments of the President remain as they were expressed in his last annual message to Congress – Should the crisis . . . which gave rise to the remarks then made, hereafter recur, he will be ready to give them effect,” but only with the sanction of Congress. Congressional approval was not the only limitation on U.S. action, though, as under “a deliberate and concerted system of the allied Powers to exercise force against the freedom and Independence of your Republic; . . . the United States could not undertake resistance to them by force of Arms, without a previous understanding with those European Powers [Great Britain], whose

¹⁶ This diary entry was recorded as brief minutes rather than the more formal narrative Adams normally employed. 7 July 1824, in John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-77), 6:399.

Interests and whose principles would secure from them an active and efficient co-operation in the cause.”¹⁷ The United States, on its own, was not powerful enough to wage a war against the powers of Europe on a different continent, thus rather than an immediate and forceful response should the Allies intervene, the United States would await legislative approval and British assistance before committing itself to defend Colombia.

With the ascendancy of Adams to the presidency it was left to Secretary of State Henry Clay to respond to the remaining proposals. To the Brazilian Chargé d’Affaires he affirmed that President Adams “adheres to the principles of his predecessor,” but given that “there does not appear, at present, any likelihood of Portugal being able to draw to her aid other powers to assist her in resubjugating the Brazils, there would not seem to be any occasion for a Convention founded upon that improbable contingency.” Clay further asserted that any formal alliance with Brazil “would be inconsistent with the policy which the United-States have heretofore prescribed to themselves.”¹⁸ The United States was not going to depart from its traditional principles by forming permanent alliances with Latin America.

The Latin American response to the Monroe Doctrine further highlights the fact that John Quincy Adams and his associates had a vastly different view of the Doctrine than did most other observers around the world. By mid-1824, many Americans began to fear that the Doctrine represented a threat to continued adherence to Washington’s Farewell Address, and this fear was only confirmed

¹⁷ John Quincy Adams to José Maria Salazar, 6 August 1824, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1:224-26.

¹⁸ Henry Clay to José Silvestre Rebello, 13 April 1825, in *Ibid.*, 233-34.

by suggestions that the United States further depart from Washington by concluding new alliances. Regardless of how influenced one was by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, these alliances were deemed to be dangerous. More instructive, though, is what these proposals demonstrate about Adams's understanding of the doctrine of two spheres by early 1825. The U.S. response to Latin America made clear that he had no intention of departing from America's fundamental principles. The Doctrine was an expansion of the Farewell Address, but more importantly it was a declaration of the specific principles that would guide the U.S. response to the particular threat of Allied intervention in Latin America. The doctrine of two spheres, while enunciating a general principle – the separation of American and European spheres – was also quite limited in its intent; it was a warning that the Allies should not intervene in the concluding stages of Spanish America's revolution.¹⁹ While Adams did see North and South America as sharing some common interests, especially as it pertained to relations with Europe – a fact acknowledged in the Monroe Doctrine – he by and large did not see the Doctrine as having any bearing on the larger direction of U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America. To put it another way, once the threat of Allied intervention passed away so too would the utility of the doctrine of two spheres; all that would remain were the general principles. For Adams, who never believed that the Allied would intervene, those principles were all that ever really mattered. He had such a complex view of both the Doctrine and U.S. foreign

¹⁹ Historian Albert Bushnell Hart discussed the Monroe Doctrine in terms of a “pledge to herself” made by the United States. Albert Bushnell Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916), 92.

policy, though, that it is easy to understand why almost no one else saw things the way that he did.

President John Quincy Adams

Throughout his career John Quincy Adams was both blessed and cursed by timing and circumstance. He began and ended his term as a United States senator by supporting the Louisiana Purchase and Jefferson's Embargo, two issues that served to alienate him from the Federalists who elected him. At the same time, those votes earned him the respect of then-Secretary of State James Madison, who as president returned him to the diplomatic service in Russia, at Ghent, and in Great Britain. The convergence of circumstances at the end of 1823 allowed him to forcefully assert America's foreign policy principles to the world, but in 1825 his presidency was doomed to virtual failure almost before it began due to the state of American politics and his association with those principles. By 1820 the Federalist party had essentially ceased to exist as a nationally viable entity and James Monroe ran unopposed for reelection to the presidency, winning all but one electoral vote.²⁰ By 1824 no second party had risen to replace the Federalists, but with no sitting president running for reelection, and no uniform method for nominating candidates for the presidency, five men put themselves forward: Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War John C.

²⁰ An elector from New Hampshire cast his electoral vote for John Quincy Adams because he was opposed to the Monroe administration. The popular mythology of the event was that the elector cast his vote for Adams because he believed that no man but Washington should be elected unanimously. For an extended discussion of this myth versus reality, see Lynn W. Turner, "The Electoral Vote Against Monroe in 1820 – An American Legend," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42 (Sep. 1955): 250-73.

Calhoun, Speaker of the House Henry Clay, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford, and America's foremost military hero of the day, Andrew Jackson.²¹ Calhoun quickly backed out of the crowded field to focus his efforts on securing the vice presidency, leaving four candidates, each with regional appeal, and a deadlocked Electoral College. One "corrupt bargain" later and Adams was elected president by the House of Representatives and Clay was soon after appointed secretary of state. The supporters of Jackson and Crawford were livid and lined up behind Jackson, stepping off the development of the second party system. This development, more than any other, came to define Adams's presidency.

At the heart of Adams's agenda during his first year as president was seeing the permanent restoration of peace to Latin America. His efforts took two main forms. First, he wanted Spain, which was still attempting to resubjugate its former colonies, to recall its armies and put an end to war. The United States had little to no influence over Spain, so instead turned to Russia in hopes that that country would intercede to convince the Spanish that it was in its best interests to accept the loss of mainland America and be happy that it still had its Caribbean colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico.²² Second was limited participation in the Congress of Panama.

²¹ The fact that three members of Monroe's cabinet were all contending for the presidency not only created tension at cabinet meetings, but actually impeded the functioning of the cabinet, as Crawford would use cabinet meetings to distinguish himself from Adams, almost always opposing anything that Adams favored. See, for example, the entries for 18 March 1818 and 29 October 1819 in Adams's diary. Adams, *Memoirs*, 4:64, 428-29.

²² Henry Clay to Henry Middleton, 10 May 1825, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1:244-50.

One of the first issues Clay brought to Adams's attention was an informal invitation from the Colombian and Mexican ministers for the United States to participate in a congress of American nations scheduled to take place at Panama. Discussions of the formation of some sort of Latin American or pan-American organization had reached Adams as early as May 1820, when he noted in his diary after a discussion with a representative from Colombia that the Latin Americans "were jealous of the European alliance. . . . They were desirous of combining an American system to embrace the whole hemisphere in opposition to that of Europe."²³ As the revolutions achieved lasting success, and especially in the wake of American recognition, the Spanish American desire for such a system grew. The main architect of this pan-American movement was Simon Bolivar, the Spanish American revolutionary widely recognized as being the pivotal figure in the success of the Spanish American revolutions.²⁴ In a toast at a public dinner in 1820, then-Speaker of the House Clay went so far as to label Bolivar "the Washington of South America, and the Republic of Colombia."²⁵ Early on Bolivar recognized that the former Spanish colonies, regardless of when they achieved independence or the forms of government they chose, all shared common interests and common challenges that could best be met through collective negotiation and action. A pan-American system would not only

²³ 13 May 1820, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 5:115.

²⁴ For more on Bolivar and his role in the revolutions, see John Lynch, *Simon Bolivar: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); and David Bushnell, *Simon Bolivar: Liberation and Disappointment* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2004).

²⁵ Henry Clay, "Remarks and Toast at Public Dinner," [1 January 1825], in *Papers*, 4:1. Bolivar often compared himself to Washington as well. See William R. Shepherd, "Bolivar and the United States," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (Aug. 1918): 273-77.

provide easier defense against future attacks by Spain or other foreign powers, but would also facilitate the maintenance of peace between the nations of Latin America. Bolivar's original conception of this system did not include the United States, and when he issued his circular letter on 7 December 1824 inviting nations to Panama it was not sent to Washington, D.C.²⁶

Despite Bolivar's intention of having a Latin American congress, three separate informal invitations were extended to the United States by mid-1825. Adams initially hesitated to involve the United States in this international meeting, but after multiple cabinet discussions, and several weeks of prodding by Clay, he relented.²⁷ He stipulated that the United States would not depart from its long-standing neutrality, participate in negotiations of a belligerent nature, or commit itself to anything without the sanction of its own Congress, but would otherwise fully take part in the proceedings. Three weeks later he offered the mission to U.S. minister to Colombia, Richard C. Anderson of Kentucky, who

²⁶ The invitation was sent to Colombia, Mexico, Rio de la Plata, Chile, Central America, and Peru (which is where Bolivar was writing from). Simon Bolivar, "Invitation to the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Rio de la Plata, Chile, and Guatemala to Hold a Congress in Panama," 7 December 1824, in *El Libertador: Writings of Simon Bolivar*, trans. Frederick H. Fornoff, ed. David Bushnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 159-61. Some historians have suggested that Bolivar chose not to invite the United States because of a dislike or distrust of that nation, and others have posited that he feared Britain's reaction to the invitation of the United States. Evidence seems to suggest, though, that Bolivar felt that a U.S. presence at Panama was unnecessary for what he truly hoped to accomplish there. Throughout 1825 he frequently expressed his great concern for the stability of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, and believed that a confederation of these nations, within a larger Latin American system to be established at Panama, could solve the problem. The United States was not needed to achieve these goals. This did not mean that he did not place a strong emphasis on American assistance, though, as he frequently made mention of the need for "an intimate and extremely close alliance with England and North America." See Shepherd, "Bolivar and the United States," 287-98 for an extended discussion of Bolivar's thoughts on the role of the United States in the Latin American system and at Panama.

²⁷ The Panama Congress was introduced by Clay on 23 April 1825 after several conversations with the Colombian and Mexican ministers. It was further discussed on 27 April, and the final decision to accept the invitations was made on 7 May. Adams, *Memoirs*, 6:531, 536-37, 542.

readily accepted. In November a decision was made to send a second delegate, and the post was offered to Albert Gallatin – America’s finest diplomat (after Adams) – who declined the mission. The second spot was ultimately given to John Sergeant of Pennsylvania, with William Rochester of New York named secretary.²⁸ By the end of November, with formal invitations received and accepted and with ministers selected, Adams was prepared to announce the American mission to Panama in his first annual message to Congress.²⁹

The American press was not sure what to make of the Panama Congress itself or of U.S. participation in it after the publication of Adams’s message. Newspapers had been printing stories about the Panama Congress throughout 1825, so were not surprised by Adams’s discussion of it.³⁰ With his message to Congress he mainly confirmed what had long been rumored but his lack of specific detail opened the door to competing interpretations. The *Richmond Enquirer*, which had expressed its disapproval of the mission in October in declaring that “it is not the interest of our own country to accede to the plan, and

²⁸ 27 May 1825, in Adams, *Memoirs*, 7:15-16; Henry Clay to Albert Gallatin, 8 November 1825; Albert Gallatin to Henry Clay, 10 November 1825; Henry Clay to John Sergeant, 16 November 1825, in Clay, *Papers*, 4:801, 813, 832-33; John Sergeant to Henry Clay, 19 November 1825 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M662, roll 1); Records of the Department of State Relating to the First Panama Congress, 1825-27; Records of United States Participation in International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Record Group 43 (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston); Henry Clay to William Rochester, 30 November 1825, in *Papers*, 4:871.

²⁹ Official invitations were received from Mexico, Colombia, and Central America on 1, 2, and 14 November 1825, respectively. Guadalupe Victoria to John Quincy Adams, 1 November 1825; Pablo Obregon to Henry Clay, 3 November 1825; José Maria Salazar to Henry Clay, 2 November 1825; and Antonio José Cañaz to Henry Clay, 14 November 1825, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 3:1641; 1642-43; 2:1286-88; and 883.

³⁰ For a discussion of early press coverage of the Panama Congress, see Frances L. Reinhold, “New Research on the First Pan-American Congress Held at Panama in 1826,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 18 (Aug. 1938): 343-50.

to dispatch ministers to the Congress,” likewise disapproved of it in Adams’s message.³¹ The *Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C. expressed relief that participation was “to be done under instructions to [the ministers] to act as counsellors [*sic*] only, and with a perfect understanding, between this and other governments, that no deviation is expected of the United States from that strict neutrality which it has heretofore declared and maintained between the present belligerents.” It was especially relieved “that the idea of *alliance* between the United States and those powers is wholly out of question.”³² Unsurprisingly, these two papers would go on to be two of the Adams administration’s biggest critics and supporters, respectively. The *Boston Courier* understood the interest in the mission, but observed that the “specific object such a measure is intended to produce, or what indirect benefit is to be expected from it, we are not informed.”³³

The confusion of this Boston newspaper was understandable at this juncture as Adams never actually spelled out what he hoped to achieve by sending ministers to Panama. For that matter, he never explained that there was even a legitimate or compelling reason to participate at all. He had emphasized that the United States would not depart from its long-standing neutrality, nor was it expected to by the inviting countries, but beyond that the nature of U.S. involvement was an open question. But, in what would become one of the more frequent refrains of the congressional debate, many Americans wondered if the

³¹ “American Confederation,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 October 1825; “*The President’s Message. Splendid Government!*,” *Ibid.*, 8 December 1825.

³² *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), 9 December 1825.

³³ “Congress at Panama,” *Boston Courier*, 14 December 1825.

United States would be violating its neutrality just by sending delegates to the international congress in the first place. Insight into why Adams accepted the invitations can be gained from two messages to the House of Representatives that he drafted but never sent. In the first he revealed that “the decisive inducement to me, to accept the invitation, was to meet in the spirit of kindness and friendship, an overture of kindness and friendship from three Sister Republics of this Hemisphere.” As he had done repeatedly, he qualified that this favorable response contained “an explicit avowal on our part . . . that the United States should take no part in measures at the Congress which should import a departure from the neutrality which they were determined to maintain.”³⁴ Expanding on these points in a second message, Adams noted that even if the subjects for deliberation had been of less immediate interest to the United States, he still would have accepted the invitation “if for no other reason than because it had been given. . . . The invitation was to a meeting of consultation, between ministers of the American nations to deliberate upon objects of deep and common interest to them all.”³⁵ There was no reason to shy away from the open discussion of issues of genuine common interest between the United States and Latin America. Given Adams’s long-held belief in the wisdom of negotiating in times of peace to remove points of future controversy, it is unsurprising that he attached such importance to the Congress of Panama. As a meeting of the recently

³⁴ John Quincy Adams to the House of Representatives of the United States [not sent], 9 February 1826 (Reel 474), Adams Family Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

³⁵ John Quincy Adams to the House of Representatives of the United States [not sent], February 1826, *Ibid.*

independent nations of the Americas, which were still struggling to chart their own course in the world, it represented an ideal opportunity to not only foster a sense of international friendship and cooperation, but also to guide them towards American principles and policies that would both serve U.S. interests and the long-term interests of Latin America.

Adams's specific goals for the Panama Congress were first concretely expressed to Congress at the end of December when he formally submitted nominations for Anderson and Sergeant to the Senate. In addition to transmitting a "report from the Secretary of State and copies of the correspondence with the South American Governments on this subject," he also outlined his expectations for the meeting. He began by clarifying U.S. neutrality, stating that "the United States neither intend nor are expected to take part in any deliberations of a belligerent character; that the motive of their attendance is neither to contract alliances nor to engage in any undertaking or project importing hostility to any other nation." Within this context he urged that "the principles of a liberal commercial intercourse should be exhibited" to Latin America, and they should encourage the "consentaneous adoption of principles of maritime neutrality." He hoped that, "without entering into any treaty, the moral influence of the United States" could be "exerted with beneficial consequences" for the "advancement of religious liberty." He also looked towards the "indirect influence which the United States may exercise upon any projects or purposes originating in the war in which the southern Republics are still engaged, which might seriously affect

the interests of this Union, and the good offices by which the United States may ultimately contribute to bring that war to a speedier termination.” Most importantly for the debate that followed, though, Adams sought “An agreement between all the parties represented at the meeting that each will guard by its own means against the establishment of any future European colony within its borders.” This was the non-colonization principle that had been “announced by my predecessor to the world,” and he desired it to be “developed to the new southern nations that they will all feel it as an essential appendage to their independence.” Given the move away from the Monroe Doctrine in the rest of the United States, Adams’s inclusion of one of its tenets as a reason for a mission to the Panama Congress proved to be controversial, and led many of his opponents in Congress to openly question what his true motivations were.³⁶

The best evidence of what Adams hoped to specifically achieve at Panama is Secretary of State Henry Clay’s instructions to Anderson and Sergeant. While they would not be made available to Congress or the public until 1829, these instructions spell out in great detail the objectives and scope of American participation. In later years Clay would point to the importance of commerce in the instructions and to the American mission, but a close reading makes clear that the administration was arguably most concerned with spreading American

³⁶ John Quincy Adams, “Special Message,” 26 December 1825, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:318-20.

principles for the conduct of foreign policy.³⁷ To put it another way, these instructions make clear one of the central goals of the Panama mission was international adoption of Washington's Farewell Address in both its original and expanded forms. This congress represented "a new epoch in human affairs" at which dramatic steps could be taken to ensure the permanent separation of the European and American spheres while at the same time providing for the equitable and profitable expansion of worldwide commerce.³⁸

Clay emphasized the neutral and purely "diplomatic" role the ministers were to play, and to reinforce this position he suggested they take this as an opportunity to permanently put to rest the idea of the doctrine of two spheres as justification for alliance. Clay argued that because the danger posed by the Holy Alliance had "disappeared, there can be no necessity, at this time, for an offensive and defensive alliance between the American Powers, which could only find a justification, at any period, in the existence, or continuation of such a danger. Such an alliance, under present circumstances, would be worse than useless, since it might tend to excite feelings in the Emperor of Russia and his Allies, which should not be needlessly touched or provoked." Clay pointed to that portion of Washington's Farewell Address dealing with the avoidance of alliances, noting that this maxim "was directed to Europe, which, having a system of connexions

³⁷ Clay spent a little over a quarter of the instructions discussing commercial principles and commercial agreements, but spent much of the rest elaborating on principles associated with Washington's Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine.

³⁸ Henry Clay to Richard C. Anderson, Jr. and John Sergeant, 8 May 1826, in *The Papers of Henry Clay*, ed. James F. Hopkins, 10 vols. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-91), 5:313-14.

and of interests remote, and different, from ours, it was thought most advisable that we should not mix ourselves up with them. And it is also true that, long since the origin of the maxim, the new American Powers have arisen, to which, if at all, it is less applicable.” As if taking direct aim at the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, Clay was arguing that the Farewell Address was written with Europe in mind and did not preclude a closer relationship with Latin America. Despite this distinction, though, it remained the policy of the United States to only depart from “that established maxim” of avoiding alliances in circumstances of “great urgency,” which did not then exist.³⁹

The avoidance of permanent alliances was not the only portion of Washington’s Farewell Address put forward by Clay as principles for the U.S. ministers to “inculcate” in their counterparts at the congress. Clay argued that “the preservation of peace among [the Latin American nations], and with the rest of the world,” should be instilled in the congress’s participants, as “the true interest of all Nations, but it is especially that of infant States.” As he saw it, “Peace is now the greatest want of America,” and he hoped that “the policy of all America will be the same, that of peace and neutrality.” Clay also urged the need for the Latin American governments to work to prevent “foreign interference, either in the formation, or in the conduct, of their Government,” and that they be “equally scrupulous in refraining from all interference in the original structure, or subsequent interior movement, of the Governments of other independent

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

Nations.”⁴⁰ These principles had allowed the United States to develop from an infant nation into a growing power, and the ministers at Panama should advocate for their adoption.

Perhaps more than any other point in his lengthy instructions, Clay stressed the importance of Latin American adoption of Adams’s expanded Farewell Address principle of non-colonization. The Adams administration believed, as Monroe’s had in 1823, that the entirety of the American continents, with only “one or two inconsiderable exceptions,” belonged to “Sovereign, resident American Powers.” As a result, there was “no chasm, within the described limits in which a new European [*sic*] Colony could be now introduced without violating the territorial rights of some American State. An attempt to establish such a Colony and, by its establishment, to acquire sovereign rights for any European Power, must be regarded as an inadmissible encroachment.” To give greater weight to Monroe’s original declaration of this principle, as well as “To prevent any such new European Colonies, and to warn Europe, beforehand, that they are not, hereafter, to be admitted,” the president wanted the ministers to “propose a joint declaration of the several American States, each, however, acting for, and binding only, itself, that, within the limits of their respective territories, no new European Colony will, hereafter, be allowed to be established.”⁴¹

Clay was explicit that this proposal was “not intended to commit the parties . . . to the support of the particular boundaries which may be claimed by

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 320-21, 339.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 330-31.

any one of them; nor is it proposed to commit them to a joint resistance against any future attempt to plant a new European Colony.” As if taking a page from George Canning’s original proposal to Richard Rush in August 1823, Clay expressed the belief “that the moral effect alone, of a joint declaration, emanating from the authority of all the American Nations, will effectually serve to prevent the effort to establish any such new Colony.” Only if this joint declaration failed and an “attempt should actually be made,” would it be necessary “for the American Powers to consider the propriety of negotiating between themselves, and, if necessary, of adopting, in concert, the measures which may be necessary to check and prevent it.” Adams and Clay firmly believed that international adoption of the non-colonization principle was a vital step in permanently eliminating European influence and control in the Americas, but at the same time were adamant that it only be adopted in the non-binding form of a joint declaration. Clay added that it would “not be necessary to give to the declaration now proposed, the form of a Treaty,” and later in the instructions he reiterated that it “does no more than announce, in respect to the United States, the existing state of their Institutions and Laws.” Properly executed, it “Neither contracts any new obligations, on their part, nor makes any alteration, as to them, in the present condition of things.”⁴² Taken as a whole, these instructions clearly demonstrate that Adams had high hopes for what could be achieved at Panama and they reveal

⁴² *Ibid.*, 330-31, 338-39.

that he was motivated by the same understanding of the Farewell Address and American principles that had guided him in 1823.⁴³

The problem Adams soon encountered was that both his message to Congress nominating Anderson and Sergeant and the documents accompanying it lacked the explicitness and the clarity of these instructions as to the goals of the mission. This made it much easier for those senators and congressmen who opposed Adams and/or the mission to interpret the president's actions and motives as being dangerous for American security and as a departure from Washington's principles. Further complicating the debate over the Panama mission as it played out in both houses of Congress and especially in the

⁴³ For the rest of his life, Clay would maintain that the Panama instructions were among his most notable accomplishments while Secretary of State. In 1836 he told one correspondent that his "great work was the preparation of the instructions intended for our Commissioners who were to meet first at Panama, and afterwards at Tacubaya." Six years later he stated that "The State papers which I have composed, in my opinion, possessing the most permanent value, are: My instructions to our Ministers sent to the Congress of Panama, or rather Tacuyba [*sic*]; . . ." Contemporary observers and Clay's biographers (all of whom shared Clay's political views), also pointed to these instructions as an example of Clay's wisdom and diplomatic skill. One writer remarked that the instructions contained "the soundest, as well as the most liberal principles of policy. They are founded in the purest and noblest motives which ever animated a freeman and a statesman." When Clay ran for president in 1844, several campaign biographies were published, all of them hailing the instructions. One declared that "If we were to single out one from the multitude of official papers prepared by Mr. Clay during his secretaryship, as evincing the most ability and skill, it would be the letter of instructions to Messrs. John Sergeant and Richard C. Anderson." Another argued that composition of the instructions was "among the proudest monuments of his great ability, and of the true republican spirit which has always guided his public conduct." A third stated that "Few state papers in the archives of the Government will compare, in point of ability, with this letter of instructions of Mr. Clay. . . . [The instructions] constitute one of the boldest, most original, comprehensive and statesman-like documents on record." Henry Clay to Robert Walsh, Jr., 25 April 1836; Henry Clay to Epes Sargent, 16 July 1842, in Clay, *Papers*, 8:845, 9:736; *Mexico and Mr. Poinsett. Reply to a British pamphlet, entitled 'Observations on the instructions given by the President of the United States of America to the representatives of that republic, at the Congress of Panama, in 1826, on the conduct of Mr. Poinsett, Minister of the United States at Mexico, and generally on our relations with Spanish America, with a copy of the instructions'* (Philadelphia, 1829), 3; Henry Clay, *The Life and Speeches of the Hon. Henry Clay*, ed. Daniel Mallory, 2 vols., 2nd, ed. (New York: R. P. Bixby & Co., 1843), 1:143; Henry Clay, *The Life and Speeches of Henry Clay*, ed. James B. Swain, 2 vols. (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1843), 1:142; Epes Sargent, *The Life and Public Services of Henry Clay*, New Ed. (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1844), 42.

American press was that it coincided with the reemergence of rival political factions throughout the country. As a result the pall of partisanship hung over Congress's proceedings, and while this certainly shaped the course of the debate, it has also tended, both in contemporary and historical accounts, to overshadow the legitimate principled differences that existed between John Quincy Adams and most of his opponents. Partisanship may have led to an exaggerated view of Adams's motives, but those congressmen who believed in Washington's Farewell Address as defined by "entangling alliances with none" were always going to have a problem with American participation at Panama. This debate ushered in the second American party system, but it was also the proverbial day of reckoning for these two increasingly divergent views of the Farewell Address and the fundamental principles of foreign policy.⁴⁴

The Panama Debate

Adams's message nominating Anderson and Sergeant was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and when it reported back on 16 January 1826 it did so in Executive Session, meaning that all proceedings were kept confidential and were not reported by the press. The committee, which was composed entirely of men who would ultimately align themselves with the opposition party and Andrew Jackson, issued an extended report condemning the mission for a variety of reasons, and a resolution declaring "that it is not

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the relationship between the Panama debate and the rise of the second party system, see Andrew R. L. Cayton, "The Debate Over the Panama Congress and the Origins of the Second American Party System," *Historian* 47 (Feb. 1985): 219-38.

expedient, at this time, for the United States to send any Ministers to the Congress of American nations, assembled at Panama.”⁴⁵ Rather than immediately take up the committee’s report, the Senate waited more than six weeks to begin the debate. The press took a keen interest in the Panama mission and many newspapers began speculating as to the cause of the delay in approving it. By the end of February, papers both in favor of and opposed to the mission began criticizing the Senate. *The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser* disclosed that “public opinion is strongly against the Senate for so long delaying to decide,” but cautioned patience in judging as it was “unwilling to believe that a majority or even one third of the senators would consent to unite in any improper opposition to any measure proposed by the executive.”⁴⁶ The *Richmond Enquirer* described the Panama question as “absolutely a mystery to us,” and expressed disbelief at reports that “the Senate have not even yet debated the expediency of the mission! They have not gone yet upon the merits of the question.”⁴⁷ The most pointed criticism appeared in the *Charleston Courier*, which described the American people as looking on “with astonishment at all this dumb shew, and marvels at its meaning, if meaning it have any.” It placed the fault for the delay at the feet of the Senate, concluding that “The majority of that body must be either for, or against the Panama Mission; and it shews a want of self confidence, as well as of courtesy, not to avow their decision. If the majority be in favor of the President’s

⁴⁵ 22 March 1826, in United States Congress, *The Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States, on the Subject of the Mission to the Congress at Panama, Together with the Messages and Documents Relating Thereto*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 68, 57-76.

⁴⁶ *The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 25 February 1826.

⁴⁷ *Richmond Enquirer*, 28 February 1826.

proposal, it will ‘*tell well* in history,’ that they allowed a worrying minority to defeat them, by protracting the discussion, until its object was unattainable.”⁴⁸

The *Courier*’s critique proved to be an accurate reflection of what actually took place.

Once the debate did commence in early March it turned into a far-ranging discussion of international commerce, religious freedom, slavery, and race, but at its core it revolved around the meanings of America’s principles of foreign policy, and specifically Washington’s Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine. The most consistent principled criticism of the mission’s opponents, despite President Adams’s repeated assurances to the contrary, was that it threatened American neutrality. Robert Hayne of South Carolina argued that sending ministers to the Congress of Panama would produce “an entire change of the neutral position which we have hitherto so happily occupied.” He asserted that the mission was part of a wider system of foreign policy being pursued by the Adams administration that was designed to entwine the United States in “entangling alliances,” and should the Senate vote to send ministers to Panama, it would “violate the maxim of the Father of his Country, which enjoins upon us, as the most sacred of duties, ‘to cultivate peace and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.’”⁴⁹ Hugh White of Tennessee echoed Hayne’s

⁴⁸ Emphasis in original. *Charleston Courier*, 15 March 1826. The mission was actually approved the day before this editorial appeared, but news of the debate’s conclusion would not reach South Carolina for several days.

⁴⁹ Robert Y. Hayne, March 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 153, 166, 175. Because Senate consideration of the Panama mission was carried out in Executive Session, the speeches were not inserted into the record on their original dates and instead were all listed as March 1826.

sentiments when he declared that “if this mission should be advised, a new era will have commenced in the history of our foreign relations. Have peace with, and good will towards, all Nations; entangling alliances with none – has been our cardinal principle in times past. It was recommended by the Father of our Country – repeated, and practiced upon by his *republican* successors.”⁵⁰ From the beginning it was clear that the debate over the Panama mission was actually a debate between those, like Hayne and White, who saw Washington’s Farewell for the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, and those, like Adams, who did not.

Senators opposed to U.S. involvement looked at the documents transmitted with Adams’s nominations and simply could not believe that it would be possible for the United States to participate at Panama without compromising its neutrality; the belligerent objectives of the other nations precluded it. Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire put this position into stark relief when he incredulously remarked, “I have been utterly astonished, that any gentleman could read these documents, and still contend that this was not a belligerent Congress. What! a Congress, originating with those engaged in war; confined for years, in its incipient stages, to those only who are engaged in war; to be convened within the territories of those engaged in war; and having for its main objects, as again and again repeated, the triumphant prosecution of that very war; and yet a Congress, in no degree belligerent, and perfectly safe for neutrals to unite in?”⁵¹ That Adams had specifically agreed to attend only to take part in discussions of a

⁵⁰ Emphasis in original. Hugh L. White, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵¹ Levi Woodbury, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 187.

nonbelligerent nature was an insufficient safeguard, as several senators argued that by virtue of their very presence at the congress the United States would assume a state of co-belligerency with the South American republics in the eyes of the world, if not in actual fact. White made the point that regardless of what actions the United States did or did not take, participation would permanently hinder U.S. relations with Spain. He argued that “if we send Ministers to this Congress of belligerents, we lose all influence with Spain. It is hardly possible that we could ever satisfy her that we were impartial in any question between her and her former colonies.”⁵² With one diplomatic mission, Adams could negate thirty years of foreign policy precedent and achievement.

Even if participation in and of itself would not technically violate American neutrality, the prospect of a mission was further complicated by Latin America’s interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine as a pledge of support in future wars. Historian Samuel Flagg Bemis estimated that the United States was approached about participating in the Congress of Panama in order to “convert the Monroe Doctrine into a conditional multilateral alliance among the states of the Western Hemisphere.”⁵³ While Adams had no intention of involving the United States in such an endeavor, and explicitly sought to use the congress as an opportunity to put the doctrine of two spheres to rest, the fears of many senators as to how participation would have been perceived in light of the Monroe Doctrine were quite legitimate. Hayne lamented that “the new States have

⁵² Hugh L. White, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 214.

⁵³ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Knopf, 1949; reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 548-49.

conceived themselves *entitled to our aid* whenever foreign interference shall be threatened,” while John Macpherson Berrien of Georgia argued that President Monroe “had no authority, by his own act alone, to pledge the United States to a foreign Power. He did not intend to do so. It was a mere declaration of the policy, which, under given circumstances, he believed it proper for the United States to pursue. It did not bind him. It did not bind Congress. [Congress] declined to respond to it. No foreign Power could demand the enforcement of it, because no foreign Power was party to it.”⁵⁴ White concluded that, regardless of Monroe’s intentions, “If we send Ministers . . . then, indeed, will the United States be *pledged*.”⁵⁵ Since the Latin American nations saw in the Monroe Doctrine a concrete pledge of support, attendance at the Panama Congress would only confirm its existence.

Even with regards to the non-colonization principle, the opposition denied the need for the Panama mission, largely because they misinterpreted – perhaps unintentionally, perhaps not – Adams’s aim in seeing it adopted internationally. White argued that “whenever we can feel the necessity for such a stipulation, to guard our Territory against the encroachments of European nations, then, indeed, . . . we are prepared for the vassal condition of colonies. If these new States set so little value upon independence, as to require such an agreement to stimulate them to exert their means to prevent colonies from being planted within their limits, then I shall conclude they are unfit for self-government, and that no agreement

⁵⁴ Emphasis in original. Robert Y. Hayne and John Macpherson Berrien, March 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 162, 284.

⁵⁵ Emphasis in original. Hugh L. White, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 201.

with them, upon any subject, can be of much utility to us.”⁵⁶ Mahlon Dickerson of New Jersey dismissed non-colonization entirely, concluding that “if the powers of Europe possess, by right, any portion of either of these continents, they may colonize such possessions, and this Government will not prevent them – the pledge of the late President to the contrary, notwithstanding.”⁵⁷ In the view of many, the non-colonization principle was a worthless international pursuit, and seeing it spread was certainly not worth the potential dangers associated with U.S. participation.

Despite their vigorous opposition, the mission’s opponents knew from the beginning that they likely did not have the votes necessary to actually block its passage. Thus they relied on introducing what historian Robert Remini described as a succession of “dilatatory motions” that brought the proceedings to a virtual halt and on giving speeches of “gargantuan length, all deliberately conceived to consume as much time as possible.”⁵⁸ If they could not prevent the mission, they would at least delay its approval. The awkward part of the debate was that while a majority of the Senate ultimately voted to ratify Adams’s nominations, it was not because they necessarily disagreed with some of the assessments of the opposition, but rather because they trusted Adams when he said that American neutrality was not at stake. By 14 March they had had enough of the delay and

⁵⁶ Hugh L. White, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁷ Mahlon Dickerson, March 1826, in *Ibid.*, 297.

⁵⁸ Remini, *Martin Van Buren*, 107; and Remini, *Henry Clay*, 292.

they voted down the Foreign Relations Committee's resolution and to confirm the appointments of Anderson, Sergeant, and Rochester.⁵⁹

In many ways the work of the Senate opposition only truly began once the mission was approved. In the days following the vote the Senate voted to remove the injunction of secrecy from their debates, meaning that they would be made publicly available. The official Legislative Journal only contained a limited amount of information – texts of motions and resolutions, votes, and the like – but not the bulk of the speeches, as these were typically recorded by newspaper reporters. Sensing a genuine rhetorical advantage in being able to marshal the Farewell Address and Washington's promise of "entangling alliances with none" in support of their cause, the mission's opponents saw to it that transcripts of their speeches were made available to Washington's leading newspapers, knowing that they would subsequently be reprinted throughout the country. Many of these speeches, primarily by the mission's opponents, were also quickly published and distributed in pamphlet form as well.⁶⁰ Regardless of the outcome of the debate, they aimed to shape public opinion of the mission by ensuring that their arguments reached more people than did those of the mission's supporters. Even the opposition press used passage of the mission in the Senate as an opportunity to once again criticize it. The *Richmond Enquirer*, for example, remarked that "Whatever may be the diversity of our feelings on the subject of comparative

⁵⁹ The resolution was defeated by a vote of 19 to 24; the nominations of Anderson, Sergeant, and Anderson were approved by votes of 27-17, 26-18, and 28-16, respectively. *Executive Proceedings of the Senate*, 100-103.

⁶⁰ At least eleven speeches were printed as pamphlets, and seven of those were by the mission's opponents.

merits . . . there is but one pervading maxim of foreign policy, ‘peace, friendship, and commerce, with all nations, entangling alliances with *none*.’ The ordinary mode of diplomatic intercourse, has been found all sufficient to secure us the full benefit of this policy. The proposed Congress, if conformable to it, is unnecessary; if opposed to it, ought not, and I am sure will not, be sanctioned by the people.”⁶¹

In Congress, approval of the nominations was only the first hurdle for Adams as he still needed to secure passage of an appropriations bill through both houses of Congress in order to fund the mission. The day after the Senate completed its work, Adams transmitted a lengthy message to the House advocating for the utility of the mission and the allocation of the funds necessary to support it. Samuel Flagg Bemis described this message as “one of the most important papers of [Adams’s] diplomatic career,” to which “he summoned all the powers of rhetoric, all the weight of his experience.”⁶² While Adams sought to remind the House that the Congress of Panama was “in its nature diplomatic and not legislative,” and that its decisions were non-binding unless ratified by the U.S. Congress, his central concern was explaining the relationship of the congress to Washington’s Farewell Address.⁶³ This message put forward the clearest explication of Adams’s expanded view of the Farewell, a view unclouded by Thomas Jefferson’s “entangling alliances with none.”

⁶¹ Emphasis in original. “Panama Mission – Creek Treaty,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 17 March 1826.

⁶² Bemis, *Foundations*, 554.

⁶³ John Quincy Adams, “Special Message,” 15 March 1826, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:336.

Adams began by reassuring the House – and by extension the American people – that he was “mindful of the advice given by the father of our country in his Farewell Address, that the great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible.” At the same time, he also readily understood that “like all the counsels of wisdom, [the Farewell] was founded upon the circumstances in which our country and the world around us were situated at the time when it was given,” specifically a world dominated by European powers and European colonies. In such a world, Washington’s warnings that “Europe had a set of primary interests, which to us had none, or very remote relation,” and that “our *detached* and *distant* situation, invited and enabled us to pursue a different course,” were both wise and necessary. Adams asked the House to “Compare our situation and the circumstances of that time with those of the present day. . . . Europe has still her set of primary interests with which we have little or a remote relation. Our distant and detached situation with reference to Europe remains the same.” Much had changed since 1796, though, as “we were then the only independent nation of this hemisphere, and we were surrounded by European colonies, with the greater part of which we had no more intercourse than with the inhabitants of another planet.” Thirty years later that was no longer the case, as “Those colonies have now been transformed into eight independent nations, extending to our very borders, seven of them Republics like ourselves, with whom we have an immensely growing commercial, and *must* have and have already

important political, connections; with reference to whom our situation is neither distant nor detached; whose political principles and systems of government, congenial with our own, must and will have an action and counteraction upon us and ours to which we can not be indifferent if we would.” This was why Adams had articulated the Monroe Doctrine as an expansion of Washington’s principles and this was why he wanted to see those principles spread and adopted throughout Latin America.⁶⁴

Adams concluded that if Washington had written his Farewell in 1826 instead of 1796 he would have asserted “that *America* has a set of primary interests which have none or a remote relation to Europe,” and that economically, geographically, and ideologically it was in the best interests of the United States to not isolate itself from its American neighbors. As a result, “the acceptance of this invitation, . . . far from conflicting with the counsel or the policy of Washington, is directly deducible from and conformable to it.”⁶⁵ This was a masterful explanation of how Washington’s principles should best be understood and applied in a world fundamentally different from the one the Father of his Country had inhabited three decades earlier. At the same time, Adams’s logic flew in the face of those who understood the Farewell Address as meaning “entangling alliances with none,” because for those people the existence of a free Latin America did not necessitate a new foreign policy or the abandonment of Washington’s wisdom. The United States had grown and prospered due to a strict

⁶⁴ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 337-38.

⁶⁵ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*

adherence to this maxim and there was no compelling reason to move away from it.

Adams's message struck a chord with many Americans. One correspondent wrote to Adams that it had "wrought wonders in disabusing mens [*sic*] minds here and it would seem like flattery to say how strong a feeling of admiration is expressed even from lips of political indifference."⁶⁶ Former president Thomas Jefferson, Massachusetts Governor Levi Lincoln, and former secretary of state and U.S. senator Timothy Pickering also wrote approvingly of the message.⁶⁷ As could be expected, the increasingly partisan press took a varied view. *The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser* viewed the message as throwing "the opposition in the Senate far in the back ground, and proves it to have been an opposition to persons not to measures, an opposition becoming partizans better than patriots, and highly to be censured in the present instance, as having no perceivable good object in view."⁶⁸ *The Charleston Courier* declared

⁶⁶ Letter to John Quincy Adams, author unknown, 21 March 1826 (Reel 475), Adams Family Papers Microfilm.

⁶⁷ Thomas Jefferson to John Quincy Adams, 30 March 1826; and Levi Lincoln to John Quincy Adams, 30 March 1826, in *Ibid.*; Timothy Pickering to Elijah H. Mills, 15 April 1826 (Reel 16, Page 118), Timothy Pickering Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Richard C. Anderson, the U.S. minister to Colombia and to the Panama Congress, described the message in his diary as "able & elegant – but I have always thought that there was too much prettiness, or floridness as you may call it in his composition for grave state papers. He gives an instance of a man cold, almost icy in his appearance & social intercourse whose writings are marked by fervour & fire." Further south, the U.S. minister in Buenos Aires described it as "so lucid an exposition of American policy and of such transcendant [*sic*] interest to all the new States, that I have put it into the hands of an able translator and shall immediately have it printed in a handsome manner on a separate sheet to be circulated in such manner as many produce the most extensive and beneficial influence." 23 May 1826, in Anderson, *The Diary and Journal of Richard Clough Anderson, Jr.*, 256; J. M. Forbes to John Quincy Adams, 22 June and 2 July 1826 (Reel 476), Adams Family Papers Microfilm.

⁶⁸ "Panama Question – President's Message," *The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 20 March 1826.

that the message did “not contain a sentiment to which an unprejudiced American would not, with his whole heart respond.”⁶⁹ Taking an entirely different view, the *Richmond Enquirer* asserted that the message had done nothing “to shake the objections which we took in October last to such a Mission,” and still contended that there “were no urgent considerations for us to join it, and impelling us to depart from the sound maxims of two of the soundest men who have ever sat in the Presidential Chair: Washington and Jefferson.” While the *Enquirer* refused to see the logic of Adams’s message, it was at least one of the few commentators to denote Jefferson as the author of “entangling alliances with none.”⁷⁰

Such newspaper coverage throughout February and March, and even as it further devolved in April, highlights the precarious relationship between the press and the burgeoning political parties in this period. At stake in the debate over the Panama mission was more than just the fate of a diplomatic appointment but also the legacies and future meanings of Washington’s Farewell Address and Monroe’s Doctrine, as each side, while operating under a developing partisan framework, was also advancing highly principled arguments in support of their cause. In the press these principled differences were usually dismissed as being nothing more than partisan differences. In early April the *Charleston Mercury* predicted that the Panama mission would not receive its appropriation and that it was becoming generally an unpopular subject throughout the city. The *Courier*, a newspaper generally supportive of Adams, was highly skeptical of the *Mercury*’s

⁶⁹ “The President’s Message,” *Charleston Courier*, 27 March 1826.

⁷⁰ “The Panama Mission,” *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 March 1826.

coverage, declaring instead that “The Messages of the President to both Houses of Congress . . . have placed the propriety and necessity of this measure in so clear a point of view, that there are few who do not approve it, excepting those who are determined to oppose the administration, right or wrong.”⁷¹ Both newspapers were attempting to sway the city’s readers to their view of the mission, with little regard for the legitimate and differing interpretations that each side was advancing.

Back in Congress, the House Committee of Ways and Means reported a bill on 25 March “making appropriations for carrying into effect the appointment of a mission at the Congress of Panama.”⁷² The Committee of Foreign Relations also issued its own report and resolution likewise approving of the mission.⁷³ The House would not consider either measure until 3 April, at which time it took up the Foreign Relations resolution over the objections of those who argued that it was the duty of the House to immediately consider the Ways and Means appropriation; however, considering the Foreign Relations resolution allowed for a wider-ranging debate of the issues at stake in the Panama mission.

A vocal minority in the House were unwilling to accept Adams’s assurances that the mission would not violate U.S. neutrality or threaten American principles. The vast majority of the House debate on the Foreign Relations resolution centered not on the resolution itself, but on two proposed amendments

⁷¹ *Charleston Courier*, 8 April 1826.

⁷² 17 March 1826, in United States Congress, *Message From the President of the United States, Upon the Subject of an Appropriation to Carry Into Effect a Mission to Panama*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 162; and 25 March 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 1764.

⁷³ 25 March 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 1765.

to it, both of which sought to limit the scope of the ministers' actions and authority at Panama. The first amendment, introduced on 3 April by Louis McLane of Delaware, sought to explicitly tie approval of the mission to both the Jeffersonian reconceptualization of Washington's Farewell Address and a rejection of the internationalization of the non-colonization principle. It was "the opinion of this House," the amendment stated, that it had "always been the settled policy of this Government, in extending our commercial relations with foreign nations, to have with them as little political connection as possible; to preserve peace, commerce, and friendship, with all nations, and to form entangling alliances with none." As a result, the ministers to Panama "ought not to be authorized to discuss, consider, or consult, upon any proposition of alliance, offensive or defensive, between this country and any of the South American Governments, or any stipulation, compact, or declaration, binding the United States in any way, or to any extent, to resist interference from abroad with domestic concerns of the aforesaid Governments." Furthermore, they should be prohibited from pursuing any "measure which shall commit the present or future neutral rights or duties of these United States, either as may regard European nations, or between the several States of Mexico and South America."⁷⁴

More interesting than the amendment itself was how McLane justified it. In structuring it he had "endeavored . . . to embrace all those principles which had characterized the policy of the United States from our earliest history" in hopes to "preserve that policy unimpaired." As he saw it, "this House cannot vote the

⁷⁴ Louis McLane, 3 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2009.

resolution recommended by the committee [of Foreign Relations], apart from some expression of its opinion, without committing itself to the doctrine, that a different line of policy is to be observed towards the New, from that which we have hitherto observed towards the Old World.”⁷⁵ Adams would not necessarily have disagreed with McLane on this point; he *was* urging a new course of policy towards the New World from that followed towards the Old. What McLane failed to grasp, though, was that by Adams’s calculus, both lines of policy were dictated by the original policies and precepts laid out by Washington. In that respect, while the mission to Panama did represent a new line of policy towards the independent nations of the New World, it did not represent a change in the fundamental principles underlying American foreign policy. From McLane’s perspective, what applied to Europe in 1796 applied to Latin America in 1826; the meaning of “entangling alliances with none” remained unchanged.

William C. Rives of Virginia felt that McLane’s amendment did not go far enough in placing limits on the mission. He proposed the insertion of an additional clause that sought to prevent “any compact or engagement by which the United States shall be *pledged* to the Spanish American States to maintain, by force, the principle that no part of the American continents is henceforward subject to colonization by any European Power.”⁷⁶ This issue of the Monroe Doctrine as a pledge became a central question in the House debate. Charles Wickliffe of Kentucky asserted that it was “not until after the message of

⁷⁵ Louis McLane, 4 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2011, 2020.

⁷⁶ Emphasis in original. William C. Rives, 5 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2059-60.

President Monroe, of 1823, had superinduced the belief, in some of these Republics [of Latin America], that the United States had ‘pledged themselves . . .’ do we hear of any determination, officially, to invite us to take part . . . in the deliberations of this Congress.”⁷⁷ Wickliffe was not alone in believing that the United States owed to the Monroe Doctrine its invitation to Panama. John Carter of South Carolina raised the issue when he stated that “without pretending to say, or know, what the exact meaning of [Monroe’s] declaration was, I think very little doubt can be entertained but that we owe the invitation we have received to send Ministers to Panama, to nothing else.”⁷⁸ John Forsyth of Georgia was especially critical of the mission in light of the Latin American perception of the Monroe Doctrine. He believed that the purpose of U.S. involvement in the Congress of Panama was “to concert means of resisting European interference; these being considered as the principles of Mr. Monroe’s message, that we have been invited, and have consented to go to Panama. We go not to undeceive them; not to explain to them their mistake, in supposing us pledged to any efforts for the defence of their rights; but to discuss the question of means, as if the pledge existed in full force.”⁷⁹ Clearly Forsyth did not put any faith in Adams’s assurances that the United States was not going to Panama to participate in discussions of a belligerent nature.

James Buchanan of Pennsylvania and James Hamilton of South Carolina were especially critical of the administration’s handling of the Latin American

⁷⁷ Charles A. Wickliffe, 5 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2034.

⁷⁸ John Carter, 15 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2283-84.

⁷⁹ John Forsyth, 17 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2322.

nations' mistaken belief in a pledge. They both pointed to examples in the diplomatic correspondence provided to the House of U.S. foreign ministers explicitly referring to a pledge by Monroe, and asserted that their actions represented a conscious and intentional change of the established foreign policy of the United States by John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay. Buchanan argued that the Monroe Doctrine "contained no pledge to any foreign Government. It left us perfectly free: but it has since been converted into such pledge by the present Administration."⁸⁰ Hamilton believed that the "basis of our negotiations with the South American Republics" had been "this declaration of Mr. Monroe (which has been most unjustifiably termed by the administration a pledge, and, by their subsequent commentaries on it, converted into one)."⁸¹ Buchanan and Hamilton went further than anyone else in accusing the administration of intentionally fostering the Latin American belief in a pledge and, as a result, perverting the long-standing principles of U.S. foreign policy.

Several representatives took the opposite view of the Monroe Doctrine altogether and conceded that, while it may have constituted a pledge at the time that it was enunciated, it no longer stood as such by 1826. Edward Livingston of Louisiana looked to the Doctrine as a pledge: "A pledge, not to ourselves or to posterity . . . but a pledge to the world, that we would interfere, according to our means, to resist [European] interference." The key, though, was that such a pledge "related only to the state of things that then existed. . . . The circumstances

⁸⁰ James Buchanan, 11 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2172.

⁸¹ James Hamilton, 10 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2146.

under which the declaration was made, have passed away; they are not likely again to recur; but, I should wish all Europe to understand, that if they should, our conduct would redeem the pledge our Executive then made.”⁸² In many ways this was the exact view taken by the administration. Adams likely never would have termed the Doctrine a pledge, but the idea of its conditionality was reiterated multiple times, most notably in Clay’s Panama instructions.

The existence of such varying perspectives begged the question, if the Monroe Doctrine’s purpose had been served by 1826 – at least in terms of the doctrine of two spheres and the threat of European intervention in Spanish America – was it still pertinent? Could it still represent an important declaration of U.S. foreign policy principles if it was no longer applicable to the existing global context? John Forsyth of Georgia and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts believed that it could and did. Forsyth argued that “the law of self-defense requires us to act, whenever any combination of Powers – Asiatic, African, European, or American – interferes with the domestic concerns of the American States. This was all that was rightfully asserted by the message of 1823.”⁸³ Pledge or no pledge, Monroe’s message was founded on the basic principles of a nation’s right to defend itself against foreign interference. This idea was just as true in 1826 as it had been in 1823, and as it had been in 1796 when Washington warned of its dangers in the Farewell Address.

⁸² Edward Livingston, 12 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2211-12.

⁸³ John Forsyth, 17 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2321.

Webster echoed these sentiments in proclaiming that Monroe's "declaration must be considered as founded on our rights, and to spring mainly from a regard to their preservation." He never believed that the Doctrine had constituted a pledge, as "it did not commit us, at all events, to take up arms on any indication of hostile feeling by the powers of Europe towards South America." Instead, Monroe's declaration was important because it was a statement of American rights and American principles, rights and principles that were hailed when they were announced but were under attack in 1826. Webster looked upon the Monroe Doctrine "as forming a bright page in our history," but questioned "how should it happen . . . that there should now be such a new-born fear, on the subject of this declaration? The crisis is over; the danger is past. . . . Most of the gentlemen who have now spoken on this subject, were at that time here [in Congress]. They all heard the declaration. Not one of them complained. And yet, now when all danger is over, we are vehemently warned against the sentiments of the declaration."⁸⁴ Webster's understanding of the Doctrine's contemporary meanings and importance was founded both on the idea that President Adams had not and would not pervert its meanings, and independently of its interpretation as a pledge in Latin America, two points which the opposition was clearly, and on the latter point understandably, unwilling to concede.

For Adams, the Monroe Doctrine was still pertinent and important, if not because of the declaration of rights and principles contained within the doctrine of two spheres, then at least because of the non-colonization principle. Despite the

⁸⁴ Daniel Webster, 14 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2269-70.

importance Adams placed on it, many congressmen felt that it would be a worthless exercise to advance such a principle abroad. Charles Wickliffe, for one, wondered why the United States should “be called upon to stipulate by treaty that we will not suffer our own soil to be invaded; to be occupied by an European Power; to be colonized? We need no paper stipulations upon such a subject. We have a stronger guarantee than all the parchment the South can give us: it is that devotion to liberty and self government which is felt and seen by our citizens. For the honor and character of my country, I would not enter into such a stipulation with any Power.”⁸⁵ Louis McLane expressed a similar sentiment when he argued that “any stipulation, or any treaty, on the subject of a resistance to colonization, or of interference, by European Powers, with the Independence of the South American States, [is] utterly incompatible with the settled policy of this Government.” He argued that no nation could ever “negotiate about its own policy or attitude towards foreign nations. . . . It consults its own honor and interests, and the happiness of its citizens; and when it has decided on its course, it is its duty to announce its policy to the world – not to negotiate about it.” In the case of the United States, “it is the duty of the Executive to say to all People that our policy is pacific – it is neutral – it is to steer clear of the difficulties and quarrels of other People, and not to negotiate with any body whether we shall commit ourselves to their destiny.”⁸⁶ Wickliffe and McLane believed that entering into agreements based on the non-colonization principle would not

⁸⁵ Charles A. Wickliffe, 5 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2045.

⁸⁶ Louis McLane, 4 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2015-16.

strengthen the ability of the United States to defend itself against foreign interference and would likely only serve to weaken it by binding the U.S. to defend other nations' sovereignty. They were arguing against a different object than Adams was proposing, though. He did not seek the aid of other nations in defending the territorial integrity of the United States, nor did he intend to bind the nation to militarily defend the principle abroad. He simply wanted the Latin American nations to adopt the principle for themselves and to declare it to the world as the United States had in 1823.

Several representatives did understand and agree with this position. John Wurts of Pennsylvania felt that the arguments advanced by men like Wickliffe and McLane were “not treating the question fairly. It is not proposed to go abroad to gather strength, or create inducements to defend our own soil. The colonization of any part of the continent of North America, within our territorial limits, by any Government, never will be permitted, so long as this Republic retains the power to prevent it. The stipulation, therefore, would bind us to no course other than that to which our feelings and our policy would prompt us, independent of it.” Rather, pursuing the non-colonization principle abroad “would be the mean by which we should obtain the security, so far as international stipulations can give it, that no part of the territorial dominion of the Southern Republics should pass, by cession or otherwise, to European Powers, who might prove to be troublesome and mischievous neighbors to both of us.”⁸⁷ Daniel Webster similarly stressed that such agreements with the South American

⁸⁷ John Wurts, 11 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2189.

republics could not impact America's ability to defend the non-colonization principle at home. Instead, he argued, it would behoove the United States to encourage these new nations to "settle it, as part of their policy, not to allow colonization within their respective territories," because it would provide for domestic security, and help to protect American commerce with these nations.⁸⁸

These discussions of the Monroe Doctrine as a past and future pledge, as defending national interests and rights, and as advancing a useful or useless non-colonization principle, revealed a great deal about the short-term legacy of the Monroe Doctrine. It was generally believed that the Doctrine had been an appropriate response to the threat of European intervention in 1823, but by 1826 many felt that the Doctrine had served its purpose and now belonged to the annals of history. There still were those who saw the Doctrine as of perpetual importance as a statement of American principles and as an assertion of American rights, but very few saw it as an essential component of American foreign policy thought moving forward. If anything, many saw it as endangering those truly important American principles enunciated by Washington in 1796."

For most involved in this debate over a U.S. mission to the Congress of Panama, the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine was intimately connected with but also of secondary importance to the legacy and meaning of Washington's Farewell Address. In the Senate an overarching contention of the mission's opponents was that it contradicted Washington's wisdom, and such arguments carried over into the House. "A crisis has now arrived," James Buchanan

⁸⁸ Daniel Webster, 14 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2271.

declared, “in which it is the duty of this House to take a firm stand in favor of the ancient and the approved policy of the country. We should proclaim to the world, that it is our determination ‘to preserve peace, commerce, and friendship, with all nations, and to form entangling alliances with none.’”⁸⁹ James Hamilton similarly feared that Adams was attempting to pervert “the spirit and meaning of the advice of Washington.” He described the Farewell as the “warnings of a parting friend. Posterity has the reversionary interest; and it is not the sophistry of Mr. Adams that can deprive our children of the full benefit of this long enduring legacy. Founded on the then and ever enduring circumstances of our country, were these counsels. Sir, they rest permanently on our immutable condition, as a federative Republic.”⁹⁰ Contrary to Adams, who argued that foreign policy had to be a reflection of America’s evolving relationship with the rest of the world and founded on U.S. interests, Hamilton believed that the nation’s approach was permanently established by its form of government. Charles Wickliffe similarly declared, “There are certain great principles which never change; and among them I recognize those prescribed by the Father of his Country, in his Farewell Address to his beloved People, as the rule of our conduct with and toward foreign nations.”⁹¹ These men all firmly believed that as long as the United States endured, so too should Washington’s principles.

Such professions of loyalty to Washington’s Farewell Address were not simply political posturing in the course of the debate either, as similar sentiments

⁸⁹ James Buchanan, 11 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2172.

⁹⁰ James Hamilton, 10 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2158, 2160.

⁹¹ Charles A. Wickliffe, 6 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2085-86.

appeared in the private correspondence of many of those involved in the debate both in and out of Congress. Andrew Jackson, for one, believed that even if they “let the primary interests of Europe be what they may, or let our situation vary as far as you please from that which we occupied when the immortal Washington retired from the councils of his country, I cannot see, for my part how it follows that the primary interests of the United States will be safer in the hands of others, than in her own.” Regardless of a changing global context, he did not understand how it could “ever become necessary to form entangling alliances, or any connection with the governments of South America. . . . The doctrine of Washington is as applicable to the present as to the then primary interests of Europe, so far as our own peace and happiness are concerned, and I have no hesitation in saying so far as the true interests of South America are concerned.” Letting his personal dislike of Adams show through, he argued that “to abandon a policy so wise in itself, and so beneficial an experiment to our country displays a weakness of wickedness not paralleled [*sic*] in the history of any country. It is a bold game of ambition, that puts at once to hazzard [*sic*] our peace, our happiness, and for what is known may lead to the destruction of our liberty at last.” The key to Jackson’s understanding – and of all the mission’s opponents, for that matter – was his assertion that all of this was risked “without the least apparent cause for a departure from that wise policy recommended by Washington, ‘peace with all nations entangling alliances with none.’” Jackson and his supporters rejected Adams’s contention in his 15 March message to the House that his expansion of

the Farewell Address flowed naturally from Washington's original maxims, instead seeing it for the rigid and unwavering Jeffersonian reconceptualization.⁹²

All of the bitterness over the true meanings of Washington's Farewell Address aside, at the root of these debates still rested the amendments of McLane and Rives. The central purpose of these proposed amendments was to force President Adams and his ministers at Panama to conform to America's fundamental principles of foreign policy, as defined by the mission's opponents. Many in the House purported to believe in the spirit of these amendments but not in the power of the House to actually pass them, as constitutionally it had no purview over foreign relations and thus could not instruct the ministers how to conduct themselves at Panama. On 18 April James Buchanan proposed another amendment designed to "test the sincerity of those gentlemen who had declared, that their only objection to the amendments now before the committee, was, that they contained an instruction from this House to the Ministers which would be sent to Panama." The amendment stated that the House of Representatives, in approving of the mission, "Do not intend to sanction any departure from the settled policy of this Government, that, in extending our commercial relations with foreign nations, we should have with them as little political connexion as possible; and that we should preserve peace, commerce, and friendship, with all nations, and form entangling alliances with none." Based on this view of

⁹² Andrew Jackson to James Buchanan, 8 April 1826, in Andrew Jackson, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, ed. John Spencer Bassett, 7 vol. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926-35), 3:300; and Andrew Jackson to James K. Polk, 3 May 1826, in James K. Polk, *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, ed. Herbert Weaver, 11 vols. to date (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969-), 1:39-40.

America's "settled policy," the "Government of the United States ought not to be represented at the Congress of Panama, except in a diplomatic character, nor ought they to form any alliance, with all or any of the Spanish American Republics; nor ought they to become parties with them, or either of them, to any joint declaration for the purpose of preventing the interference of any of the European Powers with their independence or form of Government, or to any compact for the purpose of preventing colonization upon the continent of America." Instead, "the People of the United States should be left free to act, in any crisis, in such a manner as their feelings of friendship towards these Republics, and as their own honor and policy may at the time dictate."⁹³

Buchanan maintained the spirit of the previous amendments, but reframed them as clearly expressing the opinion of the House rather than a direct instruction.

McLane accepted Buchanan's amendment, and Rives withdrew his entirely, believing that it was no longer necessary.⁹⁴

On 20 April voting on the Panama mission commenced in the House. The first vote was on the Buchanan/McLane amendment, and the result could not have been closer, as it was defeated by just one vote.⁹⁵ A vote was then taken on McLane's original amendment, which narrowly passed by four votes.⁹⁶ The following day the amended resolution of the Committee of Foreign Affairs was

⁹³ James Buchanan, 18 April 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 2368-69.

⁹⁴ Louis McLane, and William C. Rives, 18 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2369.

⁹⁵ The vote was 93 to 94. 20 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2453. The House records fail to list the individual votes on the Buchanan/McLane amendment, making it impossible to compare the votes on that measure with any subsequent votes.

⁹⁶ The vote was 99 to 95, in *Ibid.*, 2457. While the final tally states that 95 representatives voted against McLane's amendment, the *Register of Debates* lists only 94 names as voting nay.

handily voted down by an almost three-to-one margin. The House immediately moved to consider the bill of the Committee of Ways and Means, and after minimal debate overwhelmingly approved the funding for the mission to Panama.⁹⁷

In the Senate, the Committee of Finance reported the House appropriation without amendment. In a last attempt by the Senate's opponents of the mission to put some form of limitation, even if non-binding, on the prerogatives of the president and the ministers in carrying out their diplomatic duties at Panama, John Macpherson Berrien offered what was essentially the Buchanan amendment to the House Foreign Relations resolution as an amendment to the appropriation bill.⁹⁸ The irony of this amendment was that it was originally introduced in the House to assuage the reservations of those representatives who felt that the House could not issue instructions to the president on diplomatic matters. If it was successfully attached to the appropriation bill and passed in the Senate, it would then be returned to the House, where, if approved, it would embody the very reservations it was designed to relieve: the House would be giving diplomatic instructions to

⁹⁷ The votes were 54 to 143, and 134 to 60. 21 and 22 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2490, 2514. At first glance it is not immediately apparent why 99 representatives voted in favor of amending the Foreign Relations resolution (McLane's amendment), yet the next day only 54 voted to pass the amended resolution. A close examination of the votes reveals an interesting pattern. Of the 99 representatives to vote in favor of McLane's amendment, 50 voted in favor of the amended resolution and 49 voted against it. Of the 50 who voted for the amended resolution, 43 also voted for the appropriation bill; however, of the 49 who voted against the amended resolution, every single one who cast a vote voted against the appropriation bill (one representative, James Hamilton of South Carolina, did not cast a vote on the appropriation bill). It seems clear that this second group favored placing limitations on the scope of the mission's authority but also refused to sanction the mission by actually voting in favor of the amended resolution or the appropriation. On the other side, 87 representatives could be said to have voted the Adams line, voting against McLane's amendment, against the amended resolution, and for the appropriation bill. Voting data taken from 20-22 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 2457, 2490, 2514.

⁹⁸ John Macpherson Berrien, 27 April 1826, in *Ibid.*, 641-42.

the president. Such potential complications proved to be moot, though, as the amendment was rejected with 19 in favor to 24 opposed.⁹⁹ The unamended appropriation bill was passed the following day by a vote of 23 to 19; after nearly five months of delay and debate, the mission to the Congress of Panama was finally approved.¹⁰⁰

The Congress of Panama and a Legacy of Failure

Despite months of intense coverage of the Panama debate, final passage of the mission received little extended attention in the press. This proved just as well for Adams and Clay, as the Congress of Panama was a complete failure, especially from the U.S. perspective. As demonstrated in Clay's instructions to Anderson and Sergeant, the president and secretary of state still had ambitious hopes for what could be achieved, for the influence the United States could exert over Latin America. It was an opportunity to not only form agreements with the young nations of Latin America that would benefit U.S. commerce and security, but also to see American foreign policy principles adopted and individually defended throughout the western hemisphere. This congress was to be the venue in which Washington's Farewell Address would be asserted to protect both American continents from European interference. The problem for the United States was that their ministers never made it to Panama. The delayed approval of the mission meant that travel to Panama would commence at the height of the

⁹⁹ 2 May 1826, in *Ibid.*, 667.

¹⁰⁰ 3 May 1826, in *Ibid.*, 671. As could be expected, every person who voted in favor of the Buchanan/Berrien amendment voted against the appropriation bill.

summer disease season. John Sergeant notified Clay in early May that he was unwilling to take his life in his hands and that he would not depart until later in the year.¹⁰¹ Richard C. Anderson, stationed in Colombia, did not learn that he was to set out for Panama until early June, and was not finally prepared to leave until just three days before the congress assembled. More than a month later, after the congress had already adjourned, Anderson took ill and died, never having made it to Panama.¹⁰²

The congress assembled 15 June 1826 and was attended by just four countries: Colombia, Peru, Central America, and Mexico. Lasting one month, the delegates produced five agreements that were to be ratified by their respective governments before the congress was to reassemble at Tacubaya, Mexico early the next year.¹⁰³ Despite their setbacks, Adams and Clay continued to press for the utility of the mission and its continuance. In his second annual message to Congress, Adams stated that the course of events to that point had only “confirmed me in the conviction of the expediency to the United States of being represented at the congress.”¹⁰⁴ In early 1827 he nominated Joel R. Poinsett of South Carolina, the U.S. minister to Mexico, to take Anderson’s place on the mission.¹⁰⁵ By March it seemed increasingly likely that the congress would never

¹⁰¹ John Sergeant to Henry Clay, 8 May 1826, in Clay, *Papers*, 5:346.

¹⁰² Anderson died on 24 July. Diary entries for June and July 1826, in Anderson, *The Diary and Journal of Richard Clough Anderson, Jr.*, 262-72; John M. MacPherson to Henry Clay, 26 July 1826, in Clay, *Papers*, 5:572.

¹⁰³ José Maria Salazar to Henry Clay, 20 November 1826, in *Ibid.*, 939-40.

¹⁰⁴ John Quincy Adams, “Second Annual Message,” 5 December 1826, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:356.

¹⁰⁵ As a further demonstration of his continued high expectations for the Panama mission, before nominating Poinsett Adams asked former president James Monroe if he would be willing to act as

reassemble, but Clay still urged Sergeant and Poinsett that “the objects, which are contemplated by your instructions, are so highly important, that the President thinks their accomplishment ought not to be abandoned whilst any hope remains.”¹⁰⁶ In the end, the agreements passed at Panama were not ratified by the participating nations, governments refused to appoint ministers to attend at Tacubaya, and Bolivar himself abandoned the congress in favor of a different plan of Latin American unification and self-aggrandizement.¹⁰⁷ By the end of 1827, Adams had to regretfully inform Congress that “the treaties concluded at Panama do not appear to have been ratified by the contracting parties, and that the meeting of the congress at Tacubaya has been indefinitely postponed.”¹⁰⁸ For Adams, the internal divisions in Latin America that had caused the congress to fall apart only reinforced how important the ideas and ideals he had hoped to inculcate truly would have been to the long-term stability of the American continents. For the opposition, it validated how right they were to oppose it, and bolstered the sense

one of the ministers. Monroe declined, and Poinsett was chosen instead. John Quincy Adams to James Monroe, 21 October 1826 (Reel 148), Adams Family Papers Microfilm. The mission’s opponents resisted appointing Poinsett in Anderson’s stead. 12 and 14 February 1827, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 2nd sess., 334-5 and 1161-76.

¹⁰⁶ Henry Clay to John Sergeant and Joel R. Poinsett, 16 March 1827, *Papers*, 6:312.

¹⁰⁷ Sergeant arrived in Tacubaya on 9 January 1827 to find only three other delegates present, and that none of the treaties drafted at Panama had been ratified. By the end of February, as he was still waiting for all of the delegates to arrive and for the congress to resume, he wrote to Clay suggesting the possibility of its “total failure.” As more time passed, everyone seemed to understand that the congress was never going to reassemble, but no formal action was ever taken by those ministers present to formally adjourn. On 28 July 1828, more than a year-and-a-half after the congress was supposed to open at Tacubaya, Poinsett relayed to Clay his unsuccessful efforts to officially adjourn the Panama Congress. John Sergeant to Henry Clay, 17 January 1827, 24 February 1827, and 10 May 1827 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M662, roll 1); Records of the Department of State Relating to the First Panama Congress, 1825-27; Records of United States Participation in International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Record Group 43; Joel R. Poinsett to Henry Clay, 23 July 1828, in Clay, *Papers*, 7:396.

¹⁰⁸ John Quincy Adams, “Third Annual Message,” 4 December 1827, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:384.

of success they felt over effectively preventing U.S. participation in the first place.

The great irony of the congressional debate on the U.S. mission to Panama was that, technically speaking, Adams was the victor in his showdown with Congress – the mission was approved and all attempts to limit its scope was defeated. Yet because the congress itself was futile and American participation amounted to nothing, the historical memory of the debate quickly became the failure of Adams and the victory of the opposition. More importantly, though, it became the story of the failure of Adams to abandon Washington’s Farewell Address and extend the Monroe Doctrine, and the victory of the opposition in ensuring America’s adherence to Washington’s wisdom. The project began by those senators who ensured the publication of their speeches was continued the following year by congressmen who reminded their constituents what had been at stake. Such letters were epitomized by that of James K. Polk of Tennessee who presented the mission as having been a departure from the nation’s traditional principles. “From the commencement of the Government down to that period,” he argued, “our policy in relation to foreign Nations, had been distinctly marked and was well understood. ‘A strict neutrality,’ ‘friendship with all Nations, but entangling alliances with none,’ were our mottos.” The proposed congress, “whose powers were undefined & whose secret objects were enveloped in darkness and uncertainty,” had to be opposed. “The United States had nothing to gain” by participating, “but much to lose, by becoming members of such an

extraordinary Assembly. I was not prepared to say that the policy laid down by Washington, and steadily pursued by his republican successors, a policy under which the Country had been prosperous and happy, should be abandoned for untried and hazardous experiments.”¹⁰⁹

At the close of Adams’s presidency, when an attempt was made by those supporters of the mission who still had positions in Congress to see Adams’s and Clay’s instructions to Anderson and Sergeant published, the force of this historical memory was made especially clear. Robert Hayne dismissed this renewed attempt “to convince the people that the minority was right and the majority wrong.”¹¹⁰ John Macpherson Berrien refused “to revive the discussion of a transaction, which was a political experiment in its origin – a political abortion in its result; which agitated the public mind in its progress; and of which the consummation may be sought in the decisive judgment pronounced by the American people on the project and its projectors.”¹¹¹ While the instructions were ultimately published they received little national attention beyond Adams’s most ardent defenders.¹¹² For most Americans the Panama Congress was best left in the past.

¹⁰⁹ James K. Polk, Tennessee, 4 March 1827, in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 3:1383-84.

¹¹⁰ Robert Y. Hayne, 3 March 1829, in *Register of Debates*, 20th Cong., 2nd sess., 77-78.

¹¹¹ John Macpherson Berrien, 28 February 1829, in *Ibid.*, 69.

¹¹² Perhaps the most interesting response to the publication of the Panama instructions came not from the United States but from Great Britain. See *Spanish America. Observations on the Instructions Given by the President of the United States of America to the Representatives of that Republic, at the Congress Held at Panama, in 1826; On the Conduct of Mr. Poinsett, Minister of the United States in Mexico; and Generally on Our Relations with Spanish America; with a Copy*

The significance of this historical memory was more than just the lasting view it left of the Congress of Panama, but also the impact it had on American views of the nation's principles of foreign policy. The debate made abundantly clear that a significant portion of Congress rejected Adams's expanded interpretation of the Farewell Address and greatly feared the extension of any part of the Monroe Doctrine. These men would point to "entangling alliances with none" and legitimately argue that Adams was attempting to move away from it and towards closer relations with Latin America. Just as important as the efforts of the mission's opponents, though, was that its supporters never made a strong stand on behalf of the principles Adams was advocating. Most never defended the non-colonization principle as a viable international pursuit, and no one ever argued for the legitimacy or necessity of his interpretation of Washington's Farewell Address. Daniel Webster did issue an impassioned vindication of the Monroe Doctrine as having been declared in defense of American rights, and many others made the argument that participation did not represent a violation of American neutrality, but this was the limit of their defense. As a result, despite final passage of the mission, the dominant arguments emerging from Congress were ones opposed to Adams and his principles. The subsequent failure of the United States to discuss these principles abroad and see them adopted in an international context only further cemented the outcomes of the congressional

of the Instructions (London: Effingham Wilson, 1829). For the American response, see *Mexico and Mr. Poinsett*.

debate. Rather than gaining widespread adoption of American principles, Adams was left with the negative judgments of Congress.¹¹³

In the minds of most Americans, Washington's Farewell Address would continue to mean "entangling alliances with none" and the Monroe Doctrine was largely forgotten as having been expressed to meet a set of contingencies that had ceased to exist.¹¹⁴ By introducing the non-colonization principle as a prominent point of discussion at Panama, Adams was attempting to put that principle forward as the salient legacy of the Monroe Doctrine. Had the American mission succeeded in seeing it adopted at Panama, this international adoption would have become the second chapter in the history of the Doctrine. Instead, the Doctrine was left aside without any explicit definition of its lasting importance, meaning that it could be taken up by later generations as a blank slate free to be given new meanings and interpretations. All of this is not to say that the Monroe Doctrine would have necessarily been viewed any differently in the short term after

¹¹³ One speaker at a pro-Adams convention held in Ohio in 1827 took this argument one step further, claiming that the congressional opposition to Panama was so dominant an outcome of the debate that it actually produced a negative reaction against Latin America as a whole. According to the speaker, "Until this measure was denounced in Congress, the whole nation had expressed a lively interest, in the success and prosperity of what were then called the Sister Republics. They were the theme of popular declamation, and subject of convivial commendation. But since the nomination of ministers referred to, they have ceased to be in favor with the opposition at home. They are no longer applauded or toasted. They are viewed with cold neglect, or made the subjects of smears and sarcasms." National Republican Party Convention, *Proceedings and Address of the Convention of Delegates, that Met at Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 28, 1827, to Nominate a Ticket of Electors Favorable to the Reelection of John Quincy Adams, President of the United States, to be Supported at the Electoral Election [sic] of 1828* (Columbus, OH: P. H. Olmsted, 1827), 12-13.

¹¹⁴ Dexter Perkins, one of the foremost authorities on the Monroe Doctrine, pointed out that "for the decade and a half which follows on the debates over the Panama Congress allusions to the President's declaration [the Monroe Doctrine] are few and far between. . . . Very distinctly, it falls into the background." Dexter Perkins, *A History of the Monroe Doctrine: A New Revision of the Book Originally Published Under the Title HANDS OFF: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963), 72.

Panama or used any differently in the long term. The rhetoric surrounding its use would certainly have been different, though, especially in the context of American foreign policy principles defined by the Washingtonian idea of a closer interest in Latin America, as opposed to the distinct separation of the United States from the rest of the world as called for by “entangling alliances with none.”

Five: The Revaluing of American Principles, 1826-1850

In his first annual address to Congress in December 1845, President James K. Polk formally reintroduced the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 to the American people. As had become standard practice in these “state of the Union” messages, as they would later come to be called, he invested a great deal of time discussing the status of America’s relations with the rest of the world. After pages of details, Polk paused to take a broader view, observing that “The rapid extension of our settlements over our territories heretofore unoccupied, the addition of new States to our Confederacy, the expansion of free principles, and our rising greatness as a nation are attracting the attention of the powers of Europe.” So concerned were these powers with America’s growth that “lately the doctrine has been broached in some of them of a ‘balance of power’ on this continent to check our advancement.” While the United States was “sincerely desirous of preserving relations of good understanding with all nations,” it could not “in silence permit any European interference on the North American continent.” He boldly declared that “should any such interference be attempted,” the nation would be “ready to resist it at any and all hazards.” He reminded his audience in Congress and around the world that “this Government has never interfered with the relations subsisting between other governments. We have never made ourselves parties to their wars or their alliances; we have not sought their territories by conquest; we have not mingled with parties in their domestic struggles; and believing our own form of government to be the best, we have never attempted to propagate it by

intrigues, by diplomacy, or by force.” This was the course navigated by the United States under the guidance of Washington’s Farewell Address and the Jeffersonian reconceptualization.¹

Employing the doctrine of two spheres as the expansion of the Farewell Address it was originally intended as, Polk claimed “on this continent a like exemption from European interference. . . . The people of the United States can not . . . view with indifference attempts of European powers to interfere with the independent action of the nations on this continent.” The European idea of the balance of power “can not be permitted to have any application on the North American continent, and especially to the United States. We must ever maintain the principle that the people of this continent alone have the right to decide their own destiny.” Most importantly to Polk was the idea that “Should any portion of them, constituting an independent state, propose to unite themselves with our Confederacy, this will be a question for them and us to determine without any foreign interposition. We can never consent that European powers shall interfere to prevent such a union because it might disturb the ‘balance of power’ which they may desire to maintain upon this continent.” Polk was not just concerned with the doctrine of two spheres, as, after quoting the non-colonization principle directly, he promised that it would be applied “with greatly increased force should any European power attempt to establish any new colony in North America.”

According to Polk, “The reassertion of this principle, especially in reference to

¹ James K. Polk, “First Annual Message,” 2 December 1845, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols. (New York: National Bureau of Literature, 1908), 4:398.

North America, is at this day but the promulgation of a policy which no European power should cherish the disposition to resist. Existing rights of every European nation should be respected, but it is due alike to our safety and our interests that the efficient protection of our laws should be extended over our whole territorial limits, and that it should be distinctly announced to the world as our settled policy that no future European colony or dominion shall with our consent be planted or established on any part of the North American continent.”²

While Polk framed these declarations as a simple restatement of Monroe’s Doctrine, in reality they represented something much different. The Doctrine was being reasserted as America’s guiding and “settled” policy. Polk limited its expression to North America, the region most directly connected to U.S. interests and subject to U.S. influence, but his version of the Doctrine was presented as a much more aggressive warning to Europe to keep out of American affairs and out of the United States’ way. This chapter will examine the evolution of American principles and policies in the wake of the debate over the Panama mission in order to understand the reemergence of the Monroe Doctrine as Polk conceived of it. Throughout this period Americans remained attached to George Washington and his Farewell Address, but their view of America’s relationship with the rest of the world was restricted by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization. This was amply demonstrated during the Panama debate. At the same time, the near-isolationism Thomas Jefferson first envisioned with “entangling alliances with none” had been thoroughly abandoned by presidents from James Monroe forward in the

² *Ibid.*, 398-99.

recognition of new governments, the completion of new commercial treaties, and the dispatching of ministers and consuls all over the world. Despite this expansion, or perhaps because of it, policymakers originally opposed to the Monroe Doctrine were drawn back to the expansive view of the Farewell Address that it offered. By the 1840s it was these principles and not the Jeffersonian reconceptualization that was asserted as the foundation for American foreign policy. While policymakers in Washington were moving in this direction, popular understandings of American principles remained unchanged; if anything, many people attached themselves more firmly to “entangling alliances with none” after Polk put forward his aggressive view of the Monroe Doctrine. After the annexation of Texas and war with Mexico, and as the nation’s sectional crisis deepened, the Farewell Address increasingly became a symbol of Union for many Americans, while for others its principles became too strict a limitation on the ability of the United States to more forcefully assert itself on the world stage. For generations adherence to the Farewell and “entangling alliances with none” had been the main reason for American growth and prosperity; by 1848 some saw it as the main obstacle. This chapter begins, though, with the revelation that the Farewell Address may not have been Washington’s work in the first place.

The Authorship Controversy

Given the place that the Farewell Address occupied in American cultural and political life by the 1820s, any suggestions that it was not solely Washington’s work were met with passionate objections; that there was

documentary evidence in the form of a complete draft of it in Alexander Hamilton's handwriting made the claims impossible to ignore. The authorship controversy had its roots in Hamilton's unexpected death in the summer of 1804 at the hands of Vice President Aaron Burr. Hamilton's untimely passing meant that he left his heirs no direction as to how his papers, and specifically those related to his role in writing the Farewell Address, should be handled. Questions as to how he would want them made public, if he wanted that at all, were left unanswered. As a result, when one of the executors of Hamilton's estate, Judge Nathaniel Pendleton, discovered these documents amongst his papers in 1810, he was unsure of how to proceed. Fearing that they would be made public by Hamilton's widow in an attempt to restore her deceased husband's public image, and dreading the impact this could have, he bundled them up and gave them to his close confidant, Rufus King.

By early 1811 confidential letters with information about the controversy began circulating. One man who became quite involved was Judge Richard Peters of Pennsylvania, who contacted acquaintances that might have insight into the authorship question: Timothy Pickering and John Jay. Peters never questioned that Washington was the sole author, and was specifically looking for information that would confirm this belief. In writing to Jay he asserted that Hamilton had done no "more than *dress* it," but also admitted that he did "most likely interweave some good Things." More revealing of his mindset was his comment that "If I had it in his Hand-Writing (Hamilton's) I would burn it. What

Good does the Development of this Fact do? Hamilton has fame enough. He can get no more from those who admire him; of whom I am one. He will not gain a Feather from his, or the Enemies of Washington's Principles. But those Principles would lose Force, by being ascribed to Hamilton, & deducted from Washington."³ For Peters, preservation of the Farewell Address as a guiding instrument was a primary concern, and any evidence to undermine it should be ignored. Pickering, who had been Washington's secretary of state when the Farewell Address was published, would only go so far as to say that when it came to Washington's state papers, he "did not *take* credit to himself when he was assisted by others; but the credit was *bestowed* upon him by his fellow citizens & the world and this credit he could not *disclaim* without defeating the national object he had in view in what appeared under his name."⁴ Pickering was very familiar with Washington's habit of having men more skilled with the pen than he draft his important letters and addresses, and was thus willing to believe the story circulated by Hamilton's family.⁵

It was the version of events put forward by John Jay in response to Peters's letter that would prove persuasive both at that time and in later years in shaping private and public views of the authorship question. He revealed to Peters that he had met with Hamilton in the summer of 1796 in order to discuss

³ Emphasis in original. Richard Peters to John Jay, 14 February 1811, in Victor Hugo Paltsits, *Washington's Farewell Address: In Facsimile, with Transliterations of All the Drafts of Washington, Madison, & Hamilton, Together with Their Correspondence and Other Supporting Documents* (New York: New York Public Library, 1935), 263.

⁴ Emphasis in original. Timothy Pickering to Richard Peters, 5 January 1811 (Reel 14, Page 303), Timothy Pickering Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

⁵ For more on this, see Richard Peters to John Jay, 14 April 1811, in Paltsits, *Washington's Farewell Address*, 275-76.

Washington's draft of a Farewell Address. When they met, Hamilton "observed to me in words to this effect, that after having read and examined [Washington's] draft, it appeared to him to be susceptible of improvement. That he thought the easiest and best way was to leave the draft, untouched, and in its fair state; and to write the whole over with such amendments, alterations, and corrections as he thought were advisable, and that he had done so; he then proposed to read it and to make it the subject of our consideration." The two of them then discussed, in great detail, Hamilton's draft "until the whole met with our mutual approbation."⁶ At that point both the revised draft and the original "untouched" draft were sent back to Washington. As far as Jay knew, the president then crafted his Farewell Address using these documents. This was the evidence Peters was looking for, as it demonstrated some logical reason for there to be papers related to the Address in Hamilton's handwriting that did not challenge Washington's authorship.

Historians who have discussed the authorship controversy, most notably Victor Hugo Paltsits, have treated the 1811 episode as having been limited to this private correspondence; however, contemporary newspapers did report that the Hamiltons planned to take credit for the Farewell Address in a forthcoming biography by Dr. John Mitchell Mason. As one editorial put it, Mason intended to "robe [Hamilton] in the highest honors; *and, at the expense of General Washington*, to claim for Hamilton the rank which Washington now holds in the

⁶ John Jay to Richard Peters, 29 March 1811, in Committee on Washington's Valedictory Address, "Papers Relative to the Valedictory Address of President Washington," *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, ed. Edward Armstrong, Vol. 1, Being a Republication (Philadelphia: McCarthy and Davis, 1826; reprint, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864), 259.

hearts of a grateful country. . . . [N]ot only would he prove that Hamilton was the author of all the *state papers* signed George Washington, but that he would demonstrate that the *farewell address* of president Washington . . . was actually from the pen of Alexander Hamilton.”⁷ The tone of the article made clear that its author not only disbelieved the claim, but also and that men like Mason should be viewed with great contempt. Fortunately, from the perspective of many observers, the story gained no real traction as many Americans dismissed it out of hand and because no Hamilton biography by Mason ultimately appeared.

The controversy remained largely dormant until May 1825, when the Hamiltons sued Rufus King in a very public attempt to get the bundle of documentary evidence returned. Word of the suit and the authorship claim behind it quickly spread and began to be openly debated in the popular press. In 1826 the Historical Society of Pennsylvania chose to investigate the controversy in order to put it to rest. The committee charged with the investigation contacted Jay, Peters, John Marshall, Washington’s heirs, and even David C. Claypoole (the man in possession of Washington’s final draft of the Farewell Address) to gather evidence, but they uncovered little more than what Peters had been able to discover in 1811, and the main piece of evidence in their report was Jay’s old letter. Their report concluded that their investigation “must remove all doubts on the subject. The facts stated in Mr. Jay’s letter to Judge Peters well account for the *mistake* which has accompanied this question.” Then, ignoring the main point

⁷ Emphasis in original. “Hamilton Greater than Washington,” *The Columbian* (New York, NY), 24 July 1811.

of Jay's letter that he and Hamilton had made substantial changes to a draft of the Address, the report continued that "The whole address appears to have been copied by General Hamilton, whose affectionate attachment to the President prevented him from thinking any trouble on his account too great; and this copy having, we know not how, returned to his possession, was probably the cause of the opinion that he was the original author."⁸ This particular conclusion was a tad nonsensical, a fact emphasized by Pickering when he exclaimed, "Hamilton is supposed to go through the drudgery of copying Washington's Farewell Address! An Address prepared on purpose *to be soon published!* How absurd!"⁹ Apparently the committee was more concerned with preserving Washington's name and the sanctity of the Farewell Address than with making complete sense. The committee's report aside, publication of the Jay letter settled the matter for most Americans, as it put forward a plausible explanation that accounted for the Hamilton documents while still giving credit squarely to Washington.

The more important revelation emerging from this report (and out of the authorship controversy more generally) was the importance Americans attached to the Farewell Address as the work of George Washington, and not just for its principles. Judge Peters alluded to this in 1811 in his comment that the Farewell "would lose Force, by being ascribed to Hamilton, & deducted from Washington." As he put it in 1826 in his reply to the committee's inquiries, should Hamilton have been shown to have been the author of the Address, "our

⁸ Emphasis in original. Committee on Washington's Valedictory Address, "Papers," 242-43.

⁹ Emphasis in original. Timothy Pickering to William Coleman, 5 October 1826 (Reel 38, page 306A), Timothy Pickering Papers.

nation would suffer a serious injury, by having the fascinating name of *Washington* taken from the creed of every friend to his country.”¹⁰ John Marshall, writing to Bushrod Washington several months before the committee began its investigation, expressed his belief in Jay’s version of events, but he also argued that even had the Address been written solely by Hamilton, “I can have no doubt that it was published in the name of Washington from a perfect conviction that the valuable sentiments it contains would do more good if proceeding from him than from any other person. The public opinion of General Washington will remain unaltered, but their respect for the address will be changed.”¹¹ This overriding sense of the importance of the Farewell as a Washingtonian statement of principle obviously influenced the committee’s approach to their investigation.¹² When the authorship controversy became an issue of public concern it forced Americans to confront the question of why they placed such value on the principles of the Farewell Address – was it the wisdom of the

¹⁰ Emphasis in original. Letter of Richard Peters, 19 February 1826, in Committee on Washington’s Valedictory Address, “Papers,” 247.

¹¹ John Marshall to Bushrod Washington, 3 October 1825, in Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address*, 285.

¹² While the controversy was settled in the public’s mind, there was still the matter of the documents in Rufus King’s possession. Once the Jay letter had been published and Washington’s reputation was secured, King relinquished the letters to the Hamilton family. The following year James Hamilton and Washington biographer Jared Sparks met to review all of the pertinent documents from each family’s collection. Even if natural familial biases skewed each man’s reading of the documents, at the very least they would have been able to finally make some informed conclusions as to the process followed by Washington and Hamilton and they would have been able to trace the evolution of the Address’s various drafts. Despite the knowledge that would have been gained at this time, it was another thirty-two years before a publication appeared that would bring all of the documents together to finally prove the extent of Hamilton’s role in writing the Farewell Address. Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address*, 91-94. Horace Binney, *An Inquiry into the Formation of Washington’s Farewell Address* (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, Publishers, 1859).

principles themselves or merely that of their author? The answer was resoundingly the latter.

A Consistent Foreign Policy

One of the unfortunate side effects of the heightened partisanship that emerged during the Panama debate and its aftermath was that it served to mask the great deal of overlap that existed in the foreign policies of John Quincy Adams and his successor, Andrew Jackson. Both men faced the same basic foreign policy challenges and, with the exception of the Panama Congress, pursued very similar solutions. Among these challenges were the maintenance of peace and the expansion of commercial relations with an increasingly fractious Latin America that was also being subjected to the growing political and economic influence of Great Britain and France; longstanding boundary disputes with Mexico over Texas, and with Britain over Maine in the northeast and Oregon in the northwest; claims of U.S. merchants against Latin America and Europe dating back as far as the Napoleonic Wars; and the desire to purchase Texas from Mexico.

Despite dramatic differences in domestic priorities, both administrations were guided by similar foreign policy principles; specifically their conception of those enunciated by Washington in his Farewell Address. Washington had preached an honest assessment of American interests and the construction of foreign policies best-suited to protect them. For the original President Adams, this meant talking tough with France during the Quasi-War of the late 1790s

while avoiding taking precipitate action that could lead to the outbreak of actual war. For the negotiators of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812, it meant finding common ground to treat upon and a mutual understanding to put off irresolvable issues to future negotiations. It was the trust placed in the eventual peaceful resolution of diplomatic questions that led to so many treaties being signed during the Jackson and subsequent administrations to resolve issues years and even decades old. Commercial claims against France dating from as far back as 1803, for example, were not treated until 1831, and payments were not made until 1836, yet the two nations chose peace over war or a fractured relationship.¹³ The same basic approach was taken with the northeastern and -western boundary disputes with Great Britain. They had existed since 1783 and 1815, but were not resolved until 1842 and 1846, respectively. Relations along these contested borders did not always remain peaceful on the ground, but both nations understood the benefits of peace, an understanding preached by Washington in his Farewell Address.

A similarity in approach and principle extended to the Monroe Doctrine as well, as Jackson's foreign policy pronouncements revealed the first hints of its reemergence as an expansion of Washington's Farewell Address and a declaration of the separation of American and European spheres. In his annual address to Congress in December 1832 he praised the nation for maintaining "a state of prosperity and peace" with the rest of the world, which was "the effect of a wise

¹³ For an extended discussion of the spoliations claims against France and their slow resolution, see John M. Belohlavek, *"Let the Eagle Soar!": The Foreign Policy of Andrew Jackson* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 91-125.

attention to the parting advice of the revered Father of his Country on this subject, condensed into a maxim for the use of posterity by one of his most distinguished successors – to cultivate free commerce and honest friendship with all nations, but to make entangling alliances with none. A strict adherence to this policy has kept us aloof from the perplexing questions that now agitate the European world and have more than once deluged those countries with blood.” In and of itself, the discussion of the Farewell Address is unremarkable, but it was his effort later in the message to concretely spell out the meaning of U.S. abstention from the European sphere that stands out. He clarified that when he discussed events taking place in foreign nations, it was done “solely in cases where those events affect our political relations with them, or to show their operation on our commerce. Further than this it is neither our policy nor our right to interfere. Our best wishes on all occasions, our good offices when required, will be afforded to promote the domestic tranquillity [*sic*] and foreign peace of all nations with whom we have any intercourse. Any intervention in their affairs further than this, even by the expression of an official opinion, is contrary to our principles of international policy, and will always be avoided.”¹⁴ While he was only reiterating one half of the doctrine of two spheres, the specificity with which he did so made clear that he was actively thinking about the separation between American and European interests. At the same time, it is quite remarkable that nearly four

¹⁴ Andrew Jackson, “Fourth Annual Message,” 4 December 1832, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:592, 596.

decades after its publication, presidents were still vocally proclaiming their faithfulness to Washington and his Farewell Address.

The Washington Centennial

Indeed, the Farewell continued to be of great importance to virtually all Americans. Nowhere was this put on better display than in annual celebrations of Washington's birthday. With the decline of the Federalists after 1815 and thus the loss of their stranglehold on Washington as a symbol, he quickly reemerged as a truly national figure. Birthday celebrations, which were sponsored by civic and fraternal organizations as well as city and state governments, played an important role in refreshing American interest in and devotion to Washington's precepts as much, if not more so, than national debates such as the one surrounding the Panama Congress. Birthday festivities still usually centered around a public address, but also often featured prayers and sermons, dinners, parades, and even dances. For a people accustomed to elaborate celebrations of Washington's birth, the occasion of the centennial anniversary of that event in 1832 meant the need to go to new and greater lengths. The additional pomp was especially noticeable in major cities. In Philadelphia, events were planned from morning to night, but the highlight of the day was a grand procession featuring virtually every important (and unimportant) city and state official, large swaths of the local military, and an impressive representation from a plethora of regional trade associations.¹⁵ In New

¹⁵ For a broadside laying out the ordering of the grand procession, see "Washington's Birth Day. Centennial Celebration," (Philadelphia, 1832). For a more detailed broadside describing the

York City, the day began with a gun salute at sunrise fired by the Veteran Company of Artillery, continued with a “national salute to be fired at the Battery at noon, and such other military display . . . *as the season will permit,*” a procession to the Middle Dutch Church for an oration by Major General Morgan Lewis, a reception with the Mayor, and a “Military and Civic Ball” in the evening.¹⁶ In Washington, D.C. a public dinner presided over by Senator Daniel Webster and attended by senators, congressmen, judges, and other distinguished citizens was held in Washington’s honor.¹⁷

It is through the grand orations given at these types of festivities throughout the nation that the modern observer can gain the best appreciation for how central the Farewell Address and its foreign policy principles were to Americans’ admiration of Washington and their conception of the country’s place in the world. In Lexington, Kentucky, for example, Charles Caldwell announced that “We are assembled to unite, in sentiment, with millions of our fellow-citizens, in a festive act, which the nation honors, and all enlightened freemen will learn to revere. We are pledged to perform our part, however humble, with suitable feelings, and in such fitness of style and manner as we can attain, in the great Jubilee of the first Centennial Anniversary of the Birth-day of Washington.”

procession after the fact, see “Grand Civic and Military Procession in Philadelphia, February 22d, 1832 . . .” (Philadelphia, 1832).

¹⁶ Emphasis in original. *Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington. New-York, February 22, 1832* ([New York, 1832]), 4-5, 10; also see Morgan Lewis, *An Oration Delivered in the Middle Dutch Church, in the City of New-York, Before the Common Council and Citizens, on the First Centennial Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington, the Father of His Country* (New York: G. F. Hopkins & Sons, 1832).

¹⁷ *Speeches and Other Proceedings at the Public Dinner in Honor of the Centennial Anniversary of Washington. To Which is Added, Washington’s Farewell Address* (Washington, D.C.: Jonathan Elliot, 1832).

This was an important day for the nation, a day when literally millions of Americans would be united in their celebration of the Father of their Country. On this day of national significance, Caldwell focused on the idea of the “Century of Washington” concluding on that day, and extolled the virtues of Washington put on display during his life and how they were instrumental to the progress and development of the nation, even after his death. Such progress could only be maintained so long as the states continued “to be governed on the same principles, which shed such a lustre on the administration of Washington, and are so forcibly inculcated in his Farewell Address.”¹⁸ Francis C. Gray, speaking before the Massachusetts state legislature, praised that “system of administration established by [Washington], and the main principles both of foreign and domestic policy which he laid down, [that] have, for the most part, been adhered to ever since by the American government, and have never been departed from without reason for regret.”¹⁹ In Nashville, Tennessee the Farewell Address was read aloud to the gathered crowd before Philip Lindsley took the stage and remarked, “With what thrilling emotions have we not listened again to his last paternal counsels, and yielded the conviction of honest hearts to the truth and wisdom of all his sagacious and ever seasonable instructions! . . . Nor can a more appropriate tribute of respect be offered to his memory, than the solemn recital, in the ears of

¹⁸ Charles Caldwell, *A Discourse of the First Centennial Celebration of the Birth-Day of Washington, Delivered by Request, to the Citizens of Lexington, On the 22nd of February, 1832* (Lexington, KY: Printed by N. L. Finnell & J. F. Herndon, 1832), 6, 8, 56.

¹⁹ Francis C. Gray, *Oration Delivered before the Legislature of Massachusetts, at their Request, on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1832), 66.

the people, on each returning anniversary of his birth-day, of this precious valedictory. It is a text-book for our statesmen to study. . . . Let every youth commit it to memory. Let its maxims be engraven upon every American heart.”²⁰

Perhaps the most laudatory address given by anyone on that day was Daniel Webster’s at the public dinner in Washington, D.C. He began by giving an exposition of “The maxims upon which Washington conducted our foreign relations,” which were “few and simple.” Washington “regarded other nations only, as they stood in political relations to us. With their internal affairs, their political parties and dissensions, he scrupulously abstained, from all interference; and, on the other hand, he spiritedly repelled all such interference by others with us or our concerns.” Washington had repeatedly expressed his “deep fears, that foreign influence would insinuate itself into our councils,” and “never forgot that we had interests peculiar to ourselves.” Webster hailed Washington’s Farewell Address for being “full of truths, important at all times, and particularly deserving consideration at the present. With a sagacity which brought the future before him, and made it like the present; he saw and pointed out the dangers that even at this moment most imminently threaten us. I hardly know how a greater service of that kind could now be done to the community than by a renewed and wide diffusion of that admirable paper, and an earnest invitation to every man in the country to

²⁰ Philip Lindsley, *An Address Delivered at Nashville, Ten. Feb. 22, 1832, at the Request of the Citizens of Nashville and its Vicinity, on the Occasion of the Centennial Birth Day of George Washington* (Nashville, TN: Hunt, Tardiff & Co., 1832), 5.

reperuse and consider it.”²¹ As if following Webster’s advice, two days after Washington’s birthday the legislature of Pennsylvania passed a resolution declaring that “it is important that the principles inculcated in that address should be spread through the community, and facilities should be afforded for their diffusion.” It thus called for “three thousand copies of said address in the English and three thousand copies in the German language” to be printed “in pamphlet form for the use of the members.”²²

While it did not focus on the Farewell Address itself, the most interesting commemoration for what it portended about America’s future direction was that planned by the United States Congress. Congress did not have a long history of officially celebrating Washington’s birthday. The first attempt to formally acknowledge the day was made in the House of Representatives in 1826 with a proposal to adjourn in honor of Washington, but was relatively easily voted down.²³ By 1832, given the magnitude of the day, there was considerably less resistance to the idea that Congress should play some sort of role in the national festivities surrounding the centennial; however, less resistance did not mean complete acceptance. In early February a joint committee was appointed to make arrangements for the day, and among its recommendations was a call for Congress to adjourn on the 22nd and for “Congress to adopt the necessary

²¹ *Speeches and Other Proceedings at the Public Dinner in Honor of the Centennial Anniversary of Washington*, 7-8.

²² *Washington’s Valedictory Address to the People of the United States. Published in September, A. D. 1796, Printed in Pursuance of a Resolution of the Senate of Pennsylvania, Adopted on the 24th of February, A. D. 1832* (Harrisburg, PA: Henry Welsh, 1832), 2.

²³ 21 and 22 February 1826, in *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., 1419-21, 1428.

measures to carry into effect the resolution which was passed by Congress on the 24th day of December, 1799, for the removal of the body of George Washington, and its internment in the capitol at the city of Washington; and that the ceremony be performed on the 22nd instant.”²⁴ The committee wanted to memorialize Washington’s one hundredth birthday by moving his remains from Mount Vernon to the nation’s capital.²⁵

While the propriety of engaging in “Man-worship,” as Littleton Tazewell of Virginia labeled it, featured in the debate over the committee’s recommendations, it was the question of moving Washington’s remains that caused tensions to dramatically rise and foreshadowed the deepening sectional crisis that would come to plague the nation.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, Virginians expressed the most ardent objections to moving the remains. Richard Coke, Jr. “felt as if he, as a Virginian, and the State of which he was a native, were on the verge of losing something in comparison with which all the riches of the world would, in his and her estimation, weigh but as dust in the balance, and he begged [Congress], under the influence of such feeling, whilst the sad decree was yet unexecuted, to refrain from depriving them of that which was beyond all price.” Coke urged the House “to make allowance for the feelings of Virginia in this matter. There were at the present time, in the flag of the confederacy, the

²⁴ 13 February 1832, in *Ibid.*, 22nd Cong., 1st sess., 368.

²⁵ The committee of arrangements, composed of twenty-four members of the House of Representatives (one from each state) and five members of the Senate (including Henry Clay and Daniel Webster), also recommended an oration delivered by John Marshall (which he declined for health reasons) and for the chaplains of each house to perform services. *Ibid.*

²⁶ Littleton Tazewell, 7 February 1832, in *Ibid.*, 297.

glittering stars of twenty-four sovereign and independent States; but the time might perhaps arrive, when, at some distant period, those stars should be dimmed of their original brightness, and present to the view twenty-four fragments of a great and powerful republic, warring the one with the other. At that lamentable time, then, he would ask, should Virginia, in offering homage to the memory of the mighty dead, be forced to pay a pilgrimage to the remains of her own son, through scenes of blood, shed perhaps by kindred hands?"²⁷ Coke's vision of civil war was a stark sentiment to be expressed in a debate over what was meant to be a joyous national celebration. Edward Everett of Massachusetts dismissed Coke's pleas for sympathy, noting that "though Washington was by birth a native of the colony of Virginia, he lived and died a citizen of the United States of America; united more by his labors, counsels, and sacrifices, than those of any other individual. The sacred remains are, as the gentleman well said, a treasure beyond all price, but it is a treasure of which every part of this blood-cemented Union has a right to claim its share."²⁸

In a refrain that would oft be repeated in years to come, the figure and legacy of Washington came to be simultaneously claimed as the pre-eminent symbol of the Union and as the great hero of Virginia and the South. In 1832, unlike in later years, the sectional divide did not prove determinative to most members of Congress, as the committee of arrangements' plan relatively easily

²⁷ Richard Coke, Jr., 7 February 1832, in *Ibid.*, 1785.

²⁸ Edward Everett, 7 February 1832, in *Ibid.*, 1787.

passed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.²⁹ Congress endorsed moving Washington's remains, but the much-anticipated event did not take place due to the objection of Washington's heir. This refusal ruined the day for John Quincy Adams, who had been one of the House members on the committee of arrangements and one of the most vocal proponents of the proposal. Adams had been elected as a Representative from Massachusetts in 1831, and remained in that position until his death in 1848. At the end of his presidency Adams was best known for his foreign policy service and achievements, but his entry into the House marked a fundamental shift in focus, as from that point forward he dedicated himself to the anti-slavery cause. For him, much like for Coke, the debate over Washington's remains related directly to the deepening sectional crisis; however, Adams saw Washington as the defining symbol of the Union. As he noted in his diary on 22 February 1832, "The solemnities intended for this day at this place lost all their interest for me by the refusal . . . to permit the remains of George Washington to be transferred to be entombed under the Capitol. . . . I did wish that this resolution might have been carried into execution, but this wish was connected with an imagination that this federative Union was to last for ages. I now disbelieve its duration for twenty years, and doubt its continuance for five. It

²⁹ On the sectional divide, William Drayton of South Carolina, for example, opposed the removal of Washington's remains on the grounds that a grand memorial in the nation's capital would violate the wish expressed by Washington in his will for a simple burial at Mount Vernon. He also specifically rebuked Coke's sectional argument, arguing that "The adoption of this resolution has been opposed, because, should the Union be dissolved, which some gentlemen apprehend to be neither an improbable nor a distant event, the tomb of Washington may then be in a territory hostile to Virginia. These gentlemen, from their remarks, seem to infer, that as the Union may be destroyed, therefore, that it must be. . . . Whatever may be our fate hereafter, we ought to perform our duties now." William Drayton, 7 February 1832, in *Ibid.*, 1795-96.

is falling into the sere and yellow leaf.”³⁰ While Adams’s prediction proved overly dire (but ultimately true), the larger debate over Washington’s remains illustrated that even at this early date the larger fault lines that were already developing over the issue of slavery were impacting at least some Americans’ views of George Washington, and by extension the Farewell Address. By the middle of the 1840s, these fault lines would begin to shape their approach to foreign policy and understanding of foreign policy principles.

Evolving Conceptions of American Foreign Policy

No foreign policy question more than Texas contributed to these developments. Americans had laid claim to at least a portion of Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase and had only begrudgingly renounced it as a condition of the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. Texas was gone but not forgotten, as many held onto hope of regaining the territory at some point in the future. When Mexico achieved its independence, Texas, along with all other Spanish territory on the North American continent went with it, meaning that the United States now had to negotiate with its southern neighbor. As president, John Quincy Adams offered Mexico one million dollars for Texas, and Andrew Jackson quintupled that offer, but the Mexican government was unwilling to sell the region. Mexico lost Texas anyways in 1836 when its inhabitants, primarily immigrated Americans, rebelled and declared the independent Republic of Texas. When this new nation

³⁰ 22 February 1832, in John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-77), 8:478-79.

immediately requested annexation to the United States, most Americans, instead of seeing it as a question relating to U.S. foreign policy, understood it as a domestic issue bearing directly on the sectional balance and slavery. Southerners saw a tremendous opportunity for economic expansion while many northerners, especially those opposed to slavery and its extension, feared the first movement in a grand slave power conspiracy.³¹

President Jackson favored American acquisition of the territory but understood that annexation of an independent nation was a fundamentally different question than the purchase of territory from another country. In his final annual address to Congress, Jackson, channeling Washington's Farewell Address, cautioned that the nation could not commit the "great error of suffering public policy to be regulated by partially [*sic*] or prejudice" in its dealings with Texas and Mexico. Concerned with more than just regional tensions, he feared that "The known desire of the Texans to become a part of our system . . . is calculated to expose our conduct to misconstruction in the eyes of the world. There are already those who, indifferent to principle themselves and prone to suspect the want of it in others, charge us with ambitious designs and insidious policy."³² If Americans did not proceed cautiously, it would be too easy for international observers, both in Latin America and in Europe, to accuse the United States of

³¹ For a discussion of American relations with Mexico over Texas during the Adams and especially the Jackson administrations, see Belohlavek, "*Let the Eagle Soar!*", 215-38.

³² Andrew Jackson, "Eighth Annual Message," 5 December 1836, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 3:237.

engineering the Texas revolution just so that it could annex the territory. Jackson did not want to give foreign nations cause to distrust U.S. motives or actions.

Jackson reiterated this cautious approach in a special message to Congress several weeks later in which he declared that it was “known to the world that the uniform policy and practice of the United States is to avoid all interference in disputes which merely relate to the internal government of other nations, and eventually to recognize the authority of the prevailing party, without reference to our particular interests and views or to the merits of the original controversy.” Despite the U.S. sympathy with and desire for Texas, this was still an internal Mexican question until such time as Texan independence was an established fact. When it came to officially recognizing the Republic of Texas, “It becomes us to beware of a too early movement, as it might subject us, however unjustly, to the imputation of seeking to establish the claim of our neighbors to a territory with a view to its subsequent acquisition by ourselves. Prudence, therefore, seems to dictate that we should still stand aloof and maintain our present attitude, if not until Mexico itself or one of the great foreign powers shall recognize the independence of the new Government, at least until the lapse of time or the course of events shall have proved beyond cavil or dispute the ability of the people of that country to maintain their separate sovereignty and to uphold the Government constituted by them.”³³ Only once independence was widely acknowledged or entirely indisputable could the United States act and be above suspicion or reproach. In the months following Jackson’s message, Congress grew impatient

³³ Andrew Jackson, “Special Message,” 21 December 1836, in *Ibid.*, 266, 268-69.

with the president's patience but had little recourse given that recognition of foreign governments was solely at the president's discretion. Members of Congress were not accustomed to delays that were not of their own creation and decided to act to spur Jackson along. The House of Representatives appropriated funds for a diplomatic agent to Texas to be available whenever the president should decide to appoint one, and the Senate passed a resolution declaring its opinion that Texas had achieved a state of independence and deserved recognition. On the final day of his presidency, Jackson sent a message to Congress acknowledging "these proceedings as a virtual decision of the question," his "duty to acquiesce therein," and he appointed a chargé d'affaires to the Republic of Texas, officially recognizing its independence.³⁴

Most Americans, and even the Texans themselves, believed that recognition was merely a precursor to annexation, but this proved not to be the case. Much the same concerns that had caused Jackson to preach caution weighed on his successor, Martin Van Buren. So too did constitutional considerations over the ability of the United States to annex an independent nation, and the desire to maintain a positive relationship with Mexico, which could only be damaged by immediate action. More persuasive than any of this, Van Buren recognized that Texas had become directly linked to slavery in the popular consciousness, and thus any move towards annexation would split the country along sectionally divisive lines. For both national as well as political reasons, this was an argument he wanted to avoid. In his inaugural address Van Buren pledged his allegiance to

³⁴ Andrew Jackson, "Special Message," 3 March 1837, in *Ibid.*, 282.

the nation's longstanding principles of foreign policy, describing them as having been "so uniform and intelligible as to constitute a rule of Executive conduct which leaves little to my discretion, unless, indeed, I were willing to run counter to the lights of experience and the known opinions of my constituents. We sedulously cultivate the friendship of all nations as the conditions most compatible with our welfare and the principles of our Government. We decline alliances as adverse to our peace."³⁵ When Texas formally requested annexation in August 1837, Van Buren declined after only a brief debate in the cabinet.³⁶ Texas would remain at the front of Americans' minds, but receded as a focus of U.S. foreign policy for the remainder of Van Buren's term.

The Haphazard Reemergence of the Doctrine of Two Spheres

Jackson and Van Buren had been actively concerned with international opinion when they decided to proceed with caution in Texas. They themselves, though, went to great lengths to avoid taking official notice of questionable actions taken by Great Britain and France in Latin America. Multiple incidents throughout the region, especially during Jackson's eight years in office, could have warranted a response, even if only in the form of a note of protest, under the auspices of the Monroe Doctrine. The Doctrine, of course, had been "rejected" by Congress in 1826, and it remained largely dormant, at least in any official sense, throughout the 1830s. Implicit references to it crept into the occasional

³⁵ Martin Van Buren, "Inaugural Address," 4 March 1837, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 3:319.

³⁶ Major L. Wilson, *The Presidency of Martin Van Buren* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 151.

diplomatic dispatch, but by and large U.S. principles in this period were framed solely with regard to Washington's Farewell Address.³⁷ The one notable, and curious, exception occurred in February 1839 when, in response to a French naval blockade of a portion of the coast of Mexico, the House of Representatives passed a resolution introduced by Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts requesting information from the president on the role of the United States in the affair and the effect that it had had on American vessels. What made this resolution so interesting was that in a lengthy preamble it quoted extensively from the Monroe Doctrine (without citing Monroe by name), looking to justify interest in French actions under its precepts. It was passed with no debate.³⁸

The resolution was clearly something of an outlier, both in terms of the interest it took in European actions in Latin America and in the principles it cited, but it did point to a shift that was about to take place in the official discourse surrounding American principles. Between 1840 and James K. Polk's first annual message to Congress in 1845, it became clear that American presidents and policymakers were feeling increasingly restricted by Washington's Farewell Address as defined by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization. They began to have an expanded sense of the sphere of American interests and as a result began to

³⁷ For several examples of diplomatic correspondence that included references to the Monroe Doctrine (both implicit and explicit), see Martin Van Buren to Thomas P. Moore, 17 August 1829; Martin Van Buren to Cornelius Van Ness, 2 October 1829, 13 October 1830, and 25 April 1831; and Edward Livingston to Thomas P. Moore, 9 June 1831, 16 February and 31 October 1832 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M77, roll 9); Instructions, American States, Diplomatic Instructions of the of the Department of State, 1801-1906, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

³⁸ The resolution was introduced by Cushing on 31 December 1838 and passed on 11 February 1839, in *Congressional Globe*, 25th Cong., 3rd sess., 81-82, 176.

express more expansive versions of Washington's principles. With the doctrine of two spheres, what John Quincy Adams had seen as the logical extension of the principles of the Farewell Address in 1823, and had been rejected by Congress as endangering those principles in 1826, was being recreated to circumvent the narrowness of "entangling alliances with none" in the 1840s. The key, though, was that even as they were expressing these principles during this five year period, the Monroe Doctrine itself was only rarely discussed, and it was never mentioned by a president in his public messages until Polk.³⁹

The first important evidence in the reemergence of the doctrine of two spheres was Van Buren's final annual message to Congress in December 1840. He pledged the nation to "A rigid and persevering abstinence from all interference with the domestic and political relations of other States, alike due to the genius and distinctive character of our Government and to the principles by which it is directed." He further described the United States as being "Bound by no entangling alliances, yet linked by a common nature and interest with the other nations of mankind."⁴⁰ This last statement simultaneously moved closer to and further away from the principles of the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, as it cited "entangling alliances with none" but also acknowledged the common

³⁹ It is an open question as to why, when policymakers were almost certainly influenced by its principles, the Monroe Doctrine did not explicitly reemerge earlier than it did. Two possible explanations make some level of sense. The first is that the doctrine of two spheres truly was recreated in the 1840s as a response to changing world events and that the prior existence of the Monroe Doctrine was just coincidental. The second is that policymakers were hesitant to actually cite the Monroe Doctrine given how thoroughly it had been discredited during the Panama debate. Neither explanation is satisfactory.

⁴⁰ Martin Van Buren, "Fourth Annual Message," 5 December 1840, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 3:602, 603.

interests that now existed with other nations, an idea at the heart of John Quincy Adams's conception of the doctrine of two spheres as an expansion of the Farewell Address. Whig President John Tyler completed Van Buren's circle in December 1842 when he declared that as the United States was "Carefully abstaining from interference in all questions exclusively referring themselves to the political interests of Europe, we may be permitted to hope an equal exemption from the interference of European Governments in what relates to the States of the American continent."⁴¹ Here in one sentence was the explicit enunciation of two spheres of interest, that of Europe and that of the "States of the American continent."

That the Tyler administration took an expanded view of American principles was not surprising given the president's overwhelming desire to annex Texas and that his first secretary of state was Daniel Webster. Webster considered himself to be a true disciple of Washington and had been one of the only members of Congress to actively defend the Monroe Doctrine during the Panama debate. He repeatedly demonstrated a broader understanding of American interest and of Washington's Farewell Address, a fact exemplified by his approach to Texas. When annexation was raised in 1836 and 1837, he had been adamantly opposed to it, but unlike many others who shared this view, he still cared deeply about Texas's political situation. Writing to Nicholas Biddle in September 1838, he expressed his relief that Texas had formally withdrawn its annexation request, describing it as "an event, eminently favorable to both

⁴¹ John Tyler, "Second Annual Message," 6 December 1842, in *Ibid.*, 4:197.

countries.” He sincerely hoped that Texas would be “able to maintain her position” as an independent nation, given that “Any connexion with a European State, so close as to make her dependent on that State, or to identify her interests with the interests of such State,” would be “greatly unfortunate for us.” The significance of this letter for Webster’s understanding of American foreign policy can be seen in his suggestion that Biddle “remember the strong opinion, expressed by Mr. Monroe, that the U.S. could not consent to the recolonization [*sic*] of those portions of this Continent, which had severed the ties, binding them to a European connexion, & formed free & independent governments for themselves; or to the establishment of the European Colonies, in America. The spirit, & reason, of these sentiments, would lead us to regard with just fear, & therefore with just jealousy, any connexions between our near American neighbours, & the powerful states of Europe, except those of friendly & useful commercial intercourse.” Here was, in 1838, the application of both the doctrine of two spheres and the non-colonization principle to Texas. It was clear, though, that he understood both principles in their original context as an expansion of the Farewell Address and not for how they were treated in Congress in 1826. Webster wanted Texas to “keep herself free from all particular European connexion” and urged that “whatever aid can be furnished to her, by individuals, or corporations, in the U. States, in the present state of her affairs, to enable her to maintain a truly independent & national character, would tend to promote the welfare of the U. States as well as of Texas herself.”⁴² Stated more succinctly, “I go for *our*

⁴² Daniel Webster to Nicholas Biddle, 10 September 1838, in *The Papers of Daniel Webster*, ed.

America – free as possible from all European entangling connexions.”⁴³ This was the crux of Webster’s view, that the Monroe Doctrine was being redeployed as a means of protecting U.S. interests by preserving Texan independence.

With more than just Texas, which was not his primary concern while he was secretary of state, Webster brought this understanding of American principles with him into the State Department. Two episodes in particular stand out as deserving brief consideration. The first stemmed from the completion of the Treaty of Washington with Great Britain in August 1842. The treaty, also known as the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, settled the U.S.-Canadian border from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains, and most notably the border of Maine. Article 8 of the treaty contained provisions for suppressing the international slave trade on the high seas, especially along the coast of Africa. Lewis Cass, a Democrat from Michigan and the U.S. minister to France, issued a strong protest to Webster regarding Article 8 that stepped off an extended trans-Atlantic debate over the meaning and direction of U.S. foreign policy and specifically George

Charles M. Wiltse, 15 vols. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New Hampshire, 1974-89), Series I: Correspondence, 4:324-26.

⁴³ Emphasis in original. Daniel Webster to Nicholas Biddle, 9 September 1838, in *Ibid.*, 324. Writing at about the same time Webster did, Henry Clay, without explicitly referencing the Monroe Doctrine itself, expressed similar sentiments, stating that “I do not believe that the U. S. will or ought to interfere, so as to become a party to the contest, whilst it is confined to Mexico and Texas. But if any European power, and especially if G. Britain or France, were to attempt the conquest of Texas, or to aid Mexico in re conquering it, in my opinion the U S. could not regard any such attempt with indifference.” Writing six years later, he affirmed that “If any European nation entertains any ambitious designs upon Texas, such as that of colonizing her, or in any way subjugating her, I should regard it as the imperative duty of the Government of the United States to oppose to such designs the most firm and determined resistance, to the extent, if necessary, of appealing to arms to prevent the accomplishment of any such designs.” Henry Clay to Nicholas Biddle, 14 September 1838, in *The Papers of Henry Clay*, ed. James F. Hopkins, 10 vols. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-91), 9:229; and Henry Clay to the Editors of the *Washington Daily National Intelligencer* [Joseph Gales & William W. Seaton], 17 April 1844, in *Ibid.*, 45.

Washington's Farewell Address. The editors of Webster's diplomatic papers framed the debate as hinging on Webster's and Cass's "respective interpretations of the basic American foreign policy of isolationism. Webster's views seem to have been derived from Washington's Farewell Address . . . ; Cass seems to have relied more on Thomas Jefferson's 'entangling alliances with none' inaugural message."⁴⁴ In other words, Webster was guided by his expanded view of the Farewell Address, while Cass endorsed the Jeffersonian reconceptualization.

Cass saw Article 8, "by which we might be pledged to concur, with [Great Britain] in measures for the suppression of the Slave Trade," as representing a departure "from our former principle of avoiding European combinations upon subjects not American," and was critical of Webster for agreeing to it.⁴⁵ Webster was taken aback by Cass's letter, which he received "as a sort of protest, or remonstrance, in the form of an official despatch, against a transaction of the Government to which you were not a party, in which you had no agency whatever, and for the results of which you were no way answerable." On the question of American principles, Webster argued that the United States had not "departed in this treaty, in the slightest degree, from their former principles of avoiding European combinations upon subjects not American, because the abolition of the African Slave Trade is an American subject, as emphatically as it

⁴⁴ Webster, *Papers*, Series 3: Diplomatic Papers, 1:710-13. The pertinent letters, all of which can be found in the first volume of Webster's diplomatic papers, are dated 3 October, 14 November, 11 and 20 December 1842, and 7 March 1843.

⁴⁵ Lewis Cass to Daniel Webster, 3 October 1842, in *Ibid.*, 719.

is an European subject.”⁴⁶ As far as Webster was concerned, American interests extended across the Atlantic Ocean to seeing the illegal slave trade stopped. This truly was a more expansive view of American interests and principles. Cass fundamentally disagreed with Webster’s interpretation, arguing that “combinations of this kind are among the ‘entangling alliances’ against which the great statesman, whose exposition of our Constitution will go down to posterity with the instrument itself, warned his Countrymen.”⁴⁷ Cass later expanded on this point, adding that “our duties can be fully performed without any European combination, and that such a mutual arrangement is injurious and violates one of the articles of our political faith.”⁴⁸ If the United States could accomplish the same goal without committing itself to another power, it should do so, especially when the cost was the abandonment of the nation’s principles. This was ultimately the last word in the debate between Webster and Cass, as no concrete resolution was achieved; but the debate’s significance lies not in any conclusion but in the competing interpretations of American interests and principles it expressed.

⁴⁶ Daniel Webster to Lewis Cass, 14 November 1842, in *Ibid.*, 724, 727.

⁴⁷ Lewis Cass to Daniel Webster, 11 December 1842, in *Ibid.*, 737-38. From the perspective of this dissertation, this quote is intriguing, as it is unclear as to who the “great statesman” Cass referred to actually was. On one level, the phrase “entangling alliances” would suggest Thomas Jefferson, but as the Jeffersonian reconceptualization demonstrated, that phrase was just as commonly attributed to George Washington. The more instructive part of the passage is Cass’s description of “entangling alliances” as a warning and in connection with the “exposition of our Constitution” that would “go down to posterity with the instrument itself.” Language such as this strongly indicates a reference to the Farewell Address, as Jefferson’s first inaugural address was not often discussed in this manner. This point is given further credence when one considers that even those who correctly attributed “entangling alliances” to Jefferson still did so in the context of the Farewell Address, meaning that they acknowledged Jefferson’s authorship but understood it as having been expressed in relation to Washington’s Farewell. Based on all of this, it seems that Cass’s “great statesman” was Washington and not Jefferson.

⁴⁸ Lewis Cass to Daniel Webster, 7 March 1843, in *Ibid.*, 767.

The second episode of note from Webster's secretaryship dealt with the Sandwich, or Hawaiian Islands. Representatives of the Hawaiian government had been dispatched to the United States at the end of 1842 to seek a formal recognition of the islands as an independent nation. While Webster and President Tyler deemed recognition unnecessary, the secretary of state did declare to the representatives that "The United States . . . are more interested in the fate of the Islands and of their government, than any other Nation can be; and this consideration induces the President to be quite willing to declare . . . that the government of the Sandwich Islands ought to be respected; that no power ought either to take possession of the Islands as a conquest or for the purpose of colonization; and that no power ought to seek for any undue control over the existing Government, or any exclusive privileges or preferences in matters of commerce."⁴⁹ Less than two weeks later, in what some historians have labeled the Tyler Doctrine, the president reiterated and even strengthened this position by declaring to Congress that Hawaii, being "Far remote from the dominions of European powers," and given its "near approach to this continent and the intercourse which American vessels have with it," should be respected. It "could not but create dissatisfaction on the part of the United States at any attempt by another power, should such attempt be threatened or feared, to take possession of the islands, colonize them, and subvert the native Government."⁵⁰ Where Webster made abstract references to other powers, Tyler specifically aimed his

⁴⁹ Daniel Webster to Timoteo Haalilio and William Richards, 19 December 1842, in *Ibid.*, 870.

⁵⁰ John Tyler, "Special Message," 30 December 1842, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 4:212.

declaration at Europe. Both men extended the American sphere of influence and self-interest to include Hawaii. The doctrine of two spheres had been reiterated and now it was being expanded.

The Return of Texas

His Doctrine aside, Tyler's most significant contribution to the evolution of American principles of foreign policy was brought about by his obsession with the annexation of Texas. From the moment he took office upon William Henry Harrison's death in 1841, it became his primary objective while president, but it was not until the end of 1843 that he took his first step. In his third annual message to Congress, Tyler boldly extended the U.S. sphere of interest to include Texas. With Mexico still waging a war against that nation in an attempt to resubjugate it, Tyler claimed that "Our own interests are involved in the matter, since, however neutral may be our course of policy, we can not hope to escape the effects of a spirit of jealousy on the part of both of the powers. Nor can this Government be indifferent to the fact that a warfare such as is waged between those two nations is calculated to weaken both powers and finally to render them – and especially the weaker of the two – the subjects of interference on the part of stronger and more powerful nations." Such interference would surely be "detrimental to the interests of the United States. We could not be expected quietly to permit any such interference to our disadvantage." Given America's close and historic relationship with Texas, the United States was "bound by every consideration of interest as well as of sympathy to see that she shall be left free to

act, especially in regard to her domestic affairs, unawed by force and unrestrained by the policy or views of other countries.”⁵¹ On one level Tyler was simply extending the same protection to Texas as he had to Hawaii, but given the precarious position of both Texas and Mexico, the seemingly imminent threat of European intervention, and the impact that this could have on U.S. interests, it is curious that he would not extend the same protections, even if just rhetorically, to Mexico. In reality, he was using the doctrine of two spheres to expedite the American acquisition of Texas; by the time he had made this pronouncement, the United States was already negotiating a treaty of annexation with that country.

Tyler’s logic in extending American protection over Texas in this manner was two-fold. First, he sought to ward off European interference before annexation could be achieved. The interest at stake for the United States was not the larger implications of European interference in American affairs, but the potential loss of Texas. More than this, the administration was particularly concerned with Great Britain and recent rumors that it was going to exert its efforts to see slavery abolished in Texas (and ultimately in the United States as well). John C. Calhoun, Tyler’s secretary of state from February 1844 forward, was one of the leading advocates of the immediate need to annex Texas to stave off British abolitionism. Writing to the British minister to the United States, Richard Pakenham, in April 1844, he explained that “So long as Great Britain confined her policy to the abolition of slavery in her own possessions and colonies, no other country has a right to complain. . . . But when she goes

⁵¹ John Tyler, “Third Annual Message,” December 1843, in *Ibid.*, 261-62.

beyond, and avows it as her settled policy, and the object of her constant exertions, to abolish it throughout the world, she makes it the duty of all other countries, whose safety or prosperity may be endangered by her policy, to adopt such measures as they may deem necessary for their protection.”⁵² In the case of the United States, the appropriate measure was the annexation of Texas.

While Tyler was concerned with preventing European interference, his second objective in extending the doctrine of two spheres over Texas in the manner that he did was to introduce the specter of European interference as a means of spurring congressional action. When the annexation treaty was submitted to the Senate in April 1844, Tyler once again raised the threat of losing Texas to Europe, warning that it was “inevitable, that if the boon now tendered be rejected Texas will seek for the friendship of others. In contemplating such a contingency it can not be overlooked that the United States are already almost surrounded by the possessions of European powers.” If the United States did not act, Europe would. In this message, Tyler also used the doctrine of two spheres to justify the very act of annexation, arguing that “Our right to receive the rich grant tendered by Texas is perfect, and this Government should not, having due respect either to its own honor or its own interests, permit its course of policy to be

⁵² John C. Calhoun to Richard Pakenham, 18 April 1844, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Robert L. Meriwether, 28 vols. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1959-2003), 18:274. Writing in May 1845, once he was no longer Secretary of State and after annexation had been completed, Calhoun described Britain’s “scheme . . . to abolish slavery in Texas as the most certain means of doing so in the United States. . . . To consummate this grand and well laid scheme, it was indispensable that Texas should be prevented from being annexed to our Union; while the only possible way to defeat it and prevent the mighty consequences which would flow from it, was the annexation of Texas.” Annexation meant that the institution of slavery would be secure. John C. Calhoun to Percy Walker and Others, 15 May 1845, in *Ibid.*, 21:553-54.

interrupted by the interference of other powers, even if such interference were threatened. The question is one purely American.”⁵³

When the Senate rejected the treaty in early June, citing concerns over slavery, sectionalism, and the real potential of war with Mexico, Tyler remained undeterred. He sent the treaty to the House of Representatives with a message reiterating the doctrine of two spheres, apparently in an effort to put at ease those concerned for the European response to annexation. Somewhat ironically, Tyler was using the threat of European interference to justify annexation, while simultaneously arguing that Europe likely would not interfere because of the doctrine of two spheres.⁵⁴ At the end of 1844 he once again argued for America’s “direct interest” in the disposition of Texas and that the ongoing war between that power and Mexico “subjected both . . . to the interference of other powers, which . . . might eventuate the most serious injury to the United States.” Should the United States accomplish annexation, he did not “apprehend any serious complaint from any other quarter; no sufficient ground exists for such complaint. We should interfere in no respect with the rights of any other nation. . . . We seek no conquest made by war. No intrigue will have been resorted to or acts of diplomacy essayed to accomplish the annexation of Texas. Free and independent herself, she asks to be received into our Union. It is a question for our own decision whether she shall be received or not.”⁵⁵ Influenced in no small part by the election of James K. Polk to the presidency on an expansionist platform, in the

⁵³ John Tyler, “Special Message,” 22 April 1844, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 4:310-11.

⁵⁴ John Tyler, “Special Message,” 10 June 1844, in *Ibid.*, 326.

⁵⁵ John Tyler, “Fourth Annual Message,” 3 December 1844, in *Ibid.*, 341, 344-45.

last days of Tyler's presidency Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing the annexation of Texas, a measure sanctioned by Tyler on his last day in office. By the end of 1845 Texas had been admitted as the twenty-eighth state of the Union.

By the time Democrat James K. Polk assumed the presidency in March 1845 American principles had undergone a sea-change. What began in 1840 as the natural expansion of the definition of American interest and interpretation of American principle was perverted into something much more aggressive and insidious once Tyler set his sights on Texas. The doctrine of two spheres, as Tyler came to define it, became a tool to undermine that declaration's true meaning. Tyler's repeated assertions that Europe had no right to complain of U.S. dealings with Texas was correct (if naïve), but it disregarded the right of Latin America, and Mexico in particular, which still laid claim to Texas, to protest. Tyler sacrificed America's relationship with Mexico and jeopardized relations with Latin America and Europe for the short-term gain of the more immediate acquisition of Texas. Even if one believed that European intervention in Texas or Mexico was imminent, thus necessitating a U.S. response, the most troubling aspect of Tyler's use of the doctrine of two spheres was his view of what that response should be. For John Quincy Adams and James Monroe that response could only be determined once specific action had been taken; for Tyler it was to preemptively annex Texas to prevent such intervention from taking place. When one considers how widely doubted European intervention actually was, it makes

Tyler's actions and rhetoric all the most suspect.⁵⁶ Most significantly from 1843 to 1845, for all of the discussion of American interests and American principles, virtually none of its was framed with reference to Washington's Farewell Address, largely because there was no way to square annexation with its larger ideals. Whether motivated by the slave interest (as many proponents of annexation were), or concern for his personal legacy, Tyler had moved the United States away from strict adherence to Washington's maxims in its international relations.

James K. Polk and the Monroe Doctrine

With Texas secured as part of the Union, the expansionist Polk could turn his attention to the vast reaches of territory along the north- and southwestern borders of the United States, most notably Oregon and California. Two months before he delivered his first annual address, Polk relayed in his diary that "He

⁵⁶ Henry Clay, for one, dismissed the possibility of British intervention in Texas. Writing in late 1843, he declared the opinion that "it will turn out that there is not the smallest foundation for the imputation of a design on the part of Great Britain to establish a colony of Texas. Such an attempt, on her part, would excite the hostility of all the great Powers of Europe, as well as the United States. But, odious as such a design, on the part of Great Britain, would be as she would cover it probably under the pretext of emancipation, her conduct would not be regarded with so much detestation, by the civilized world, as that would be of the United States, in seeking to effect annexation, since the motive which would be attributed to her and with much justice would be that of propagating instead of terminating slavery." The following year, Theodore Sedgwick published a pamphlet likewise dismissing interventionist fears, asking "what ground is there for the apprehension? What reason to suppose that England will undertake such a scheme, or that we cannot prevent it?" Pointing to Monroe's declarations of twenty years earlier in response to the threat of Holy Alliance intervention in Spanish America, he asked "Are we weaker now than we were then? or less competent to prevent unjustifiable interference with foreign powers?" Sedgwick concluded that "Texas is not threatened by any foreign power. She scarcely needs a government. All that she requires is the guaranty of this country that she shall not be oppressed by the European powers, and that guaranty she possesses in our own interests." Henry Clay to John J. Crittenden, 5 December 1843, in *Papers*, 9:899; and Theodore Sedgwick, *Thoughts on the Proposed Annexation of Texas to the United States: First Published in the New-York Evening Post, Under the Signature of Veto* (New-York: D. Fanshaw, 1844), 26-27.

would maintain all our rights, would take bold and strong ground, and reaffirm Mr. Monroe's ground against permitting any European power to plant or establish any new colony on the North American continent."⁵⁷ The doctrine of two spheres, if only in principle and not in name, had been used by Tyler, and now Polk would revive the non-colonization principle. Three days later he clarified that "in reasserting Mr. Monroe's doctrine, I had California & the fine bay of San Francisco as much in view as Oregon." He believed that Great Britain had its sights on California and he wanted to make clear to the rest of the world "that the people of the U. S. would not willingly permit California to pass into the possession of any new colony planted by Great Britain or any foreign monarchy."⁵⁸ Unlike when they were first declared by Monroe and Adams two decades earlier, these principles would be reasserted not in defense of any larger ideal, but to preserve unimpaired America's ability to expand territorially across the continent. Secretary of State James Buchanan echoed Polk's concerns in writing to the U.S. consul at Monterey, California. He stated that the United States "could not view with indifference the transfer of California to Great Britain or any other European Power. The system of colonization by foreign monarchies on the North American continent must and will be resisted by the United States." Buchanan urged the consul to "warn the Government and people of California of the danger of such an interference to their peace and prosperity," and "to inspire them with a jealousy of European dominion, and to arouse in their bosoms that

⁵⁷ 21 October 1845, in James K. Polk, *The Diary of James K. Polk, During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 4 vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910), 1:64-65.

⁵⁸ 24 October 1845, in *Ibid.*, 71.

love of liberty and independence so natural to the American Continent.”⁵⁹ Polk and Buchanan embraced American principles, but a specific view of those principles that served their larger territorial ambitions; the diplomacy and patience that had marked previous administrations were largely being replaced by rationalization and lust.

In instructions to James Slidell, the new minister to Mexico, Buchanan expressed the idea that “The nations on the continent of America have interests peculiar to themselves.” As he phrased it, “The interests and the independence of these sister nations require that they should establish and maintain an American system of policy for their own protection and security, entirely distinct from that which has so long prevailed in Europe. To tolerate any interference on the part of European sovereigns with controversies in America; to permit them to apply the worn-out dogma of the balance of power to the free States of this continent; and above all, to suffer them to establish new Colonies of their own, intermingled with our free Republics, would be to make, to the same extent, a voluntary sacrifice of our independence.” In addition to such principled ends, Buchanan and Polk also authorized Slidell to offer up to twenty-five million dollars for the purchase of California.⁶⁰ Mexico declined to receive Slidell, thus preventing a negotiated acquisition of California, but the more important implication of Buchanan’s letters was that the United States was once again pursuing the

⁵⁹ James Buchanan to Thomas O. Larkin, 17 October 1845, in *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, ed. John Bassett Moore, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1908-11), 6:275-76.

⁶⁰ James Buchanan to John Slidell, 10 November 1845, in *Ibid.*, 295, 304-5.

expansion and international adoption of the Monroe Doctrine. There was certainly a great irony to the fact that Polk and Buchanan had been among the most ardent opponents of the Panama mission in 1826, yet were now responsible for pursuing the same objects in Mexico. Ironies aside, Polk's reassertion of the Monroe Doctrine in December 1845 was thus not just an abstract declaration of principles, but was part of a much larger effort to see the continent unite behind the ideal of keeping the European powers out of American affairs so as to best defend the (territorial) interests of the United States. In effect, he wanted the Mexican government to adopt principles that would facilitate his government in taking the California territory away from it.

In January 1846 Senator Robert Allen, a Democrat from Ohio, sought to give legislative sanction to the spirit of Polk's first annual message to Congress by introducing a joint resolution "declaratory of the principles by which the Government of the United States will be governed in regard to the interposition of the Powers of Europe in the political affairs of America." Linking the need for Polk's message with the "manifestations of a disposition by certain Powers of Europe to interfere in the political arrangements of this continent, with a view to the enforcement of the European principle of the 'balance of power,'" the announcement of "the counter principle of non-intervention . . . was demanded by the manifest hazard to which such interference would inevitably expose the relations of peace now subsisting between the Old World and the New." The resolution then declared "to the civilized world the unalterable resolution of the

United States to adhere to and to enforce the principle, that any effort of the Powers of Europe to intermeddle in the social organization or political arrangements of the Independent nations of America, or further to extend the European system of Government upon this continent by the establishment of new Colonies, would be incompatible with the independent existence of the nations, and dangerous to the liberties of the people of America, and therefore would incur, as by the right of self-preservation it would justify, the prompt resistance of the United States.”⁶¹ Allen was essentially seeking legislative sanction of this more aggressive version of the Monroe Doctrine; sanction that the original never received.

John C. Calhoun, returned to the Senate after his brief tenure as secretary of state, was among the first to stand up and object to Allen’s resolution. Calhoun was uniquely qualified to offer insight on the resolution, as he was not only the most recent head of the State Department, but he had also been a member of James Monroe’s cabinet when the annual message that became known as the Monroe Doctrine was formulated and debated. He declared that “No man could view with stronger feelings of indignation than he did the improper interference of the European Powers with the nations of this continent.” That was not the question put before the Senate in Allen’s resolution, though. Instead it asked “whether we should take under our guardianship the whole family of American States, and pledge ourselves to extend to them our protection against all foreign aggression.” He questioned if the United States had “arrived at that state of

⁶¹ Robert Allen, 14 January 1846, in *Cong. Globe*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 197.

maturity when we could wisely and effectually do so? Was this to be the understood and settled policy of our Government? If so, it would become necessary to pursue a different course from that we have heretofore adopted.” Given that the resolution expressed the same sentiments contained in Polk’s message, he wondered “Why should we not, for the present, be satisfied with this announcement?” Looking back to Monroe’s original declarations, he noted that “it had been followed by no action on the part of our Government,” and questioned why a greater step was warranted in the present case?⁶² Calhoun was directly challenging Allen on the grounds that his resolution represented a departure from America’s long-standing principles.

Allen responded that “should Congress remain silent, that silence would be a negation of what the President has laid down – a declaration to all Europe that, as far as this principle is in question, it is not recognized by the people of the United States, so far as the legislative branch is concerned.” In Calhoun’s mind, Allen was missing the point. As he put it, “It was the part of wisdom to select wise ends in a wise manner. No wise man, with a full understanding of the subject, would pledge himself, by declaration, to do that which was beyond the power of execution, and without mature reflection as to the consequences. There would be no dignity in it. True dignity consists in making no declaration which we are not prepared to maintain. If we make the declaration, we ought to be prepared to carry it into effect against all opposition.”⁶³ Since the United States

⁶² John C. Calhoun, 14 January 1846, in *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 197-98

was not going to defend both American continents against European intervention, it should not make a grand declaration that it would, and it should not sanction it by the vote of the legislature. In a certain respect, Calhoun's remarks were an indictment of the original Monroe Doctrine as much as its reiteration.

The resolution was tabled until the end of January, when Allen called it back up and Lewis Cass entered the debate. Cass saw the resolution both for its larger significance and its practical bearing on America's more immediate future. Looking back to Monroe's declaration in 1823, he argued that as "no response was made to it by Congress, . . . it has therefore remained a dead letter upon the history of our intercourse with other nations." In the present case, Congress could not afford to ignore Polk's "assertion of a great principle – of an everlasting principle – of the right of the independent nations upon this hemisphere to be free from the control of the powers of Europe, and an assertion by the oldest of the family of nations upon this continent, made by one for the benefit of all." As if taking a page from Polk's diary, Cass cited the British threat on America's borders and declared that "Oregon and California, if gained, and Mexico influenced, if not ruled, would complete the circle, and would place our boundaries everywhere in contact with the territories of a great power." Expressing a train of thought that would gain great momentum in succeeding years, he argued that "We are young, but we are every day becoming stronger as we become older. Time is dealing well by us. What we now want is to prevent any future pretence that by our acquiescence we have recognized this new-fangled

doctrine of interference. Let us say to the world, we have no lot nor part in it.”

The only way to give effect and significance to Polk’s declarations – the only way to protect them from becoming “as barren as was that of Mr. Monroe” – was for Congress to sanction them.⁶⁴

For Allen, Cass, and Calhoun, the core disagreement boiled down to the implications of a broad and general declaration for American policy and American principles. Allen believed that “interference should cease; it must cease; and they might as well tell Europe calmly and mildly in the form of those resolutions, at the beginning, as by a declaration of war. The sovereigns of Europe could not be allowed to interfere in the affairs of this continent.”⁶⁵ Cass declared that “The principle for which I contend is this: by such a declaration as that contemplated in the resolution, we would merely place our protest on record, not being thereby bound to any definite course of action, but being left free to maintain neutrality or actively engage in enforcing the principle, as we might see fit.”⁶⁶ Calhoun fundamentally disagreed, and asked “would it not be better to wait for the emergency in which we would have sufficient interest to interfere, and sufficient power to make that interference influential? . . . Will mere vamping bravado have any practical effect? No. . . . We must meet each particular case by itself, and according to its own merits, always taking care not to assert our rights

⁶⁴ Lewis Cass, 26 January 1846, in *Ibid.*, 240-41.

⁶⁵ Robert Allen, 26 January 1846, in *Ibid.*, 246.

⁶⁶ Lewis Cass, 26 January 1846, in *Ibid.*, 245.

until we feel ourselves able to sustain our assertions.”⁶⁷ To put this another way, Calhoun was arguing for the preservation of the freedom to act as circumstances would dictate, which was one of the core premises of the Farewell Address. The reason many Americans had backed away from the Monroe Doctrine and condemned the Panama mission in the first place was that they were seen as committing the United States to foreign policies that might ultimately not serve American interests. By going back on this idea if these resolutions were passed, the nation would be jeopardizing its future safety and security and violating the spirit of both the Farewell and the Jeffersonian reconceptualization.⁶⁸ The resolutions were ultimately referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and were never seen again.

The debate on Allen’s resolutions provides an important window on the state of foreign policy thought as the nation approached a crossroads. Within a few months, the Oregon Treaty would be concluded, finally bringing to an end America’s long-standing territorial disputes with Great Britain, and war would be

⁶⁷ John C. Calhoun, 26 January 1846, in *Ibid.*, 245-46. Other senators took the floor, but it was the arguments of these three that shaped and guided the debate.

⁶⁸ John M. Clayton of Delaware, less concerned with the grand implications of the resolution, pointed to the Democratic party’s staunch opposition to the Panama mission in 1826, its criticism of the doctrine of two spheres and non-colonization principle, and specifically to the roles of Buchanan and Polk in carrying out that opposition, and wondered how they could now be endorsing such antithetical principles. In his diary, Polk mentioned that shortly after Clayton’s speech Cass approached him and informed him that Calhoun had given Polk’s 1826 speech against the Panama mission to Clayton to use in the debate. Polk thought that “it would have been more open and manly for Mr. Calhoun to have used the speech himself in debate, if he desired it to be used to show an apparent inconsistency on my part. But there is no inconsistency between the speech of 1826 and the message of 1845. The subjects treated of at the two periods were of an entirely different character. My speech in 1826 was against forming ‘entangling alliances’ with other nations. My message asserted the great principle that we would permit no Foreign colonization or interference on the North American continent, and that the nations of this continent would regulate their own destiny.” John M. Clayton, 31 January 1846, in *Ibid.*, 247; 31 January 1846, in Polk, *Diary*, 1:205.

declared on Mexico. If the annexation of Texas represented a step away from Washington's Farewell Address and its expansion of the doctrine of two spheres, the Mexican War threatened their complete abandonment by at least some Americans. A war started under false pretenses, and widely recognized at the time as being fought for territorial aggrandizement, clearly suggested a much more aggressive (and divisive) definition of American interest. The prosecution of the war itself is less important here than are the impacts it had on American priorities and principles. Most notable in this vein were events in the Mexican state of Yucatan, which had declared its neutrality in the war and grabbed the attention of the president and Congress in early 1848. In his diary entry for 7 March, Polk made note of "an application from an agent of the Department of Yucatan in Mexico, setting forth that a savage and cruel war was now waging by the Indians of Yucatan against the white race, and . . . requesting that the U. S. would afford assistance to the white population to save them from destruction." Secretary of State Buchanan "earnestly urged" that ten thousand pounds of gun powder immediately be shipped to the whites of Yucatan to facilitate their defense, but Polk countered that "the power [gun powder] proposed to be introduced into Yucatan might be transported to other parts of Mexico and be used in the war against the forces of the U. S."⁶⁹ Polk needed assurances that this would not happen before he would proceed.

Yucatan largely disappeared from the cabinet's view until the end of April when word reached Washington that "the Gov. of Yucatan asks the aid of the U.

⁶⁹ 7 March 1848, in Polk, *Diary*, 3:373-74.

S., & states that the same aid had been asked from the Governments of Great Britain & Spain, & that the Yucatanas [*sic*] were ready to surrender their country & the sovereignty over it to any Government which would protect & save them from extermination.” This changed the question in Polk’s mind, as he “could never agree to see Yucatan pass into the hands of a foreign monarchy to be possessed and colonized by them.” He instructed Buchanan to draft a message to Congress “placing the interposition of the U. S. upon the ground that it would be dangerous to us, and a violation of our settled policy, to permit either Great Britain or Spain to possess & colonize the country, and to [prevent] this the U. S. ought to afford the aid asked.”⁷⁰ Four days later, after perfecting the message, he submitted it to Congress. It presented “a case of human suffering and misery which can not fail to excite the sympathies of all civilized nations. . . . [T]he Indians of Yucatan are waging a war of extermination against the white race. . . . The inhabitants, panic stricken and destitute of arms, are flying before their savage pursuers toward the coast, and their expulsion from their country or their extermination would seem to be inevitable unless they can obtain assistance from abroad.” Given this dire situation, the “constituted authorities” in Yucatan “implored the aid of this Government to save them from destruction, offering in case this should be granted to transfer the ‘dominion and sovereignty of the peninsula’ to the United States.” To that point Polk was framing a case for humanitarian aid, yet he was quick to point out the similar offers made to Spain and Britain, and declared that “according to our established policy, we could not

⁷⁰ 25 April 1848, in *Ibid.*, 433-34.

consent to a transfer of this ‘dominion and sovereignty’ either to Spain, Great Britain, or any other European power.” Concerns for “Our own security” required “that the established policy thus announced should guide our conduct, and this applies with great force to the peninsula of Yucatan.”⁷¹

Given the mix of humanitarian and security concerns expressed by Polk, it was no surprise that the resulting debate moved in many different directions. Generally speaking, responses were divided between those who looked at Yucatan as an isolated question and those who placed it into the larger scope of American foreign policy and principles. In the first group, many were swayed by the humanitarian concerns, while others feared the political impact a military entry into Yucatan would have on relations with Mexico with the war still not fully resolved.⁷² It is the second focus of the debate that warrants greater consideration. A not-inconsiderable number of senators believed that the United States, fresh off a convincing military triumph, now had an obligation to assert

⁷¹ James K. Polk, “Special Message,” 29 April 1848, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 4:582. For a more thorough discussion of the background to the Yucatan episode, see Frederick Merk, *The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, 1843-1849* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 194-207; and Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 171-78.

⁷² Virtually everyone in Congress expressed a humanitarian sympathy for the whites being exterminated by the Indians. What such statements made clear, though, was that as much as they saw it as a humanitarian question, it was also a racial question. Indians comprised a substantial majority of Yucatan’s population that had been long-oppressed by the minority of whites in power. Rather than being seen as two populations struggling for control, it was portrayed as a savage race war. One newspaper report provided excellent insight on this point in its lament of the “dreadful condition of Yucatan and the destruction of its inhabitants by the Indians.” The whites were the legitimate inhabitants of Yucatan while the Indians were something separate. Had roles been reversed, or had both parties in the contest been white, American history to that point suggests that it would have been depicted as a revolutionary struggle by an oppressed people against tyrannical rule. “Yucatan,” *National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 20 April 1848. For a fascinating discussion of the racial aspect of Yucatan intervention from the U.S. perspective, see David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 173-95, 209-12.

itself more actively on the world stage in defense of American principles as well as liberal, democratic, and republican principles whenever and wherever they should come under attack. In the case of Yucatan, they argued, American intervention would not only prevent a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, but it would also uphold the right of those in power in Yucatan to determine their own form of government against European intrusion. Others strenuously argued that the United States had no right and no authority to intervene in Yucatan, regardless of how it was rationalized, and they pointed to the great irony that Polk was using the Monroe Doctrine and its principles of non-intervention to justify U.S. intervention in Yucatan; in other words, intervention to uphold non-intervention.

In many respects the debate that ensued was but a continuation of that of January 1846 over the Allen resolution.⁷³ As soon as Polk's message was read, John C. Calhoun immediately took the floor to express his disquietude with the proposition that the United States should intervene in Yucatan, especially when justified by the Monroe Doctrine. He understood Polk to be asserting "the principle as deduced from Mr. Monroe's declaration, that when the people of any

⁷³ The House of Representatives only briefly considered Polk's Yucatan message before referring it to the Committee on Foreign Relations, from which no report was ever issued. The most interesting remarks were those made by two southerners, Isaac Holmes of South Carolina and Alexander Stephens of Georgia. Holmes wondered if the United States would actually "interpose between [Yucatan] and any other country that should attempt to give them the necessary aid and protection?" If a European power assisted Yucatan, it would be at the behest of Yucatan, and not, as was originally contemplated in the Monroe Doctrine, an unwanted intervention in an American nation's domestic affairs; thus the Doctrine was being mobilized by Polk to thwart self-government rather than to protect it. Stephens was less concerned with Yucatan itself than the precedent U.S. action would set. He declared that he "was not prepared to say that this country should set out on a crusade to establish freedom in other Governments, and to throw the aegis of its protection over all the nations of the earth." Such an interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine had been rejected in the wake of repeated Latin American proposals for alliance, and Stephens feared that aid to Yucatan was going to reinvigorate the expectation. 29 April 1848, in *Cong. Globe*, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 711.

portion of this continent is placed in the condition in which Yucatan is, and either party should be compelled to apply to us for protection, we should interpose to protect them, to prevent the interference of England, or some other foreign Power.” This was “A broad and dangerous principle, truly! It goes far beyond Mr. Monroe’s declaration.”⁷⁴

In spite of Calhoun’s objections, Polk’s message was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, which a week later reported a bill authorizing the president to “take temporary military occupation of Yucatan.”⁷⁵ Debate over the bill consumed much of the Senate’s time and attention over the next two weeks, but it was once again the remarks of Lewis Cass and John C. Calhoun that epitomized the arguments on each side.⁷⁶ Cass focused on the Monroe Doctrine in an attempt to demonstrate that its principles fully supported the proposed intervention in Yucatan. He reminded the Senate that the “declaration of Mr. Monroe . . . contemplated no interference with European settlements on this continent. They merely looked to a prevention of the reduction of any of the free

⁷⁴ John C. Calhoun, 29 April 1848, in *Ibid.*, Appendix, 590-91.

⁷⁵ 4 May 1848, in *Ibid.*, 727.

⁷⁶ The remarks of John J. Crittenden of Kentucky also deserve brief consideration given the applicability of the sentiments they expressed to future American conflicts. He saw the proposed measure as being hypocritical as it was a “violation of the principle of intervention which we laid down for the observance of all other nations.” Once the United States had violated this principle, “Other nations would be induced to create slight pretexts, on which they would justify themselves in following our example,” and which could lead to “a slobbering and protracted war everywhere.” Furthermore, if the U.S. military was authorized to enter Yucatan, no one had discussed how or when it would leave. Crittenden strongly disliked that there “were no fixed limits to the occupation in the bill. How long may it be before the vengeance of these Indians will be satisfied? How long will it be before these fifty thousand white people would be able to make head against their enemies? We must make a permanent military settlement there to effect any beneficial result.” Crittenden objected to American entry into a war in violation of its long-standing principles and without a clearly defined exit strategy. John J. Crittenden, 5 May 1848, in *Ibid.*, 730.

States of America to European dependence.” With this in mind, he saw the “policy of our country” as being “not to interfere with other Powers, but to prevent other Powers from interfering with us,” and to “act promptly and vigorously when we see any evidence of a desire on the part of European Powers to interfere with us.” In Cass’s estimation, “The war with Mexico . . . placed us in a position to enforce the policy laid down by Mr. Monroe. If we had not obtained a foot of land in Mexico, the war would be worth all that it has cost us, in the glory which it had shed around our country. No European Power will now venture an interference with us.” As all of this related to Yucatan, Cass pointed to the fact that Britain had already “stretched her powerful arm so as to touch every cape and headland on every ocean,” and recent intelligence indicated that there were already “four companies of British artillery in the southern portion of Yucatan.” He did not know “what course England would pursue, but it was our duty to be on our guard against any interference which may be injurious to our interests. When she lays the lion’s paw on Yucatan, it will be difficult to displace it.”⁷⁷ As a result, the United States had an obligation to Yucatan, to its own principles, and to its own security to intervene before Great Britain could. Cass envisioned a world where the United States lived and acted much more outside its own borders than had previously been contemplated by those who attached themselves to George Washington’s principles of non-interference in the concerns of other nations.

⁷⁷ Lewis Cass, 11 May 1848, in *Ibid.*, 754.

Rather than seeing the Yucatan measure as providing an opportunity for the United States to achieve a positive good, Calhoun saw it as “pregnant with consequences, both near and remote, which may deepyl [*sic*] affect the peace and interests of this country.” He saw a great value in the doctrine of two spheres when it was enunciated by Monroe in 1823, but argued that it belonged “to the history of that day” and had ceased to be applicable shortly thereafter. Calhoun also rejected the non-colonization principle, but for different reasons. On the most basic level, British intervention in Yucatan would not technically be colonization – Yucatan had requested aid and Britain would be providing it. British intervention (or American, for that matter) could lead to colonization, but was not a necessary result. Calhoun also voiced fundamental problems with the association of the non-colonization principle with the Monroe Doctrine in the first place, as “it never became a subject of deliberation in the cabinet. . . . It originated entirely with Mr. Adams.” Not having been submitted to the cabinet, it lacked, in Calhoun’s words, the “precision and clearness” that marked the fully vetted doctrine of two spheres, and he had grave objections to its perpetuation.⁷⁸

Looking beyond the specific Yucatan question, Calhoun objected to the continuing use of the Monroe Doctrine as a part of U.S. foreign policy. Its tenets

⁷⁸ While Calhoun’s description of the non-colonization principle belied his long-standing antipathy towards Adams, his recollection of the construction of the Monroe Doctrine represents a unique case of the problem of memory as a historical source. As discussed in chapter 3, the non-colonization principle did not originate in the same cabinet discussions as the doctrine of two spheres. It was not debated in November in relation to a potential intervention in Latin America by the Holy Alliance because it had already been declared to the Russian and British ministers the previous summer in response to the Russian ukase restricting use of the northwest coast of North America. The non-colonization principle may have been a surprise to Calhoun when Monroe’s annual message was delivered to Congress, but it had not been secreted in by Adams.

were “declarations, nothing more; declarations, announcing to the world that we should regard certain acts of interposition of the Allied Powers as dangerous to our peace and our safety.” The Doctrine did not contain “one word . . . in reference to resistance” to European intervention, but this did not stop President Polk from holding forth “these declarations as imposing a solemn duty on him as Chief Magistrate to resist on all occasions; and not only to resist, but to judge on the measure of that resistance.” More troubling, Polk had described the Doctrine as being “the settled policy of this country,” to which Calhoun retorted that “Declarations are not policy, and cannot become settled policy.” He surmised that Polk “must mean that it has become the settled policy of this country to resist what these declarations refer to; and to resist, if need be, by an appeal to arms.” He wondered, though, “Is this the fact? Has there been one instance in which these declarations have been carried into effect by resistance? If there be, let it be pointed out. Have there not been innumerable instances in which they have not been applied? Certainly.” The best evidence in support of Calhoun’s point was that “these declarations, under this broad interpretation, were disavowed entirely three years afterwards by the vote of the Republican party, when the administration of Mr. Adams endeavored to carry them out practically, by sending ministers to the Congress at Panama.” This was yet another example of the memory of the Panama debate being of the failure of the administration and a rejection of its principles rather than of the passage of the mission. Lending

further credence to Calhoun's point was the fact that the Doctrine had to be reintroduced by Polk in the first place.

Calhoun concluded that the Monroe Doctrine "is not, and never has been, the established policy of the country. And if it should ever become so, to the wide extent to which these declarations have been interpreted to go, our peace would ever be disturbed; the gates of our Janus would ever stand open; wars would never cease." He believed that "What the President has asserted in this case is not a principle belonging to these declarations; it is a principle which, in his misconception, he attempts to graft upon them, but which has an entirely different meaning and tendency. . . . It goes infinitely and dangerously beyond Mr. Monroe's declaration."⁷⁹ Calhoun saw the Monroe Doctrine, especially when framed as aggressively as Polk had presented it, as being dangerous to American peace and safety, while Cass saw it as facilitating the defense of American security. Calhoun was arguing for the maintenance of America's traditional principles as defined by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization of the Farewell Address, while Cass looked towards a foreign policy not limited by the overly restrictive "entangling alliances with none." All of the gnashing of teeth over intervention in Yucatan proved to be for naught, as it was announced on 17 May that a treaty had been agreed to between the whites and Indians and the war in Yucatan was over.⁸⁰ Much as Tyler had with the doctrine of two spheres and

⁷⁹ John C. Calhoun, 15 May 1848, in *Cong. Globe*, 30th Cong., 1st sess., Appendix, 630-31.

⁸⁰ Edward Hannegan announced that this intelligence had been published in that day's *Baltimore Sun*. Edward Hannegan, 17 May 1848, in *Ibid.*, 778. In a fitting epilogue to the debate, John Niles of Connecticut rose, and in a tone of voice making clear his skepticism of the reports of

Texas, Polk was using the Monroe Doctrine to legitimize preemptive intervention in international affairs. More importantly, the debate over Yucatan revealed a growing tension in a newly emerging debate over the Farewell Address between those who asserted its continuing importance and those who believed that the United States had outgrown it.

The Nadir of the Farewell Address

While the Yucatan debate acted as an important, albeit abortive, epilogue to the Mexican War, the more significant long-term impact of the war was the exacerbated sectional tensions that thrust slavery permanently forward as not just a dangerously divisive issue but as one that weighed on the consideration of all other questions, domestic and foreign. Slavery and the sectional crisis are so important in this context because they threatened and weakened the Union of the states Washington placed at the heart of his Farewell Address. Indeed, throughout the 1840s, while the Address continued to be publicly celebrated, it was increasingly clear that Unionist concerns and a growing ambivalence about America's foreign policy principles were having an impact. The Farewell and its principles were still praised, but more as a means of celebrating Washington than for their own lasting value. At annual birthday ceremonies held at Georgetown

imminent British intervention, stated that he was "surprised" that the revelation of a peace treaty was resulting in the postponement of the bill. Many senators had "advocated this bill mainly, I might almost say exclusively, on the ground of policy, with the view of meeting at the threshold the assumed aggressive policy of England. Now, if that be the consideration on which the bill was upon us, why postpone it?" The war in Yucatan may have been over, but "There is no evidence at all that the designs of England, if they ever existed, have been abandoned. . . . The argument of humanity has, I understand, been given up; the argument of policy still remains." John Niles, 17 May 1848, in *Ibid.*, Appendix, 641.

College in 1842, Joseph Johnson of Mississippi described the Farewell as containing “the golden treasure of wisdom, adorned with a perspicuity of thought and force and reasoning, which will do everlasting honor to the heart and intellect of its author; an address which has justly been celebrated to the present time, and will continue to be held up to our admiration as long as wisdom finds its admirers and patriotism is regarded with veneration.” Speaking at the same ceremony, John M. Heard of Maryland urged that “it be frequently rehearsed; every statesman, connected in any manner with government, should make it the object of his most serious attention; like the name of its illustrious author, it should be the first thing lisped by every babe of America.”⁸¹ C. P. Krauth, speaking at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1846, warned that “When we as a people shall cease to disregard [*sic*] the advice of our Washington, when a spirit different from that of his valedictory address shall prevail in our midst, when we trample upon the sacred truths which he inculcates, then may be written upon the Capitol of our Country, and all its ensigns, ‘*the glory hath departed.*’” He also recommended that Washington’s “advice be pondered well; and as the last counsel of him whom all delight to honor, commending itself by its wisdom and excellence, adopted to produce the highest good to us and our posterity, we should give heed to it, the more earnest heed, lest at any time we let it slip.”⁸²

⁸¹ *Address Delivered Before the Philodemic Society, of Georgetown College, D. C., on the 22d February, 1842, by John M. Heard, of Maryland. To which are Prefixed the Remarks of Joseph Johnson, of Mississippi, Previous to His Reading the Farewell Address of Washington* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1842), 4, 6.

⁸² Emphasis in original. C. P. Krauth, *Address Delivered on the Anniversary of Washington’s Birth-Day, at the Request of the Union Total Abstinence Society of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, [PA]: Printed by H. C. Neinstedt, 1846), 17, 22.

The following year in Albany, New York, William B. Sprague proclaimed Washington to have seen “with a prophet’s eye; he wrote with a prophet’s pen; and when we see how much more he knew of the future and how much wiser he was in providing for it, than other great men of his age, even the greatest, we are ready almost to say, without a figure, that he was a prophet indeed.” He predicted that if the Farewell Address “be engraven on the memory and the heart of the young men of the nation, and till they shall have gone to their graves at least, there will be a wall of fire round about our liberties, which will be proof alike against treason and faction at home, and jealousy and tyranny abroad.”⁸³

Celebrations in the nation’s capital in 1848 took on a somber tone when on 21 February John Quincy Adams fell into a stupor at his desk in the House of Representatives, only to die two days later in the office of the Speaker of the House, Robert C. Winthrop. That Fourth of July, in an oration originally intended to be delivered by Adams on Washington’s birthday, during a ceremony commemorating the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument, Winthrop urged that there had been no time “more important than at this moment where the two great leading principles of his policy should be remembered and cherished.” First, was “the most complete, cordial, and indissoluble Union of the States; and, second, the most entire separation and disentanglement of our own country from all other countries. Perfect union among ourselves, perfect neutrality towards others, and peace, peace, domestic peace and foreign peace, as

⁸³ William B. Sprague, *An Address Delivered on the Evening of the Twenty Second of February, MDCCCXLVII. Before the Young Men’s Association of the City of Albany* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1847), 16, 45.

the result; this was the chosen and consummate policy of the Father of his Country.”⁸⁴

As these passages demonstrate, public celebrations of Washington continued to place a high priority on the importance of his Farewell Address to America’s future, but other contemporary sources reveal that there was less familiarity with or allegiance to Washington’s maxims. Given the progress of the United States and its foreign policy, the priorities of the nation’s leaders, and the impact of decades of interpretation of the Farewell Address constricted by the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, it should come as little surprise that not all Americans saw the nation’s destiny as being tied to Washington’s principles. Writing to John C. Calhoun at the end of 1843, Secretary of State Abel Upshur argued that “a dictum of Washington’s suited to our infant condition had induced our people to believe that we have no interest in progress of other nations. But we should remember that the infant of that day has grown into a powerful commercial nation, whose interest[s] are diffused over every quarter of the globe, and that the purpose for which the federal Government was constituted was to protect those interests.”⁸⁵ Upshur had clearly taken “entangling alliances with none” to its extreme. Several years later President James K. Polk confided to his diary that “In my late message I was careful not to adopt or endorse all the

⁸⁴ *Oration Pronounced by the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, on the Fourth of July, 1848, on the Occasion of Laying the Corner-Stone of the National Monument to the Memory of Washington. With an Introduction and an Appendix* (Washington, D.C.: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1848), 32.

⁸⁵ Abel P. Upshur to John C. Calhoun, 30 November 1843, in Calhoun, *Papers*, 17:578.

opinions of President Washington in his message in 1796, because I did not approve them.”⁸⁶ Given his use of the Monroe Doctrine, this was no surprise.

In 1849, William Henry Trescot authored a pamphlet titled *A Few Thoughts On the Foreign Policy of the United States*, in which he argued that the United States had outgrown Washington and his Farewell Address. As he put it, “It is true that at the commencement of our existence, with the caution of a nation at once wise and weak, we resolved to stand apart from the entanglements of European politics. It is true that while every other vestige of his policy, has been trodden out by the press of new circumstances and strong necessities, the warning of Washington against foreign policy has been stereotyped into a political proverb.” Fifty years later, the country was fundamentally changed, with evolved interests and capabilities. Given that the United States “stands in such intimate relation to the colonial empires of the world, has it not a direct interest in their relation to each other; . . . has it not a right to be heard in all matters touching their mutual power? Is it not time, that by some distinct and unequivocal manifestation, it should declare its intention to participate in the counsels of the world? There is but one principle upon which American intervention in the international relations of Europe can be justified, but that so wide as to cover almost any interference; and it is this, that wherever the changes among European powers are such as to modify the respective weight of its colonial empires, we are

⁸⁶ 19 January 1848, in Polk, *Diary*, 3:306.

directly interested in the resulting balance of power.”⁸⁷ This conception of the role the United States could and/or should play in the world was at the heart of the Yucatan debate and would continue at the heart of the struggle between those who desired to hold on to America’s traditional principles and those who wanted to move in a bold new direction.

By 1850, Washington’s Farewell Address occupied a somewhat different place in the larger American consciousness; it was still publicly celebrated but it had lost its universal meaning. This was not only true with regards to foreign policy, but also, as was foreshadowed in the debate over Washington’s remains, as it pertained to its Unionist sentiments. A clash over the Farewell Address as a symbol of the Union took place in Congress in 1850 when Henry Clay introduced a resolution in the Senate to purchase the original manuscript of the Address, which was being put up for auction by the heirs of David C. Claypoole.⁸⁸ As Clay put it when he addressed the Senate, “To say nothing of the nature and character of that address, who is there, sir, amidst the discordant and ungrateful sounds of disunion and discord which assail our ears in every part of this country, and in both halls of Congress – who is there that would not find refreshment and delight behind the Farewell Address of Washington to the people of this country?”⁸⁹ Many, including Daniel Webster, concurred in Clay’s sentiments, but others questioned the necessity of the purchase. James A. Pearce of Maryland, in

⁸⁷ William Henry Trescot, *A Few Thoughts On the Foreign Policy of the United States* (Charleston, [SC]: John Russell, 1849), 4, 14.

⁸⁸ 23 January 1850, in *Cong. Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 220.

⁸⁹ Henry Clay, 24 January 1850, in *Ibid.*, 226.

remarks lasting less than a minute, expressed the idea four separate times that manuscripts of this sort were “valuable merely as relics.”⁹⁰ Jefferson Davis of Mississippi questioned, “what is there so scared in the manuscripts of this Address? It is known to have been the joint production of Washington and one, at least, of his Cabinet – not the emanation of his mind alone. I feel no such respect as has been here expressed for it, and cannot perceive how this manuscript is to effect such happy results.”⁹¹ Solon Borland of Arkansas took offence that “the main object to be accomplished by the passage of this resolution is to reiterate what I have seen session after session, and what I think is disgraceful to many citizens of this country; that is, the disposition to speculate upon the patriotism of the country.”⁹²

In the House of Representatives, Samuel W. Inge of Alabama struck a desolate tone, suggesting that “The glorious sentiments embodied by General Washington in his Farewell Address, had faded away. These sentiments, which were so wisely, so patriotically expressed in that important paper had passed away, and were now lost sight of. Does public opinion respond to the sentiments contained in that Address? No. There is no such response. Instead of responding to the exhortations contained in that paper, our country throughout her whole extent is at this moment torn by dissensions, which threaten, in their progress and their termination, to tear down the existing fabric of our Government, and to destroy the most precious relic which has heretofore been preserved in the ark of

⁹⁰ James A. Pearce, 24 January 1850, in *Ibid.*, 227.

⁹¹ Jefferson Davis, 24 January 1850, in *Ibid.*

⁹² Solon Borland, 24 January 1850, in *Ibid.*, 228.

the Constitution.”⁹³ Joseph R. Chandler of Pennsylvania disagreed with Inge’s sentiment “that the spirit of this Address had departed among us. He thought it was not dead, but sleeping, and he agreed . . . that the influence of this paper would reanimate it.” He further “sincerely hoped . . . that we might all go together to the perusal of this Address, and emphatically dwell on that part which treats on the importance of preserving the Union, and the dangers which must result from its dissolution.”⁹⁴ This debate over the physical Farewell Address and not its abstract principles encapsulated the ambiguous position it had come to occupy by mid-century. For many it was still an enduring statement of American ideals, but for a vocal minority it was little more than a relic of the past.

The measure ultimately comfortably passed both houses of Congress, but by the time all political maneuvering had ceased it was too late. On 12 February 1850, Rev. Henry A. Boardman, a pastor from Philadelphia, acting on behalf of James Lenox of New York, purchased the manuscript for the sum of \$2,300.⁹⁵ The loss of the Address because of petty and partisan disputes in Congress must surely have been seen as a bad omen by those who praised it as a symbol of the Union. Over the previous quarter-century the Farewell Address had been held up as inviolable, its principles had been wisely expanded to give it lasting efficacy but also dismissed as being too narrow to meet America’s new challenges and broadening interests. As those expanded principles were perverted and turned into something unrecognizable, the Address was rendered little more than a tool

⁹³ Samuel W. Inge, 6 February 1850, in *Ibid.*, 297.

⁹⁴ Joseph R. Chandler, 6 February 1850, in *Ibid.*, 298.

⁹⁵ Paltsits, *Washington’s Farewell Address*, 96-102.

for the celebration of Washington. Even as an important symbol of the Union, it was largely disregarded by many in the increasingly divided nation. This moment that could have been seen as the nadir of the Farewell Address was relatively short-lived, though, as the arrival of Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth in the United States less than two years later stepped off the most widespread reconsideration of the Farewell and the place its principles of foreign policy should continue to hold to take place in the nation's history.

Six: "Washington or Kossuth?": The Farewell Address in the American Mind after Fifty Years

Speaking in New York City on 11 December 1851 at the Corporation Dinner being held in his honor, Hungarian revolutionary leader Louis Kossuth presented his arguments for why America's long-standing principles of foreign policy were antiquated and preventing the United States from assuming its rightful place in the world. He declared that "there can be scarcely any thing more dangerous to the progressive development, of whatever nation, than to take for a *basis* that which is none; to take for a principle that which is but the convenience of the passing situation; to take for substantial that which is but accidental, or take for a constitutional doctrine that which was but the momentary exigency of administrative policy." He was, of course, talking about George Washington's Farewell Address.¹

Kossuth had come to the United States to generate support for the recently quashed Hungarian revolution against Austria. He was specifically looking for a declaration by the U.S. government that it would go to war to prevent Russia, or any other European power, from intervening to put Hungary down, as Russia had in Hungary's original defeat in 1849. He believed that every nation had a sovereign right to determine its own fate without outside interference, and that this principle of non-intervention should be part of international law, and he toured the United States for seven months advocating this principle of

¹ Emphasis in original. *Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Common Council of the City of New York, to Make Arrangements for the Reception of Gov. Louis Kossuth, the Distinguished Hungarian Patriot* (New York: McSpedon & Baker, 1852), 141.

intervention to defend non-intervention. Kossuth's tour, while somewhat overlooked today, was in many ways a watershed moment for the United States. His arrival stepped off a spirited debate in Congress over the fundamental nature of U.S. foreign policy, but it was not contained to the legislative halls of the nation's capital; Americans of all classes and political persuasions were drawn to Kossuth and the power of his oratory and the cause he represented. Kossuth's visit was a cultural phenomenon as people traveled hundreds of miles just to see him in person and hear him speak. Most importantly, people throughout the nation engaged Kossuth on the level he engaged them and openly debated the merits of his arguments, and the meaning and significance of Washington's Farewell Address to America's past as well as its future. This chapter will briefly consider the growing interventionist sentiment in the United States before Kossuth's arrival, but will primarily focus on the Hungarian's tour of the country, examining his central arguments, Americans' responses to them, and the larger cultural impact he had in the United States by highlighting key events in New York, Washington, D.C., and Boston. This investigation reveals a great deal about the place the Farewell Address occupied in the American mind fifty years after Washington's death, and it provides insight into the broader popular conceptions of America's principles of foreign policy and the role the United States should play in the world. While Kossuth was ultimately unable to convince the United States to endorse the principle of intervention for non-intervention, he

did succeed in producing the most significant reevaluation of Washington's Farewell Address to take place in the nation's history.

A More Interventionist Foreign Policy?

After the victory over Mexico in 1848 a growing number of Americans began to urge the adoption of a more activist and interventionist foreign policy. This impulse was put on display, for example, in some of the arguments made to justify intervention in Yucatan in 1848. Such arguments were among the earliest strains of thought in the Young America movement. The basic premise of Young America was that the development of the United States by mid-century, in terms of territorial and population growth, the maturation of political institutions, and the recently demonstrated strength of the nation's military, represented a transition for the country from proverbial infancy and adolescence to manhood. Proponents of Young America, primarily members of the Democratic party, believed that the United States had not just the ability, but the duty to act internationally in defense of republicanism and liberal principles. The Yucatan debate in Congress is not typically discussed in relation to the development of Young America, at least in part because liberal principles were not at stake, but the arguments, and more importantly the leading proponents, were consistent, making it a revealing look into the early formation of the movement. The fullest expression of these ideas would not come until 1851-52 and the tour of Louis Kossuth throughout the United States, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Suffice it to say that Kossuth's calls for the United States to move past its old

modes of foreign policy thought and towards greater engagements with international movements were warmly received by those subscribing to Young America.²

Of greater notoriety in the years preceding Kossuth's arrival were American filibustering expeditions into the Caribbean and Latin America. Some U.S. citizens, discontented with the unwillingness of the federal government to take a more activist approach to international and especially hemispheric affairs, chose to take matters into their own hands by outfitting private expeditions to invade neighboring islands and nations, most notably Cuba and Nicaragua. These filibustering expeditions were often motivated as much by economic gain as by political ideals for those involved, but many Americans saw them within the context of the larger struggle over the proper aims and direction of U.S. foreign policy after Mexico. Private interventions in Cuba in 1851 generated so much national attention that President Millard Fillmore issued a proclamation disapproving of them and prominent Whig newspapers vigorously condemned them.³ The *Daily National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C., for example, repeatedly editorialized against filibustering in Cuba, and on 26 August 1851 argued that these expeditions were a violation of existing treaties with Spain, and

² The classic primer on Young America is M. E. Curti, "Young America," *American Historical Review* 32 (Oct. 1926): 34-55. For more recent and fascinating explorations of Young America's formation and impacts, see Edward L. Widmer, *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Yonatan Eyal, *The Young America Movement and the Transformation of the Democratic Party, 1828-61* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³ For Fillmore's proclamation against filibustering in Cuba, see Millard Fillmore, "Proclamation," 25 April 1851, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1908), 5:111-12.

that “This Government, were it not otherwise solemnly pledged, . . . would be bound by a regard to its own honor and professions, to compel its citizens to respect the authority of Spain so far as to abstain from all enterprises against its territories. Non-intervention in the internal administration of other Governments is the established policy of the United States, and universally recognised as such by every Administration of this Government.”⁴ The personal foreign policies of intervention threatened long-standing national principles as well as the reputation of the United States around the world.⁵

The desire of the government to remain uninvolved in international questions that did not pertain to its own direct interests was not universally adhered to in this period, as was witnessed in February and March 1851 when Congress approved the use of a U.S. naval ship to see Hungarian revolutionary leader Louis Kossuth transported from his captivity in Turkey to a new home in the United States. American interest in Kossuth stretched back to 1848 when the outbreak of revolution throughout much of Europe captured the national imagination in the United States. These revolutionary movements in the name of liberal reform on a continent historically dominated by aristocracy and monarchy were hailed in the United States as the dawning of a new era of republican and popular government. Americans paid special attention to events in Hungary, which was fighting for an autonomous existence from Austria, and which fought

⁴ “The Issue of the Cuban Conspiracy,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, 26 August 1851.

⁵ For more on filibustering in this era, see several excellent recent works, including Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

on long after many of the other revolutions had been quashed. At the center of Hungary's struggle was Governor Louis Kossuth, who most Americans believed epitomized all that was right and praiseworthy about the revolutionary movements on the continent. Kossuth was widely labeled a "genius" and deemed to be the George Washington of Hungary.⁶ The Austrian government, realizing it alone could not put down the Hungarian resistance, called upon the Russian military to assist, and the tide soon began to turn in Austria's favor. On 11 August 1849, Kossuth abdicated in favor of Hungary's leading general, and fled to Turkey; two days later the revolution ended in surrender and defeat due largely to Russia's intervention. Kossuth was soon after taken into custody in Turkey, and, to appease the Austrians, he was held under house arrest until 1851.

After his capture Kossuth was out of public view but he remained in the public's interest, especially in the United States, where people continued to sympathize with the plight of his nascent country and his own personal imprisonment. The best demonstration of the strength of this sympathy was seen in February and March 1851 when Congress passed a resolution "to authorize the employment of some one of the public vessels . . . to receive and convey to the United States the said Louis Kossuth and his associates in captivity." Those who supported the resolution believed that it was "the wish" of Kossuth and his fellow

⁶ See, for example, "The Hungarian Victory," *Littell's Living Age*, 16 June 1849, 521; and William Lloyd Garrison's speech, "Patriotism and Christianity – Kossuth and Jesus," delivered in summer, 1849, in *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison* (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1852), 78.

exiles “to emigrate to the United States.”⁷ That Congress was authorizing the use of a government vessel to carry out this transport was unprecedented, and some observers, both in the United States and in Europe, believed that it represented an act of intervention in European affairs, but Congress saw it as facilitating the emigration of a group of exiles to the United States upon their release from Turkey; as providing transport for Louis Kossuth, émigré, and not Louis Kossuth, revolutionary leader. Unbeknownst to Congress was that Kossuth did not consider himself a mere exile, and had reassumed responsibility for the continuation of his country’s revolution, going so far as to reappropriate the title of Governor of Hungary to himself.⁸

Turkey released Kossuth to the custody of the United States on 10 September 1851, when he boarded the *U.S.S. Mississippi* bound for New York City.⁹ Captain John C. Long of the *Mississippi* was under strict orders to “Avoid the expression of any opinion . . . inclined towards any particular party or nation. It is the determination of the government to preserve our neutrality strictly. . . . [A]ny deviation from the foregoing order . . . will hardly, under any

⁷ “Joint Resolution for the relief of Louis Kossuth and his associates, exiles from Hungary,” introduced in the Senate by Henry Foote (Democrat), Mississippi, 26 February 1851, in *Cong. Globe*, 31st Cong., 2nd Sess., 710.

⁸ John Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852* (Buffalo, NY: East European Institute, 1973), 47-48, 40-41. Secretary of State Daniel Webster was adamant that the United States was not seeking to intervene in Turkish affairs by discussing Kossuth’s release. In a letter to George Perkins Marsh, the U.S. minister to Turkey, Webster wanted it to be “strongly represented” that the United States “has no desire or intention to interfere in any manner with questions of public policy or international or municipal relations of other governments, not affecting the rights of its own citizens.” Daniel Webster to George Perkins Marsh, 28 February 1851, in *The Works of Daniel Webster*, ed. Edward Everett, 6 vols., 14th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1866): 6:591-92.

⁹ On the same day Kossuth was released by Turkey, Austria tried Kossuth in absentia for treason and hung him in effigy. Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy 1848-1852* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 44.

circumstances, admit of an excuse.”¹⁰ If Kossuth truly planned on settling in the United States to a life of quiet peace, such orders should have been easy to follow, but his behavior onboard the *Mississippi* made it immediately clear that quiet peace was not the future he had chosen. Instead, at every port he courted the crowds that cheered both him and the United States for taking the side of European freedom, and in doing so he jeopardized the appearance of American neutrality. With the situation growing increasingly untenable, Kossuth was allowed to leave the *Mississippi* to travel to Britain, from whence he would proceed to the United States several weeks later on a private vessel.¹¹ The proceedings on the *Mississippi*, frustrating for both American authorities and for Kossuth, should have signaled to both sides that there would be difficult times ahead.

Kossuth docked at Southampton, England on 23 October for four weeks of public speeches and private meetings. Kossuth felt that his time in England was vital for organizing a renewed revolutionary movement throughout Europe, and especially in Hungary. His efforts at organization were largely unsuccessful; however, the trip to Britain still proved to be quite important, both for the effect it had in the United States and for the impact it had on Kossuth’s expectations for that he could achieve when he got there. While news of Kossuth’s clashes with Captain Long was initially greeted with disdain by some Americans, most quickly forgot once transcripts of his British speeches reached the United States.

¹⁰ Quoted in Komlos, *Kossuth in America*, 53.

¹¹ Kossuth’s departure from the *Mississippi* is discussed at some length in *Ibid.*, 53-60.

Speaking before immense crowds numbering in the tens of thousands (some newspaper accounts of one London speech reported a crowd of up to 100,000 people), Kossuth spoke out in defense of the liberal principles that had garnered him international acclaim in the first place. He also revealed for the first time that, far from looking to settle down to a life of peace and quiet, he was going to the United States to garner support for the Hungarian cause. At a speech in Manchester, Kossuth declared his hope that he would be able to enlist the United States in an alliance with Great Britain in defense of the principles of non-intervention and human liberty. He saw U.S. efforts to see him released from Turkey as evidence of that nation's desire to stand up for his principles and his nation's right to an independent future; non-intervention was the key to both. As Kossuth explained to his cheering audience, non-intervention meant that no nation had the "right to interfere with the domestic affairs of another country." The refusal to act when that principle was violated and in the face of humanity's suffering was not non-intervention, but "an encouragement even to despotism, to carry their victory of absolutism, which has gone so much too far already."¹² The implication, soon to be confirmed, was that Kossuth expected the United States to change its traditional foreign policy.

¹² Louis Kossuth, transcript of speech at Manchester, England, 10 November 1851, in *Authentic Life of His Excellency Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary. His Progress from his Childhood to his Overthrow by the Combined Armies of Austria and Russia, with a Full Report of the Speeches Delivered in England, at Southampton, Winchester, London, Manchester, and Birmingham. To Which is Added, his Address to the People of the United States of America* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1851), 87.

Kossuth had not settled on such a bold course on his own. Just days after he arrived in England, at a dinner in his honor, former U.S. senator and treasury secretary Robert J. Walker, a Democrat from Mississippi, declared what Kossuth assumed to be U.S. principles. Walker stated that “The people of the United States had always maintained . . . the doctrine of non-intervention. It is but a few years since they were an infant State; they were now probably approaching manhood, and they still held sacred the doctrine that no Government had any right to interfere in the domestic affairs of another county. . . . They were in favor, then, of the doctrine of non-intervention.” Walker continued that he “desired now to endorse the sentiment . . . and the people of America would be ready to endorse it too – that whilst they were opposed to any intervention in the concerns of other countries, the time might come when, if despots should combine to overthrow the liberties of any nation, the people of the United States would be prepared to unite with their ancestors [the British]” to defend the principles of liberty.¹³ These remarks, by a prominent American, an American said by some to be running for president, struck Kossuth deeply. He believed that Walker spoke for all Americans, and that his sentiments not only suggested that the United States would forcibly defend the principle of non-intervention, but would also accede to an Anglo-American alliance to do it. Thus Kossuth departed for the United States

¹³ Robert J. Walker, *Speech of the Hon. Robert J. Walker, Late Secretary of the American Treasury, at the Banquet Given by the Mayor & Municipal Authorities of Southampton to M. Lewis Kossuth, Late Governor of Hungary, On the 28th Day of October, 1851, In Reply (By Request) to a Toast, in Favour of the Constitutional Governments of England and the United States* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1851).

on 20 November with a declared agenda and an expectation of success in achieving it.

Louis Kossuth in the United States

The level of popular enthusiasm and rejoicing that greeted Kossuth upon his arrival in New York City likely surpassed his expectations, but trouble loomed at the highest levels of government. On 2 December, President Millard Fillmore delivered his annual address to Congress, declaring that Kossuth “has expressed his grateful acknowledgments for the interposition of this Government in behalf of himself and his associates. This country has been justly regarded as a safe asylum for those whom political events have exiled from their own homes in Europe, and it is recommended to Congress to consider in what manner Governor Kossuth and his companions, brought hither by its authority, shall be received and treated.”¹⁴ Fillmore clearly expected to welcome Kossuth as a political exile and not as a foreign revolutionary. More revealing, though, was the reaction of Congress to a resolution introduced by Democratic Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi for Kossuth’s reception. The resolution requested a “joint committee of the two Houses of Congress . . . be appointed . . . to make suitable arrangements for the reception of Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary, on his arrival in the United States, and to communicate to him assurances of the profound respect entertained for him by the people of the United States; and to tender to him, on the part of Congress, and in the name of the people of the

¹⁴ Millard Fillmore, “Second Annual Address,” 2 December 1851, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 5:119-20.

United States, the hospitalities of the Metropolis of the Union.”¹⁵ Foote hoped that this resolution of welcome could be passed immediately, as its terms were “exceedingly guarded, and can do no harm any way,” but he encountered a great deal of resistance and was forced to withdraw his resolution two days later. New York Whig William H. Seward introduced a substitute that simply stated “That the Congress of the United States, in the name and behalf of the people of the United States, give Louis Kossuth a cordial welcome to the capital and to the country.”¹⁶ Even this resolution was subjected to a strenuous debate and was not passed by both houses of Congress until 15 December.

Most of the debate over the welcoming resolutions focused on Kossuth’s principle of intervention for non-intervention and what an official Congressional welcome would mean for U.S. foreign policy and for the perception of the United States in the rest of the world. In the earliest part of the debate, Joseph Underwood, a Whig from Kentucky, expressed the concern that “if we commence the system of complimenting foreigners for distinguished services in their own country in behalf of human liberty, there is no end; there is no limit to the exercise of this power, from this time forth forever. . . . How long is it, after you bring your aid and assistance by words, before you must carry it out by deeds?” He was “not for making idle declarations which we are not to carry out. If we do intervene by word, I am for intervening by action also. But I am not for

¹⁵ “Joint Resolution in relation to the reception and entertainment of Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary, in the United States,” 1 December 1851, in *Cong. Globe*, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess., 5.

¹⁶ Henry S. Foote, 2 December 1851, debate of 3 December 1851; and William H. Seward, 8 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 12, 21-27, 34.

intervening in any way. I think the soundest policy for any man, family, or nation, is to mind its own business and let the business of other people alone.”¹⁷

John Macpherson Berrien, a Whig from Georgia, lamented that Kossuth “comes here for the purpose of propagating a political principle,” and worried that knowing “the object for which he has come,” the rest of the world would be “much more authorized than they were . . . to conclude that the welcome to Governor Kossuth implies a pledge that we will interpose, if necessary, and in the manner he desires, for the protection of the Hungarian nation.” He feared that “Such a pledge once given would be irrevocable.” As was made clear during the Panama debate, international pledges were precarious. To counteract this perception, Berrien proposed an amendment to the welcoming resolution clarifying “that it is not the purpose of Congress to depart from the settled policy of this Government which forbids all interference with the domestic concerns of other nations.”¹⁸ Whig Jacob Miller was likewise unwilling “to go to war on the Continent of Europe, by money, men, and political influence, for the cause of human liberty there,” or to “put an end to that wise policy which we have practised [*sic*] from the days of Washington to this hour.” Miller was one of several senators to put the United States forward as an example for the world, as a demonstration of the success of liberal, republican principles. He urged his brethren that “The altar of our liberty has its own temple. It is here. Here let the oppressed of every land come to worship. . . . Let them come; but let us not take

¹⁷ Joseph Underwood, 3 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 25-26.

¹⁸ John Macpherson Berrien, 9 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 43-44.

away that altar from our own temple and carry it off into the wilderness of European Revolution, there to be taken by the Philistines, or its fires to be quenched forever beneath an ocean of blood. No, sir; it is here that our duty is to be performed.” The United States had an important role to play, but it was at home and not on foreign soil.¹⁹

Charles Sumner, a freshman senator from Massachusetts, delivered his first speech in the Senate in an attempt to focus attention away from Kossuth’s principles and on the man himself. Sumner argued that “It has been attempted to involve [this resolution] with the critical question of intervention by our country in European affairs; and recent speeches [by Kossuth] in England and New York have been adduced to show that such intervention is sought by our guest. It is sufficient to say, in reply to this suggestion, . . . *that no such intervention is promised or implied by the resolution.* It does not appear on the face of the resolution; it cannot, in any way, be inferred from the resolution. It can be found only in the imagination, in the anxieties, or in the fears of Senators. It is a mere ghost, and not a reality. As such we may dismiss it.” Sumner, a member of the Free Soil party and avowed opponent of slavery, was eager to welcome a shining tribute to the cause of human liberty to American shores, and wholeheartedly supported the resolution, but since intervention was the talk of the day, he emphasized that in dismissing interventionist concerns in this debate he was in no way “encouraging any idea of armed intervention in European affairs. . . . In the wisdom of Washington we may find perpetual counsel.” Could he address

¹⁹ Jacob Miller, 9 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 45-46.

Kossuth directly, he would say to him “with the respectful frankness of a friend: ‘. . . respect our ideas, as we respect yours. Do not seek to reverse our traditional, established policy of Peace. *Do not, under the too plausible sophism of upholding non-intervention, provoke American intervention on distant European soil.* Leave us to tread where Washington points the way.’”²⁰ Sumner was arguing for the continued centrality of Washington’s Farewell Address.

Advancing the other dominant strain of post-Mexico thought on the Farewell, Democrat Robert Stockton revealed that he was “not one of those who think that no change will ever be made in the principles of national policy which govern our foreign relations; on the contrary, I feel assured that the wonderful growth and development of the United States . . . will demand a modification of our national policy, in various respects different from that which prevailed in the infancy of the country.” He argued that “the rigid neutrality of the Washington administration, wise and just as it then was, would not now (if a similar belligerent State of the world existed) be possible.” Whereas in the 1790s the United States had had to accept insults and injustices from abroad in order to preserve peace, in 1851 “No American statesman can now contemplate any condition of the world, or any principle of public policy which would for a moment permit the United States to submit to any indignity from any power on earth. We acknowledge no superiors.” The point of Stockton’s speech was not to suggest a rugged intervention on Hungary’s behalf, but simply that a full-throated

²⁰ Emphasis in original. Charles Sumner, 10 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 51.

endorsement of Washington's Farewell Address was not always going to be the appropriate response to foreign policy questions.²¹

Fellow-Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, without necessarily intending to, issued the strongest defense of the original meanings of the Farewell Address. He stated that he would “not say, as most Senators have said, that in no event will I be for interference by this Government. I will judge of the case when it arises.” As he saw it, “To say in advance that the United States will not interfere in vindication of the laws of nations, is to give our consent that Russia may interfere, in violation of the international code, to destroy the liberties of an independent nation. . . . I will make no such declaration. I will grant no such license to the absolute governments of Europe.” Being opposed to a declaration of non-intervention did not mean that he would support a declaration in favor of intervention either, as “Such a declaration might be looked upon as a blustering, empty threat. I would make no declaration upon the subject either way until the proper occasion shall arise. I would have this Republic retain within herself the control over her own action, so that we may be in condition to do whatever our interests and duty may require when the time for action comes.” Douglas had keyed in on one of the most important, but by then largely forgotten aspects of the Farewell Address – a casualty of “entangling alliances with none” – that Washington's warning against permanent alliances was not so much a statement against involvement in foreign affairs as it was a reminder that the United States always needed to maintain the freedom to act in its own best interests. Alliances,

²¹ Robert Stockton, 10 December 1851, in *Ibid.*

like blanket declarations, bound the nation to courses of action that might not ultimately be in its best interests. In 1851, and in the future, non-intervention and a strict adherence to the mid-century view of Washington's principles would likely still be the best decision for the country, especially as it pertained to revolutions in Europe, but it was not the only choice and would not always be the right choice. Douglas concluded by declaring that "The peculiar position of our country requires that we should have an *American policy* in our foreign relations, based upon the principles of our own Government, and adopted to the spirit of the age." Neither George Washington nor John Quincy Adams could not have put it better.²²

In the end, the debate over the resolutions of welcome consumed two weeks, but ultimately produced the result everyone expected. Berrien's non-intervention amendment was rejected and Seward's original resolution, despite the spirited opposition to it, was very easily passed; three days later the House approved it with almost no debate.²³ The problem, of course, was that by the time this official Congressional welcome was approved, Kossuth had already been in the country for almost two weeks. While an extended debate over his merits and the principles he hoped to spread was not the governmental welcome he had been expecting, Kossuth's popular reception in New York City was fervent, to say the least. His transport from Britain landed on Staten Island late on 4 December, but was still greeted by city officials eager to welcome him and hear him speak.

²² Emphasis in original. Stephen A. Douglas, 11 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 70-71.

²³ 12 and 15 December 1851, in *Ibid.*, 90, 96.

From the moment Kossuth landed on American soil, he did not utter a useless word, always working to educate Americans about the plight of his country, discussing what he hoped to accomplish in America, and, most importantly, laying out how he hoped to do it. One thing that he learned in Britain was that everything he said was going to be widely reported in the press, so every speech he made was an opportunity to address not just the gathered masses but also a much larger national audience.

In his first speech on American soil, before a very small gathering on Staten Island, Kossuth made two important statements through which he sought to shape American and global perspectives on his time in the United States. First, he declared his desire to “see respected the right of every nation to dispose its own domestic concerns.” This respect meant that while he was in the United States, he would not “intermeddle” with America’s “internal concerns. You are the sovereign masters of your fate.”²⁴ This was a somewhat awkward statement for Kossuth to make because he was, in fact, planning on intermeddling, as he was looking to change the basic principles and behaviors of U.S. foreign policy. It was a necessary statement, though, because he needed to assuage the concerns of those who believed that he was seeking to influence the upcoming presidential election, as well as the concerns of a great many more that his speeches about liberty, self-determination, and intervention were going to be redirected at the American South and slavery. Kossuth keenly understood that regardless of what he personally felt about slavery, he could not afford to alienate the pro- or anti-

²⁴ *Report of the Special Committee*, 29.

slavery factions if he hoped to succeed in the United States, thus he hoped that a declaration that he would not intermeddle in internal concerns would put the slavery issue to rest without ever actually having to acknowledge it directly.²⁵

Kossuth also thanked the people of the United States for giving to him the title of Governor of Hungary in various addresses and invitations. He claimed that it was “not out of ambition that I thank you for the work you have assigned to me in naming me Governor of Hungary, – but I thank you for it, because the acknowledgment, on the part of the people of the United States . . . is an acknowledgment of the rightful existence of the Declaration of Independence of Hungary.” While this statement elicited cheers from the assembled crowd, the use of the title governor in addressing Kossuth hardly represented such a grand statement. Americans had a habit of using old titles when addressing individuals as a sign of respect for past accomplishments; plus Kossuth had reappropriated the title for himself, so to address him as anything else would likely have been interpreted as disrespect. More revealing of Kossuth’s objectives was that he presented the use of the title governor as an acknowledgement by all Americans of the legitimate existence of the Hungarian declaration of independence, which was certainly a stretch in logic.²⁶

Two days later Kossuth was brought to New York City for an extravagant welcome. He was greeted at Castle Garden by upwards of 200,000 people, and

²⁵ For an extended discussion of Kossuth and his approach to American slavery, see Steven Béla Vardy, “Louis Kossuth and the Slavery Question in America,” *East European Quarterly* 39 (Jan. 2006): 449-64.

²⁶ *Report of the Special Committee*, 31-32.

when he spoke he could barely be heard over the roaring crowd. The speech gave further insight into his objectives while in the United States. He once again took to ascribing motives and beliefs to the American people based on statements and actions that did not realistically signify what he claimed they did. The important example of this was his statement that he was pleased “to know that the United States of America, conscious of their glorious calling,” had demonstrated through the “generous act of my liberation” that it was “resolved not to allow the despots of the world to trample upon oppressed humanity.” As the debate about to take place in the United States Senate clearly revealed, the offer to transport Kossuth to the United States, even in the minds of his supporters, did not signify any grand declaration of American or humanitarian principles. Nor did it suggest that the United States was ready to “become the protectors of human rights,” but this did not stop him from presenting it as such, and the raucous cheers of an audience swept up in the enthusiasm of finally seeing the legendary Kossuth only seemed to confirm him. The Castle Garden speech was also the first time that he definitively stated his intention to “use every honest exertion to gain your operative sympathy, and your financial, material and political aid for my country’s freedom and independence.”²⁷ Anyone who still thought of Kossuth as an exile would have had their expectations corrected at Castle Garden. Once he concluded his speech he was swept up in a grand procession through the streets of New York. Later, from city hall, he looked on as much of the state’s militia, the city’s mayor, the state’s governor, New York’s entire congressional delegation,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 60-62, 64.

and virtually every other major and minor official in or from the city and state proudly passed in review for the honored guest to behold. As one report described it, the “entire route of the procession was . . . one continued scene of ovation.”²⁸

Kossuth remained in New York until 23 December, throughout that time receiving small delegations from a variety of states, cities, and organizations, and delivering several major addresses before the city authorities, the state bar association, the militia, the press, and the ladies of the state, at Tammany Hall, and in Henry Ward Beecher’s Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. Kossuth demonstrated with all of these impromptu remarks and formal speeches an amazing ability to continually come up with new material specifically tailored to engage the interests and earn the respect of whatever audience he was addressing, while simultaneously bolstering the different facets of his own argument. No opportunity to enlist a single person or raise a single dollar was missed. Kossuth toured the United States for seven months, delivering hundreds of speeches, speaking to large crowds and small, for minutes or for hours, always hitting upon his central themes, but never delivering the same speech twice. At each stop and to each crowd he – and the rather large retinue that accompanied him on his travels – specifically crafted his remarks to reflect an interest in his audiences’ local histories. At the press banquet in New York he discussed at length the importance of a free press to a free society, in St. Louis he reflected on American expansion and the gateway to the west, and in Boston he remarked on the lessons

²⁸ “The Welcome to Kossuth,” *New-York Daily Times*, 8 December 1851.

he drew from the birthplace of the American Revolution. At his core, Kossuth was a highly skilled propagandist, engaging his listeners' attention and appealing to their sympathies while also laying out a convincing case for supporting the Hungarian cause.²⁹

Perhaps the best demonstration of the force of Kossuth's personal appeal was the outpouring of monetary support he received throughout his travels. Whether it was prominent individuals donating large sums of money, or, more frequently, average Americans donating just a dollar or two, most Kossuth events turned into successful fundraisers. To facilitate this fundraising, New York's Central Hungarian Committee devised the Hungarian bond. Available in sums ranging from \$1 to \$100, every dollar invested in a bond went directly to the Hungarian cause, and the bonds were repayable once Hungary had an independent treasury.³⁰ These bonds were also seen as great collectible items, as each one featured Kossuth's likeness and a replica Kossuth signature. By the time Kossuth left the United States in July 1852, he had raised over \$80,000, and while many, including Kossuth himself, saw this sum as a disappointment, the total was still

²⁹ For many of Kossuth's American speeches, see Francis W. Newman, *Select Speeches of Kossuth: Condensed and Abridged, with Kossuth's Express Sanction* (New York, 1854).

³⁰ One skeptical newspaper, reflecting on the Hungarian bonds, commented that "Certainly nothing can well be imagined more worthless than the promise to pay imprinted on the face of the certificates. Who is it that assumes to make the promise? Kossuth? By what right? Who authorized him to bind a future government that, as yet, has no existence? . . . If people choose to give money to Kossuth no one can object. But this is something more than giving. *A false pretence is held out.* . . . Coldly viewed, a bolder, more impudent attempt to practice upon the kind feelings of a warm-hearted, generous people, was never known." Emphasis in original. "The Hungarian Bonds," *German Reformed Messenger* (Philadelphia), 11 February 1852.

impressive given that most of it came in small denominations.³¹ Much to Kossuth's chagrin, purchasing Hungarian bonds was not the only way Americans could monetarily demonstrate their support for Hungary. Enterprising merchants began making and selling hats styled after Kossuth's, which they called the Kossuth Hat. One report suggested that Americans spent as much as \$500,000 on these hats.³² Supporters could also purchase Kossuth coats, which closely resembled the Hungarian leader's, and Kossuth oysters, which were distinctive in no way from regular oysters besides the fact that they sold much better.³³

Few segments of the economy were left untouched by Kossuth-mania. Virtually every newspaper in the country was dominated by Kossuth stories; even those papers opposed to the Hungarian and his cause begrudgingly printed extensive accounts of his speeches and travels so as to not lose readers to other papers offering better coverage.³⁴ For those who wanted to read still more, countless books and pamphlets detailing Kossuth's life and speeches, as well as

³¹ Different historical accounts vary on the total amount of money raised, claiming as little as \$80,000 by July 1852, or as much as \$180,000 through the middle of February. The most complete discussion of it, in English, can be found in Komlos, *Kossuth in America*, 157-58. Komlos presented the \$80,000 figure; the claim of \$180,000 was relayed in Arthur James May, "Contemporary American Opinion of the Mid-Century Revolutions in Central Europe" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1927), 108.

³² *The Pittsfield Sun* (Pittsfield, MA), 11 March 1852.

³³ Donald S. Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*, 58.

³⁴ Two newspapers demonstrate the extreme approaches taken to Kossuth. The first was the *New York Times*, which had been founded in September 1851. According to Elmer Davis, author of a 1921 history of the *Times*, the paper, which had worked hard to establish a "reputation for balance," asserted itself as Kossuth's "principal champion in America." Kossuth's arrival was the "first big local news story" since the *Times's* founding and was seen by the paper's editors as the perfect opportunity "to show New York what the new paper could do." On the other end of the spectrum, the avowedly anti-Kossuth *Boston Pilot*, emphasized that it did not report on Kossuth "for his sake," but in deference to "our readers, particularly such of them as take no other paper" and would "like to know what is going on." Elmer Davis, *History of the New York Times, 1851-1921* (New York: The New York Times, 1921), 27-28; "The Pilot on Intervention," *Boston Pilot*, 27 December 1851.

the prominent speeches made both for and against Kossuth in Congress and elsewhere, were published and widely distributed. People could also purchase poems, portraits, sheet music, and all variety of knick-knacks memorializing Kossuth's visit.³⁵ At the same time, several cities and towns had difficulty figuring out how they were going to pay for the lavish receptions, banquets, and accommodations they had provided for Kossuth. The influx of cash to Kossuth merchants also left some businesses that were not making a profit on him in trouble. For example, the American Art-Union, a subscription art distributor, found itself at the beginning of 1852 unable to pay its contracted engagements due to the fact that December "was extremely cold and inclement, an extraordinary scarcity of money prevailed throughout the country, and Kossuth excitements and festivals engrossed the thoughts of all, and drew upon the purses of many thousands."³⁶ For better and for worse, people were eager to spend their money on Kossuth.

Kossuth and Washington's Farewell Address

In part due to the enthusiasm manifested for him, Kossuth overestimated the nature of American sympathy and support for the Hungarian cause. More importantly, he vastly underestimated the popular attachment to George

³⁵ Some excellent examples of Kossuth merchandise can be seen in Tibor Tollas, ed., *Gloria Victis: Szabadságharcunk a világirodalomban, 1848-1849 (Glory to the Vanquished: The Hungarian War of Liberation in World Literature, 1848-1849)* (München, 1973) and Joseph Széplaki, ed., *Louis Kossuth "The Nation's Guest": A Bibliography of His Trip in the United States, December 4, 1851-July 14, 1852* (Ligonier, PA, 1976).

³⁶ American Art-Union, "American Art-Union. New-York, January 2, 1852.: The committee of management of the American Art-Union . . .," January 2, 1852, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

Washington and the principles he espoused in his Farewell Address. In order to enlist the military and political might of the United States on Hungary's behalf, Kossuth needed to convince the American people and government that it was time to abandon the Farewell Address in favor of a more internationalist (and interventionist) foreign policy. He had given hints to this effect in some of his earliest remarks, but it was in his 11 December Corporation Dinner speech that Kossuth revealed the full extent of his expectations for the United States and his complete and explicit critique of Washington's Farewell Address. Kossuth began by admitting that his "confident hopes" for success in the United States were "checked by that idea of non-interference in foreign, chiefly European, affairs, which . . . we are told to be one of the ruling and lasting principles of the policy of the United States." He understood Americans' "religious attachment to the doctrines" of the founding fathers, and the "instinctive fear" people had "to touch, even with improving hands, the dear legacy of those great men." But, he asked his audience, "is the dress which well suited the child, still convenient to the full-grown man; nay, to a *giant*, which you are? Would it not be ridiculous to lay the giant in the child's cradle, and to sing him to sleep by a lullaby?" The Farewell Address had been declared when the United States was in its infancy, but now that the nation had reached its maturity, did it make sense to follow those old ideas? Kossuth thought not, and argued that the United States had "entered into the second *stadium* of political existence, the destination of which is, not only to exist for yourself exclusively, but to exist as a member of the great human family

of nations.” This meant that “the glorious republic of the United States must feel resolved to be a *power* on earth – a power among the nations,” and had to “unhesitatingly accept all the natural consequences of this situation.”³⁷ This was the central argument of the Young America movement, and why many of its supporters backed Kossuth.

In order to convince the American people that the adoption of intervention for non-intervention was a necessary consequence of their new station, he needed to define for them what the Farewell Address did and did not mean. He believed that it was “entirely an unfounded supposition, that the doctrine of non-interference in foreign matters had been, . . . bequeathed to be a constitutional principle to you” by Washington, and that he had never “recommended non-interference, or indifference, to the fate of other nations, to you. He has only recommended *neutrality*. And there is a mighty difference between these two ideas.” Neutrality referred to “a state of war between two belligerent powers” and was what Washington contemplated when he advised Americans “not to enter into entangling alliances. Let quarreling powers, – let quarreling nations war; you consider your own concerns, and let foreign powers quarrel about ambitious topics, or scanty, particular interests.” Neutrality was “a matter of convenience, not of principle.” Non-interference, on the other hand, referred to “the sovereign right of nations to dispose of their own domestic concerns.” Neutrality and non-intervention were “two entirely different ideas, having reference to two entirely different matters.” Kossuth was adamant that Washington had “recommended

³⁷ Emphasis in original. *Report of the Special Committee*, 140-43.

neutrality in the case of foreign wars, but he never recommended indifference to the violation of the common laws of humanity, by interference of foreign powers with the sovereign right of nations to dispose of themselves.” Even neutrality, by Washington’s own words, had only been intended as “a matter of temporary policy . . . as a temporary convenience,” and not as “a lasting regulation for all time.” He reminded the audience that “policy is not the science of principles, but of exigencies; and that principles, are, of course, by a free and powerful nation, never to be sacrificed to exigencies.” Kossuth may have been placing too much emphasis on single words, on the distinction between policy and principle in Washington’s writing, but his larger point that much of the Farewell Address was only temporary in nature was a valid one. In many ways what he was actually arguing against was the permanency and rigidity of the Jeffersonian reconceptualization and “entangling alliances with none.”³⁸

Kossuth proceeded to investigate “how your policy has been developed, in the course of time, with respect to the principle of non-intervention in foreign concerns.” Quite logically he looked to the Monroe Doctrine. He argued that the Doctrine had been a declaration that “the interference of foreign powers in the contest for independence of the Spanish colonies, was . . . sufficient motive for the United States to protect the natural right of those nations to dispose of themselves.” He also raised the instructions given to the U.S. delegates to the Congress of Panama, which “clearly stated, that the United States would have opposed, with their whole force, the interference of Continental powers with that

³⁸ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 145-46, 148-49.

struggle for independence.” While the original intent of the Monroe Doctrine was, at least nominally, to stave off European intervention, as we have seen, the United States quickly backed away from its warnings and emphasized its quite limited nature. As for the Congress of Panama, the delegates were instructed to reinforce the notion of a limited Monroe Doctrine, and not, as Kossuth claimed, to highlight America’s willingness to go to war to defend Latin American independence. The salient point Kossuth forgot to mention when discussing both the Monroe Doctrine and the Panama Congress was that the United States had been primarily motivated by its own security and interests, and not by the idealistic principles he was advocating.³⁹

Kossuth felt that he had shown “how Washington’s doctrine of perfect neutrality in your foreign relations, has, by-and-by, changed into the declaration to oppose, with all your forces, absolutistical Europe, interfering with the independence or republican institutions of Central and Southern America.” By 1851 the only reason this “manly resolution” had not been extended to Europe was due to its distance from American shores, but with the advent of the steam engine distance had become an antiquated notion. “Distance,” Kossuth contended, “is no more calculated by *miles*, but by *hours*. And, in being so, Europe is, of course, less distant from you than the greater part of the American continent . . . even nearer than perhaps some parts of your own territory.” In the “present condition” of the world, Americans were “at least, as much interested in the fate of Europe, as your fathers, twenty-eight years ago, declared themselves

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

interested in the fate of Central and Southern America.” When these facts were combined with America’s recent “general interference with the Turkish captivity of the Governor of Hungary,” it became clear that “the natural, logical, unavoidable, practical consequences of your own freely-chosen government policy, which you have avowed to the whole world,” were that the United States, by its own principles and interests, was ready to intervene in Europe to defend non-intervention.⁴⁰

Having demonstrated America’s new policy, Kossuth laid out his three requests to the government of the United States. First, he wanted it to enter into an alliance with Great Britain to ensure the international enforcement of intervention for non-intervention. In case anyone still questioned the legitimacy of non-intervention, as he defined it, Kossuth quoted a letter written by Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette, in which he argued that “every nation has a right to establish that form of government under which it conceives it can live most happy, and that no governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of another.” Kossuth was taking his ground “upon a principle of Washington – a *principle*, and no doctrine of temporary policy calculated for the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 153, 156-58. At a different point in the speech, Kossuth argued that “If you acknowledge the right of every nation to alter its institutions and government to be a law of nations – if you acknowledge the interference of foreign powers in that sovereign right to be a violation of the law of nations, as you really do – if you are forbidden to remain indifferent to this violation of international law, . . . then there is no other course possible than not to interfere in that sovereign right of nations, but also not to admit whatever other powers interfere.” This was intervention for non-intervention.

first twenty years of your infancy.”⁴¹ Second, he asked the United States to maintain its commercial intercourse with all European nations, even if they were in a state of revolution; he was concerned that Hungary have access to supplies and external revenue. Finally, he urged the government to officially recognize the independence of Hungary “at the earliest possible time.” Beyond these requests, Kossuth also encouraged people throughout the country to “form committees,” pass resolutions, and offer “financial aid,” all in support of the Hungarian cause.⁴²

Throughout the Corporation Dinner speech Kossuth was interrupted by applause and cheers, but this did not translate into many new converts to his principles. There were certainly those people and politicians, most notably the proponents of Young America, who had already been moving in Kossuth’s direction even before he arrived in New York, who believed that it was time for the United States, in the words of historian Donald S. Spencer, to pursue a more “evangelical foreign policy.”⁴³ It was these people and groups who had been most enthusiastic about welcoming Kossuth. But he interpreted their strenuous support and the enthusiasm of the crowds he addressed as representative of a larger movement in his direction. He was mistaken. Those who had supported intervention for non-intervention would continue to do so, but most Americans – while still willing to sympathize with his cause, to attend and cheer his speeches, and to give monetary aid – were not willing to abandon Washington’s principles

⁴¹ There was obviously a great irony to using Washington’s writings to prove the legitimacy of non-intervention when he had invested more than an hour of his speech in disproving the idea that the Farewell Address endorsed non-intervention.

⁴² Emphasis in original. *Report of the Special Committee*, 175-78.

⁴³ Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*, 89.

in order to ensure that Hungary get a fair fight the next time it sought independence. This split in public opinion was reflected in the partisan popular press of the day. Newspapers like the *New York Evangelist* and magazines such as *The American Whig Review* came out in defense of Kossuth after his Corporation Dinner speech. The *Evangelist* felt that Kossuth had moved the debate away from questions of “whether we shall preserve a strict neutrality” or “enter into ‘entangling alliances’” in favor of the more important question of whether the United States was “prepared to contemplate a violation of the law of nations with indifference, such as was perpetrated . . . upon Hungary, and was threatened against the Spanish Colonies of South America in their struggle for liberty? We say – NO: we protest against it on the ground of both duty and interest.”⁴⁴ *The American Whig Review* argued that Kossuth’s “coming to us begins an epoch, and throws a new light upon our own future and that of the world. Hitherto we have thought only of ourselves and our internal relations; the time has arrived when we must take our position before the world as one of the brotherhood of nations, and employ our powerful influence for the establishment of a law of nations congenial to our own institutions.”⁴⁵

A much larger number of periodicals came out in favor of America’s traditional principles in the wake of Kossuth’s Corporation Dinner speech. The *Advocate of Peace* believed that a departure “from the advice and example of Washington . . . would prove fatal to ourselves, and dangerous to the cause of

⁴⁴ “Kossuth – Non-Interference,” *New York Evangelist*, 18 December 1851.

⁴⁵ “The Policy of Non-Intervention,” *The American Whig Review* (New York) 9 (Jan. 1852), 4.

freedom throughout the world,” and described intervention for non-intervention as a “suicidal and interminable absurdity.”⁴⁶ *The Mercersburg Review* feared that Kossuth could “change our whole policy hitherto, and entangle us in a general European war.”⁴⁷ The *Boston Herald* described him as possessing “a very incorrect idea of the nature as [sic] our government and the tendencies of our people,” and declared that “interference would be entirely against the Washingtonian policy of non-intervention.”⁴⁸ Several newspapers expanded on the idea that the United States should stand as an example to the rest of the world. One of the more interesting editorials in this vein appeared in the *National Era*, which argued that “The first duty, then, of the American Union is to preserve its own Republicanism, to keep it fires ever burning, like the sacred fire of the vestal virgins – to do nothing that can touch its vitality or purity. This duty it owes not only to its own People, but to mankind.”⁴⁹ Echoing the Washingtonian sentiments Stephen A. Douglas expressed in the Senate, several newspapers took a wait-and-see approach to the question of intervention. The *New York Observer and Chronicle*, while being opposed to an immediate endorsement of Kossuth’s principles, argued that the United States needed to consider each potential case for intervention on its own merits, as “a nation may be so far off, or oppressed by such a formidable power that we could not render efficient aid if we should

⁴⁶ “Kossuth in Washington,” *Advocate of Peace* 10 (Jan. 1852), 16; and “Kossuth and the Friends of Peace,” *Advocate of Peace* 10 (Feb. 1852), 23.

⁴⁷ T. A., “Kossuth in America,” *The Mercersburg Review* 4 (Jan. 1852), 85.

⁴⁸ “Kossuth and Congress,” *Boston Herald*, 12 December 1851; and “Kossuth, and the Metropolis of New England,” *Boston Herald*, 8 January 1852.

⁴⁹ “Foreign Policy,” *National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 20 November 1851; also see “Kossuth, and the Metropolis of New England,” *Boston Herald*, 8 January 1852.

interfere. . . . In all cases we are to ask, *What good can we do?* If we are in danger of merely getting harm to ourselves, and doing nothing to help others, the better part of valor would be discretion.”⁵⁰ The *Christian Observer* took perhaps the best approach to these issues in praising Kossuth for raising “questions and principles which have never before been discussed in the popular assemblies of our country. . . . The strong excitement of the popular mind in defence of great principles of right, is not to be deprecated as an evil. It is healthful and salutary. It inspires thought – and leads many not accustomed to intellectual efforts of the kind, *to think* as they never thought before.”⁵¹

The debate over the place Washington should hold in determining the ongoing principles of U.S. foreign policy extended beyond the editorial pages, as speeches were made and pamphlets were published throughout the country dealing with Kossuth and his arguments. In *A Few Thoughts on Intervention*, William B. Reed lamented the “exotic and Anti-Republican doctrine” Kossuth had introduced and that threatened “to launch the fortunes and destiny of this Republic on the whirlpool of European politics.” He described the arguments made by Kossuth in his Corporation Dinner speech as being “absurdly overstrained,” and he took umbrage with the fact that “a foreigner comes amongst us to set to rights our notions and traditional opinions; to tell us, after the study of a week, what Washington’s Farewell Address really means, and to reverse the

⁵⁰ Emphasis in original. “The Right and Wrong of Intervention,” *New York Observer and Chronicle*, 25 December 1851.

⁵¹ Emphasis in original. “Excitement on Great Principles,” *Christian Observer* (Louisville, KY), 20 December 1851.

elementary principles of our foreign policy.” The Monroe Doctrine had already been “stretched” by American politicians, but even so it still fell “far short . . . of sanctioning our involving ourselves directly in the sharp and ragged network of European politics.” Reed likewise argued that far from supporting Kossuth’s argument, the example of the Panama Congress proved the opposite, as “every leading member of the Democratic party . . . took open and decided ground against the mission, on this very ground of its contravention of the Washington and Jefferson doctrine of rigid neutrality.” Reed even questioned on what grounds Kossuth had to come to the United States to plead for the cause of Hungary and for the “immediate recognition of the Hungarian Republic as an existing institution – a *de facto* Government,” given that “no *de facto* sign remains but M. Kossuth’s title by courtesy, of Governor.”⁵² Reed believed that Kossuth was dramatically off-base in his discussion of American principles and American history.⁵³

⁵² William B. Reed, *A Few Thoughts on Intervention* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1852), 5, 18, 19, 26, 14, 15. Reed’s pamphlet originally appeared as a series of articles in the *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.) between November 1851 and January 1852.

⁵³ Reed was not the only critic to attack Kossuth’s standing in this manner. Orestes A. Brownson, a Catholic preacher from Boston, launched a speaking tour of the United States in an attempt to counter the enthusiasm for Kossuth. Brownson was also the publisher of the self-titled *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, and in his April 1852 issue he challenged the basic premise of Kossuth’s argument that Hungary possessed the right of self-determination as a nation. As Brownson saw it, the “doctrine of non-intervention” applied “to Austria and Russia, not to Hungary, for Hungary was not an independent nation, was not in herself a complete state.” For any nation “to have intervened to prevent Austria from invoking the aid of Russia, or to prevent Russia from granting it, would have been a direct intervention in the domestic affairs of independent states, and an undeniable violation of the law of non-intervention.” Essentially, Russia committed no unlawful intervention because Austria requested its assistance. Brownson also contended that even if he agreed to term Russia’s actions as intervention, it should be described as “justifiable, for she has as good a right to intervene to put down revolution as we have to intervene to sustain revolution.” The *Boston Pilot*, a Catholic and staunchly anti-Kossuth paper, declared to its readers that Russia’s efforts to put down the Hungarian revolution “was not an *intervention*. An intervention, according to all respectable authorities, takes place only when

Henry A. Boardman, in a speech titled *The New Doctrine of Intervention, Tried by the Teachings of Washington*, contended that the United States owed its “present position” more to George Washington than to “any other individual,” and had to repel “all attempts to pervert his principles and to seduce our government from the wise policy he prescribed to it.” He did not object to American sympathy for liberal revolutions, but feared that intervention for non-intervention “would be most disastrous to the cause of liberty and enlightened progress both at home and abroad,” as it would “throw the influence of this nation, hitherto the beneficent guardian of peace and happiness among the nations, into the scale of merciless and insatiable war.” This did not mean that intervention would never happen, but “Cases must be disposed of as they arise, each on its own merits.” Endorsing an all-encompassing principle would prevent the United States from exercising such circumspection in deciding upon its foreign policy. Like Reed, Boardman invested a great deal of time discussing Kossuth’s Corporation Dinner speech, which he described as Kossuth’s “ingenious argument to explain away the principles of the Farewell Address.” He questioned “Whether it became [Kossuth], an exile, invited to our shores by the generous hospitality of our Government, to set himself up, almost before the spray of the ocean was dry upon

the intervening power enters against the wish of the government into whose territory it marches. Austria, assuredly, was not opposed to the entrance of the Russian soldiers.” Kossuth’s fundamental premise was that Hungary’s rights as a nation had been violated, but, as these commentaries saw it, Hungary was not a nation, and thus Kossuth’s discussion of intervention for non-intervention was moot. Orestes A. Brownson, “Austria and Hungary,” *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, April 1852, in Henry F. Brownson, *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson* (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, Publisher, 1885), 16:220-21; Emphasis in original. “Was the Russian entrance into Hungary a Real Intervention of a Foreign Power?,” *Boston Pilot*, 27 December 1851. For more on Brownson’s opposition to Kossuth, see Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*, 126-29.

his clothes, as the expositor of that immortal instrument, and to undertake to instruct the American people in the true import of sentences which are among their household words, and written upon their heart of hearts.” He did not understand the behavior of Kossuth and “his American coadjutors, who in one breath laud our present position to the skies, and in the next exhort us to quit the broad thoroughfare which has conducted us to it, for intricate and tangled by-paths which no nation ever yet attempted without being seriously damaged, if not ruined.” If the United States was going to “sacrifice all our national traditions, and embark on the stormy sea of European politics,” then the proponents of Kossuth’s principles needed to “show some solid reasons for it.” The alternative had seemingly become “KOSSUTH or WASHINGTON,” but no one had adequately demonstrated why the answer should be anything but an emphatic Washington.⁵⁴

As these editorials, pamphlets, and speeches demonstrate, the people were engaging the issues Kossuth raised in a substantive way. Kossuth was making complex and convincing arguments in support of intervention for non-intervention, but rather than blindly endorsing or unthinkingly dismissing them, people were confronting them in a very sophisticated manner. This was epitomized by those who responded to Kossuth’s impassioned pleadings by arguing that with no crisis afoot, there was no reason to make a permanent

⁵⁴ H. A. Boardman, D. D., *The New Doctrine of Intervention, Tried by the Teachings of Washington: An Address Delivered in the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on Monday and Tuesday Evenings, the 23d and 24th of February, 1852* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1852).

declaration of future policy; by those who reasoned that circumstances and not rhetoric should dictate future action. While defending contemporary understandings of the Farewell Address, they were also upholding Washington's original ideal that the wisest foreign policy was that which maintained America's freedom to act in its own best interests. History indicated that the United States possessed sound principles and that the Farewell Address would continue to be a wise guide, but history could not predict future circumstances and future interests.

This national debate was still taking shape when Kossuth left New York for Washington, D.C. just before Christmas, but already his brief time in the United States had been both highly successful and greatly disappointing. He had presented his case to hundreds of thousands of cheering Americans, had been celebrated at multiple extravagant galas given by highly important and influential people, had been daily courted by visitors from around the country, and had raised thousands of dollars for the Hungarian cause. At the same time, he could only look on while the United States Senate criticized his principles before issuing a tepid resolution welcoming him to the country – two weeks after he arrived. Plus, despite his best efforts to stay out of the slavery controversy, he had already been condemned by the Abolitionists for his refusal to come out against slavery. He had likewise been abandoned by most Southerners, both because they feared the domestic implications of his rhetoric on liberty and intervention, and because he had been vocally supported by prominent anti-slavery men like Charles Sumner.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Besides Abolitionists and Southerners, Kossuth was also generally opposed by America's Irish and Catholic populations. While immigrant groups tended to be among Kossuth's most vocal

Kossuth had thus encountered a great deal more resistance than he had originally anticipated, but he made his way to the nation's capital confident in himself and still hopeful that his enthusiastic popular support would carry the day.

In the Nation's Capital: Kossuth, Webster, and Clay

This hope came in the form of Secretary of State Daniel Webster and President Millard Fillmore. Webster, a prominent figure in the history of U.S. foreign relations dating back to the 1820s, and the first person to hold the position of Secretary of State twice, was perhaps best known, especially in Europe, for his 1824 speech in the House of Representatives defending the cause of Greek liberty. In Kossuth's mind, if any of the influential men in Washington would be for Hungary, it would be Webster. The problem was that Webster, as has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation, was an unwavering defender of Washington's principles. Even looking to the Greek speech, Webster had only proposed American recognition of Greek independence, not military intervention to help establish it.⁵⁶ Kossuth's hope for Fillmore was somewhat slipperier, as it

supporters, the Irish strongly disliked Kossuth because of his great fondness for England and for his inconsistency in not condemning that nation for its treatment of Ireland when he was in the United States to demand freedom for his own country; to the Irish the plight of Hungary and the plight of Ireland were the same, but Kossuth would not speak ill of England. The Catholics, beyond the Irish connection, opposed Kossuth for both theological reasons and for his close ties to the noted anti-papist Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini. See Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*, which does an excellent job of discussing Kossuth's relationship with all of these groups.

⁵⁶ Historians have had trouble interpreting Webster's true feelings towards Kossuth and the Young America movement that came to back him. Donald S. Spencer saw Webster as an early proponent of the "evangelical foreign policy" of Young America at its inception, even though he had always tended to support America exercising its "moral force" in Europe rather than its military might. Kossuth's arrival in the United States "transformed the nature of Young America" such that the "essentially meaningless oratory" of the past was no longer enough; moral force would be replaced with physical. Spencer argued that Webster was torn between "his genuine sympathy for

rested on an out-of-context passage from his most recent annual message to Congress. Kossuth frequently referenced Fillmore's statement that "The deep interest which we feel in the spread of liberal principles and the establishment of free governments and the sympathy with which we witness every struggle against oppression forbid that we should be indifferent to a case which the strong arm of a foreign power is invoked to stifle public sentiment and repress the spirit of freedom in any country." On its own this passage seemed to bolster Kossuth's arguments on America's new foreign policy; however, it was preceded in the address by Fillmore's reminder that the United States had proclaimed and continued to adhere to "the doctrine of neutrality and nonintervention. . . . 'Friendly relations with all, but entangling alliances with none,' has long been a maxim with us. Our true mission is not to propagate our opinions or impose upon other countries our form of government by artifice or force, but to teach by example and show by our success, moderation, and justice the blessings of self-government and the advantages of free institutions."⁵⁷ Taken as a whole, the passage made clear that Fillmore believed that the United States should

the Hungarians and his rational appreciation for the interests of the United States." The editors of Webster's *Diplomatic Papers*, Kenneth E. Shewmaker and Kenneth R. Stevens, took a different view and portrayed him as being far removed from the Young America movement and a "staunch advocate of the wisdom of George Washington." They went so far as to describe Webster, along with President Fillmore, as being "conservative leaders" that saw Young America as posing "a serious challenge to the existing precepts of American foreign policy." Despite Spencer's analysis that linked Webster to Young America, his contemporary writings reveal a more conservative approach to Kossuth. Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*, 89-90; and Daniel Webster, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*, Series 3: Diplomatic Papers, ed. Kenneth E. Shewmaker and Kenneth R. Stevens, 2 vols. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New Hampshire, 1983-87), 2:39. For Webster's speech on Greek independence, see Daniel Webster, *The Papers of Daniel Webster*, ed. Charles M. Wiltse, 15 vols. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New Hampshire, 1974-89), Series 4: Speeches and Formal Writings, 1:83-111.

⁵⁷ Millard Fillmore, "Second Annual Message," 2 December 1851, in Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 5:116-17.

sympathize with liberal revolutions around the world, but that its role was as exemplar and not as vindicator. Kossuth's hopes in both Webster and Fillmore were dashed almost as soon as he reached the nation's capital.

On the eve of Kossuth's appearance in Washington, Webster complained that his arrival in the United States had given "great strength and vivacity" to the already existing "zeal . . . for intervention in the affairs of other states."⁵⁸

Webster later remarked that he would "treat [Kossuth] with all personal and individual respect, but if he should speak to me of the policy of 'intervention,' I shall 'have ears more deaf than adders.'"⁵⁹ Webster's approach to Kossuth seemed to be a common one in Washington, as seen in the experience of Charles Sumner, Lewis Cass, and James Shields, who were delegated as the official welcoming committee from the United States Senate. Sumner, in describing their initial encounter with him, noted that when he shook Kossuth's hand and greeted him "'Governor, how do you do?'" Kossuth's immediately reply was "'Let me rather ask you a question. What will you do?'" Thus at once, on the threshold, he opened his cause." When Cass was greeted similarly, he "turned the conversation from Hungary to the ease with which [Kossuth] spoke our language! In this way he will be met at every turn."⁶⁰ These men in Washington wanted to welcome the man but not his principles.

⁵⁸ Daniel Webster to Abbott Lawrence, 29 December 1851, in Hamilton Andrews Hill, *Memoir of Abbott Lawrence*, 2nd edition (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1884), 91.

⁵⁹ Daniel Webster to Richard Milford Blarchford, [30 December 1851], in *Papers*, Diplomatic Papers, 2:96.

⁶⁰ Sumner also relayed in this letter his suspicion that what caused men like Cass to treat Kossuth this way was "the Slave-Power. Cass fears to take a step, lest this shall be aroused against him, as it is against Kossuth. Slavery is the source of all meanness here from national dishonesty down to

On New Year's Eve Webster formally introduced Kossuth to the president, in what would be one of the defining moments of the Hungarian's time in the United States.⁶¹ In a very brief speech, especially by Kossuth's standards, he praised the United States for its inspiring history, for restoring him to "life" and to "freedom," and for raising him "in the eyes of the many oppressed nations to the standing of a harbinger of hope, because the star-spangled banner was seen cast in protection around me, avowing to the world that there is a nation, alike powerful as free, ready to protect the laws of nations, even in distant parts of the earth and in the person of a poor exile." He presented himself to the president as a "living protestation against the violence of foreign interference oppressing the sovereign right of nations to regulate their own concerns," and thanked Fillmore for his declarations in behalf of his principles in his recent address to Congress. Fillmore, later described by one witness as looking as "rigid as a midshipman on a quarterdeck," began by welcoming "Governor Kossuth" to "this land of freedom." He acknowledged that, "As an individual, I sympathized deeply with you in your brave struggle for the independence and freedom of your native land. The American people can never be indifferent to such a contest." He stated very

tobacco-spitting." Charles Sumner to Samuel Gridley Howe, 30 December 1851, in *The Selected Letters of Charles Sumner*, ed. Beverly Wilson Palmer, 2 vols. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 1:345.

⁶¹ When Webster informed Fillmore that Kossuth wanted to be introduced to him, Fillmore famously replied, "If he desires simply an introduction, . . . I will see him, but if he wants to make a speech to me, I must most respectfully decline to see him." Fillmore described the exchange with Webster in a newspaper interview given in 1873. In further discussing Kossuth, he characterized him as "not a statesman; he depended entirely upon his oratory." The original interview appeared in the *New York Herald* of 16 September 1873, and was reprinted in Frank H. Severance, ed., *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, Volume XI: Millard Fillmore Papers, Volume Two* (Buffalo, NY: Buffalo Historical Society, 1907), 138.

plainly, though, that “our policy as a nation . . . has been uniform, from the commencement of our Government; and my own views, as Chief Executive Magistrate of this nation, are fully and freely expressed in my recent message to Congress, to which you have been pleased to allude.” Without explicitly rebuking Kossuth, he was making clear that he had never endorsed intervention for non-intervention and he was not about to now.⁶²

Fillmore was not treated kindly by Kossuth’s supporters in the days following their encounter. Shields wrote that Kossuth had been treated “shabbily” and that Fillmore’s remarks were “worse spoken than it read.”⁶³ The *National Era* described Kossuth’s speech as “admirable in sentiment and devotion,” and the president’s reply as “cold and unimpressive.”⁶⁴ The *Democrat’s Review* took the most negative view of the administration in complaining of its “churlish inhospitality” and its “Cossack civility.”⁶⁵ For Kossuth, the meeting with the president made clear that the United States would not be abandoning its traditional principles of foreign policy or turning away from Washington’s Farewell Address. Just days after the meeting, Sumner wrote to a relative that Kossuth “confesses that his mission has failed.” While many would later argue that Kossuth’s failure was due to Americans’ devout attachment to Washington, Sumner believed that it stemmed “from his asking too much. Had he been

⁶² “Reception of Kossuth by the President, December 31, 1851,” *National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 8 January 1852. Description of Fillmore from James Shields to Gustave Koerner, 2 January 1852, in Thomas J. McCormack, ed., *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896: Life-Sketches Written at the Suggestion of His Children*, 2 vols. (Cedar Rapids, IA: The Torch Press, Publishers, 1909), 1:579.

⁶³ James Shields to Gustave Koerner, 2 January 1852, in McCormack, *Gustave Koerner*, 1:579.

⁶⁴ “Reception of Kossuth by the President,” *National Era* (Washington, D.C.), 8 January 1852.

⁶⁵ “Presidential Courtesies,” *Democrat’s Review* 30 (Jan. 1852), 39-40.

content with stating his case, without directly proposing any change in our national policy, he would have secured the hearts of the people, & would have prepared them for all that is practicable when the great exigency arrives. But it is a rank absurdity to suppose that our Govt. – at this nether extreme from Russia – can pledge itself to be the *executive power* to enforce a new reading of the Law of Nations against that distant empire.”⁶⁶ Sumner’s was an astute analysis of what had transpired to that point; given the already widespread sympathy for Kossuth, it is likely that he could have accomplished more in the long term by looking for less in the short term.

While his mission as originally conceived had failed, Kossuth felt that he still had work to do in Washington and beyond. On 5 and 7 January, he was formally received in the United States Senate and House of Representatives, respectively, and on the evening of the 7th, he attended a Congressional banquet in his honor. Attended by three hundred guests, including prominent members of all three branches of government, Kossuth once again gave a forceful speech; he may not have convinced these men to support him, but he was not going to change his message.⁶⁷ Despite these positive events, Kossuth’s time in Washington ended as inauspiciously as it began, with an interview with another venerable statesman of old, and long-standing defender of national self-determination, Henry Clay. Just as Webster was famous for his defense of the Greeks, Clay was known for the

⁶⁶ Emphasis in original. Charles Sumner to George Sumner, 5 January 1852, in *Selected Letters*, 1:346.

⁶⁷ For more on the Congressional banquet, see, *Proceedings, Speeches, &c., at the Dinner Given to Louis Kossuth, at the National Hotel, Washington, Jan. 7 1852* (Washington, D.C., 1852).

years he devoted in the 1810s and 1820s to seeing the United States recognize the independence of the new Spanish American nations. Also like Webster, and at least partially because of his experience as John Quincy Adams's secretary of state, Clay had become an ardent proponent of America's traditional foreign policy.

Clay, being in a poor state of health and in his waning days, issued what was likely the most pointed critique of Kossuth's views and the strongest defense of American principles the Hungarian endured while he was in the United States. Clay apologized for not having met Kossuth sooner, adding that his "wonderful and fascinating eloquence had mesmerized so large a portion of our people . . . that I feared to come under its influence, lest you might shake my faith in some principles in regard to the foreign policy of this government, which I have long and constantly cherished." Clay entertained the "liveliest sympathies" for Hungary, but was greatly concerned that war would "be the issue of the course you propose to us," and questioned if, in that event, the United States would be able to "effect any thing for you, ourselves, or the cause of liberty?" The past experience of the world had demonstrated that there was little likelihood; the cost of carrying out a war halfway around the world was too high, and the might of the Russian army was too great. Thus, "after effecting nothing in such a war, after abandoning our ancient policy of amity and non-intervention in the affairs of other nations, and thus justifying [the despots of France] in abandoning the terms of forbearance and non-interference which they have hitherto preserved toward

us; after the downfall, perhaps, of the friends of liberal institutions in Europe, her despots, imitating, and provoked by our fatal example, may turn upon us in the hour of our weakness and exhaustion.” These despots could rightfully say to America, ““You have set us the example. You have quit your own to stand on foreign ground; you have abandoned the policy you professed in the day of your weakness, to interfere in the affairs of the people upon this continent.”” Clay was less concerned with the fate of Hungary than he was with the ramifications for the United States of a failed intervention in Europe.⁶⁸

The recent widespread failure of liberal revolution in Europe had given the United States “an impressive warning not to rely upon others for the vindication of our principles, but to look to ourselves, and to cherish with more care than ever the security of our institutions and the preservation of our policy and principles.” Clay was an advocate of the idea that America’s example could do “more for the cause of liberty in the world than arms could effect.” He concluded by asking Kossuth, “if we should involve ourselves in the tangled web of European politics, in a war in which we could effect nothing, and if in that struggle Hungary should go down, and we should go down with her, where, then, would be the last hope of the friends of freedom throughout the world?” Clay believed that it was “Far better . . . for ourselves, for Hungary, and for the cause of liberty, that, adhering to our wise, pacific system, and avoiding the distant wars of Europe, we should keep our lamp burning brightly on this western shore as a light to all nations, than to hazard its utter extinction amid the ruins of fallen or falling republics in

⁶⁸ Henry Clay, “Speech to Kossuth,” 9 January 1852, in *Papers*, 10:944-45.

Europe.”⁶⁹ In their parting words, Clay reiterated the great respect he had for Kossuth, but it mattered little, for he had done what no one else had: tell Kossuth explicitly that his principles were not America’s principles.

Kossuth’s failure in Washington meant that he had to drastically change his plans, and rather than triumphantly returning to England as he had originally intended, he set out to tour the rest of the United States. He likely hoped that an outpouring of sympathy from across the country would put pressure on the president and Congress to take decisive action in his favor, or that he could somehow impact the presidential election taking place that fall to bring in a more friendly administration; at the very least he expected to generate positive press and raise monetary aid along the way. Kossuth was thus incensed by lingering negative press associated with the Clay interview. Some newspapers had tried to put a positive spin on the meeting when reports leaked of what had transpired, but it was clear that there had been nothing encouraging for Kossuth to take from the encounter. To make matters worse, word also spread that he had made remarks critical of Clay. Kossuth always maintained that he had made no disparaging comments, that he had the utmost respect for Clay, and that he was only upset that their private meeting had been publicly reported, but the original negative story was impossible to put down, and it hampered his efforts throughout the West and South.⁷⁰

Kossuth’s Tour

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 945-46.

⁷⁰ See, for example, *The Farmers’ Cabinet* (Amherst, NH), April 1, 1852.

Kossuth set out from Washington, and after a brief stop in Maryland, spent the rest of January making his way across Pennsylvania. The highlight of his time in the state was his address before the legislature in Harrisburg, when a crowd of people, so excited to hear him speak, overran the chambers and refused to let the legislators have their seats.⁷¹ Kossuth spent all of February in Ohio, including more than two weeks in Cincinnati, which boasted one of the largest German immigrant populations in the country. Through the end of February his tour was largely successful, as he was celebrated everywhere he went, although he did not raise as much money as he had hoped – he fell as much as \$20,000 short of expectations in Cincinnati. This success began to wane after he left Ohio. Unlike most of his stops in the North, and with the notable exception of New Orleans, Kossuth was not invited to most of the places he visited in the South. His time in Louisville, Kentucky was indicative of his reception throughout much of the South. His formal speeches were still reasonably well-attended, with at least a few hundred listeners, but virtually all of the enthusiasm was gone; there were no longer cheering crowds or ostentatious displays welcoming him to each new city, he was not courted on a daily basis by eager supporters, and the sale of Hungarian bonds slowed considerably. Just as problematic was the diminishing national newspaper coverage that resulted from his poor reception. Even in those places most energized by Kossuth, papers stopped carrying daily reports of his travels or transcripts of his speeches. For most Americans, the Kossuth moment had

⁷¹ Andor M. Leffler, “The Kossuth Episode in America” (Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve University, 1949), 164.

passed. From Louisville he moved on to spend a slightly more successful week in St. Louis, that was followed by five days in New Orleans that were among the worst he spent in the country. Despite having been invited to come, he was greeted with icy and at times hostile treatment by the city's residents. Once he left New Orleans at the end of March, he largely abandoned his Southern tour, taking only ten days to race through multiple stops in Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas, before returning to Washington, D.C.⁷²

It was becoming increasingly clear that Kossuth was desperately in search of positive press coverage to keep him in the public eye. Some newspapers had criticized him for not visiting Mount Vernon on his first trip to Washington, so he made a special trip the second time around, accompanied by several newspaper correspondents.⁷³ Positive press was crucial for Kossuth if he had any chance of success. This was especially true in a place like Washington, where, once Kossuth left, attention turned away from the man and towards his principles. Just

⁷² For a more detailed discussion of Kossuth's tour, see Komlos, *Kossuth in America*; Spencer, *Kossuth and Young America*; Leffler, "Kossuth Episode," especially chapter 6; May, "Contemporary American Opinion," especially chapters 7, 8, and 9; and John W. Oliver, "Louis Kossuth's Appeal to the Middle West – 1852," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 14 (Mar. 1928): 481-95. *Report of the Special Committee* provides a detailed account of his time in New York City. *Kossuth in New England: A Full Account of the Hungarian Governor's Visit to Massachusetts; with His Speeches, and the Addresses That Were Made to Him, Carefully Revised and Corrected* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1852) gives a detailed account of his time in Massachusetts. Finally, Newman, *Select Speeches of Kossuth*, contains transcripts of many of the major speeches Kossuth gave throughout his time in the United States.

⁷³ Several newspaper accounts of his trip to Mount Vernon made a special point of the fact that Kossuth cried over Washington's grave. One openly anti-Kossuth newspaper, the *Boston Pilot*, was skeptical of Kossuth's behavior, writing, "He cried. And we laughed. We could not help it. . . . Months ago, the papers commented, in a tone of murmur and of censure, upon his forgetfulness or neglect in not visiting the tomb of Washington. It was a mistake, but he rectified it last week, after his return to Washington. He positively visited the tomb, and cried over it. But he spoiled the thing by over acting, which was as palpable as if he showed the onions. He cried because he did not get more money." Emphasis in original. "Kossuth," *Boston Pilot*, 1 May 1852. For a less cynical account of his trip to Mount Vernon, see Helen Irving, "Mount Vernon," *Ladies' Wreath, a Magazine Devoted to Literature, Industry and Religion*, 1 July 1852, 85-88.

days after Kossuth first departed the nation's capital, James Conger, a Michigan Whig, introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives declaring American support for intervention for non-intervention. It was objected to for procedural reasons and was seemingly never introduced again.⁷⁴ Several days later a resolution was introduced by another Whig in the Senate, John Clarke of Rhode Island, that sought to reaffirm America's attachment to its traditional principles of foreign policy. The resolution proclaimed "That this Government has solemnly adopted, and will preservingly adhere to, as a principle of international action, the advice given by Washington in his Farewell Address."⁷⁵ Echoing Douglas's comments of the prior month, the resolution stressed "That although we adhere to these essential principles of non-intervention as forming the true and lasting foundation of our prosperity and happiness, yet whenever a prudent foresight shall warn us that our own liberties and institutions are threatened, then a just regard to our own safety will require us to advance to the conflict rather than await the approach of the foes of constitutional freedom and of human liberty."⁷⁶ The United States would adhere to its traditional principles until it had a compelling interest to pursue a different course. Over the ensuing months, many speeches were made on both sides of the issue, but the decreased

⁷⁴ See debate on 15 January 1852, in *Cong. Globe*, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess., 285.

⁷⁵ It further declared "That while we cherish the liveliest sympathy towards all who strive for freedom of opinion and for free institutions, yet we recognize our true policy in the great fundamental principles given to us by Jefferson: 'Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever State or persuasion – religious or political – peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.'"

⁷⁶ "Joint Resolutions reaffirming the doctrine of non-intervention," 19 January 1852, in *Cong. Globe*, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess., 298.

national attention being paid to Kossuth removed all urgency and the resolution was forgotten by the end of the congressional session.

The defenders of the Farewell Address in Congress also latched onto Washington's birthday as an ideal occasion to hold a banquet in his honor to demonstrate the nation's continuing faith in his wisdom. The organizers of the event were quite open in their private correspondence that it was "an anti-Kossuth affair, or at least . . . a demonstration in favor of the neutral policy of Washington."⁷⁷ The *New York Observer and Chronicle* later described it as "the strongest demonstration against Kossuth yet made."⁷⁸ Those speaking at the banquet, including many congressmen, Supreme Court Justice James Wayne, and General Winfield Scott, never mentioned Kossuth by name, but the contents of their speeches and toasts made it abundantly clear that they were explicitly refuting the Hungarian. Justice Wayne offered a toast to "*The Congressional Banquet of 1852, in celebration of the Birthday of Washington* – It will aid to make in the hearts of the American people, a sanctuary and a fortress for his virtues, from which native and naturalized citizens may combat for his principles, against the sophism of 'Intervention for Non-Intervention.'" Another toast was given to "*Intervention* – We are not to be deceived by artful definitions. Our true policy is, 'Friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.'" The final regular toast of the evening was offered to "*The Memory of Washington* – May it

⁷⁷ Alexander H. Stevens to John J. Crittenden, 17 February 1852, in Mrs. Chapman Coleman, *The Life of John J. Crittenden, with Selections from His Correspondence and Speeches*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1871), 2:27.

⁷⁸ "The Birthday in Washington," *New York Observer and Chronicle*, 26 February 1852.

‘moderate the fury of party spirit, and guard against the mischief of foreign intrigue.’”⁷⁹

Kossuth spent a week in Washington, during which time little notice was taken of him, making him especially eager to get to Massachusetts, which was virtually the only place left in the country excited to have him. The state’s residents had taken a keen interest in him from the moment he gained international attention in 1848-49. When word arrived that Kossuth had landed at Staten Island, four hundred Bostonians traveled to New York City to see his reception, only to arrive a day too late.⁸⁰ Richard Henry Dana, a prominent writer from Cambridge, Massachusetts, likewise traveled to New York to see Kossuth, making a “hurried visit . . . of one day” to hear “the wonderful Kossuth . . . at the bar reception.” Dana described him as “a hero & a miracle,” but felt that he was “doomed to disappointment here. I do not believe our country will interfere in the affairs of Europe.”⁸¹ Tracy Patch Cheever, a lawyer from Chelsea, Massachusetts, similarly remarked in his journal in the weeks before Kossuth was set to arrive in Boston that “I feel yet a strong sympathy for him even if his intervention notions *are* untenable, for in a case of such dire extremity to his country, in a case so noble and patriotic, he is surely somewhat excusable for arguing doctrines which may be unsound. . . . If he is right in the *grand object*, he

⁷⁹ Emphasis in original. William Hincks and Francis Hickox Smith, *Washington’s Birthday: Congressional Banquet at Washington, In Honor of George Washington, and the Principles of Washington, February 22, 1852* (Boston: Dutton & Wentworth, 1852), 24, 27, 33.

⁸⁰ “Kossuth’s Movements – Visits of Bostonians, &c., &c.,” *Boston Herald*, 10 December 1852.

⁸¹ Letter of Richard Henry Dana, December 1851 (Box 12, Folder 11), Dana Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Richard Henry Dana was the son of Francis Dana, who was the minister to Russia John Quincy Adams served as secretary for in the 1780s.

should be encouraged even though his view of one of the means to be employed, be erroneous.”⁸² Dana and Cheever epitomized the perspective of many in Massachusetts and the rest of the nation: excited to see Kossuth, but neither hoping for his success nor enthusiastic about his principles.

One man who came out early and boldly in Kossuth’s favor was the Democratic governor of Massachusetts, George S. Boutwell. In his annual message to the state legislature, he declared that if Austria and Russia “shall assert the right of interference in the domestic affairs of European nations, . . . it would seem proper for our government to give them notice that we assert, on our part, an equal right to interfere in favor of republican or constitutional governments.” The governor was careful to add that the nation needed to reserve for itself “the power to judge the circumstances and the necessity of interference, as events transpire.”⁸³ He generally endorsed Kossuth’s principles, but was not willing to guarantee American action if they should be violated. Boutwell had been very pleased when the legislature nearly unanimously resolved to invite Kossuth to the state, and was even more so when Kossuth appreciatively accepted the invitation a few weeks later. Members of the state legislature traveled to New York to await Kossuth’s arrival from Washington, and on 23 April a special train left Newark, New Jersey to bring Kossuth to New England. At several stops in Connecticut he was joyously greeted and cheered, and in Springfield, Massachusetts, he was met by a crowd of over five thousand and delivered a very enthusiastically received

⁸² Emphasis in original. 16 April 1852, in Tracy Patch Cheever Journal, 1851-1855, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁸³ *Kossuth in New England*, 3.

speech the following morning. Two days later in Worcester, state legislator Anson Burlingame gave the most Kossuth-ian speech the Hungarian had likely heard since his departure from Ohio. Burlingame, a member of the Free Soil party who would later achieve acclaim throughout the North for his spirited condemnation of Preston Brooks's caning of Charles Sumner in 1856, reminded the crowd that Washington's policies were "for the exigency of those early times. Why, a nation can have no such thing as a fixed policy. It must have fixed *principles*. The eloquent speaker [Kossuth] has told us that policy is one thing, and principle quite another thing. One takes its hue and form from the passing hour; the other is eternal, and may not be departed from with safety. . . . Let us not wrong our fathers by believing they intended to chain this nation to the cradle of its infancy. Washington himself has told us that his was a temporary policy, suited to the requirements of the time, but not intended to stand as our guide through all eternity."⁸⁴ As Kossuth had in his Corporation Dinner speech, Burlingame was calling for a more progressive view of Washington's Farewell Address.

The following day Kossuth made his triumphant entrance into Boston. When he arrived on the Boston neck, he was met by thirty-four companies of the military, which formed into a long procession to escort Kossuth to the State House. Along the route, people lined the streets and watched from the windows to see the great spectacle. The procession lasted two-and-a-half hours and culminated in speeches and a formal review of the military from the State House

⁸⁴ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*, 63.

steps.⁸⁵ As one observer put it, reflecting on Kossuth's review of the military, "The lines were drawn as usual at the foot of the Common, and the surrounding hills were covered with the assembled thousands, like vast swarms of human bees."⁸⁶ While Kossuth reflected back on that day's proceedings thirty years later and was grateful to the "hundreds of thousands of people who had gathered for the occasion," a more likely estimate suggested that closer to fifty thousand citizens had assembled to see Kossuth and watch the parade of the sixteen-hundred-person volunteer militia.⁸⁷

The most anticipated event for most Bostonians was Kossuth's evening address in Faneuil Hall on 29 April. According to one report, by the time the doors were opened at six o'clock, "it had become so densely packed in the streets before the hall that there was no moving through it, and some ladies fainted before the pressure was relieved by admission." An hour later the hall was so filled that "the pressure at the centre was uncomfortably severe."⁸⁸ The proceedings began at eight with a speech by Boutwell in which he praised

⁸⁵ Gov. Boutwell believed that it was fitting that Kossuth was officially welcomed to Boston and the state on 27 April 1852, because that was the "day that [Kossuth] completed his fiftieth year." In a private conversation with Kossuth, Boutwell remarked "that it was my good fortune to welcome him to the State on that anniversary, he said: 'Yes, it is a marked day; but unless my poor country is saved I shall soon wither away and die.'" What was peculiar about this exchange was that this date was not, in fact, Kossuth's birthday, as he had been born in September. Either Boutwell, writing many years later, simply misremembered the events, or Kossuth did not feel the need to dissuade the governor from giving added significance to his presence in the state. George S. Boutwell, *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in Public Affairs*, 2 vols. (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1902), 1:207.

⁸⁶ *Kossuth in New England*, 73.

⁸⁷ By the time he compiled this memoir, Kossuth's memory of his days in Boston had become suspect, or at least had been romanticized, as he also described Massachusetts as a "free, cultivated, happy, model state (in which there is not a single person who cannot write, not a single pauper, not a single tumbledown house)." Louis Kossuth, *Memories of My Exile*, trans. Ferencz Jausz (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1880), xviii.

⁸⁸ *Kossuth in New England*, 82.

American principles and decried the Russian intervention in Hungary. He suggested that the United States had obligations to defend liberal principles abroad, but once again would not unconditionally endorse intervention for non-intervention.⁸⁹ Kossuth then took the stage and spoke on the same themes and with the same passion he had since he first arrived in New York five months earlier. Tracy Patch Cheever wrote about the speech in his journal the following day after reading it in the newspaper and reflected that, “I find some striking thoughts indeed, but not that impressiveness which has of course grown old by reason of the great number of addresses which have been made by its Author.”⁹⁰ Kossuth’s soaring oratory had become routine.

The most interesting remarks made by Kossuth that evening were those that were a departure from his normal themes in which he attempted to explain his mission’s failure. He pointed to two factors in particular, both of which were beyond his control. First, he had arrived in the United States “on the eve of an animated contest for the presidency.” The domestic political situation and machinations had greatly problematized a fair consideration of his principles and requests. Second, he claimed that “Many a man has told me that, if I had only not fallen into the hands of the abolitionists and free-soilers, he would have supported me; and, had I landed somewhere in the south, instead of New York, I would have met quite different things from that quarter. . . . [T]hus being charged from one side with being in the hands of abolitionists, and from the other side with being in

⁸⁹ For Boutwell’s remarks, see *Ibid.*, 84-86.

⁹⁰ 30 April 1852, in Tracy Patch Cheever Journal, 1851-1855.

the hands of the slaveholders, I indeed am at a loss what course to take.” The only silver lining to these “contradictory charges” was that they gave him the “satisfaction to feel that I stand just where it is my duty to stand, on a truly *American* ground.”⁹¹ Boutwell later argued that when it came to the presidential election, Kossuth had “attributed too much importance to that circumstance, there can be no doubt,” as his failure could be traced to “Other, deeper-seated and more adverse causes.” He specifically pointed to the fact that “The advice and instructions of Washington as to the danger of entangling foreign alliances were accepted as authority by man, and as binding tradition by all. Consequently, there was no, and could not have been, any time in the century when his appeal would have been answered by an aggressive step, or even by an official declaration in behalf of his cause.” As for his other claim, Boutwell believed that even had Kossuth been “spurned by the Abolitionists and the Free-soilers, he would not have been accepted by the South; for there was not a *quadrennium* from 1832 to 1860 when that section would have contributed to the election of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency with the weight of the Declaration of Independence upon his shoulders.”⁹² This assessment from one of Kossuth’s strongest supporters in Massachusetts.

The day after his first speech at Faneuil Hall, Kossuth again appeared there for a Legislative banquet. The demand for tickets was so great that they were sold and resold by enterprising Bostonians for much more than their original

⁹¹ Emphasis in original. *Kossuth in New England*, 91-93. For Kossuth’s entire speech, see *Ibid.*, 86-96.

⁹² Boutwell, *Reminiscences*, 1:195.

\$2 price in an example of mid-nineteenth century ticket scalping.⁹³ Over the ensuing two weeks Kossuth moved on to the suburbs, visiting the Bunker Hill monument in Charlestown, Harvard University in Cambridge, the Revolutionary battlegrounds at Lexington and Concord, Plymouth Rock, and a host of other cities and towns in the eastern part of the state. At each location he spoke eloquently about the historic events to take place there and how they related to Hungary's historic struggle.⁹⁴ He continued to draw large and cheering crowds, but as his time in Massachusetts drew to a close, some of the enthusiasm had clearly faded away. Kossuth returned to Boston for a farewell address of his own on 14 May, and while Faneuil Hall was once again "densely filled," those who were admitted faced "much less inconvenience" securing a ticket and navigating the crowds.⁹⁵ People were still excited to hear Kossuth, but for many the novelty of his visit had faded. As much as most Americans genuinely sympathized with him for his nation's plight, and while there were those who strongly believed in his principle of intervention for non-intervention, for the vast majority Kossuth was more of a celebrity than a serious shaper of public opinion. Once people had made contact with him, had heard his soaring oratory for themselves, had donated their small sum of money or purchased their memorabilia, many no longer felt the need to give up their time or treasure to him. After attending Kossuth's address to an audience of fifteen thousand at the Bunker Hill monument, Cheever commented in his journal, "I rejoice in the privilege of having heard one of the

⁹³ *Kossuth in New England*, 97.

⁹⁴ See *Kossuth in New England*, 97-259.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

greatest orators and Patriots . . . of modern days,” and then never mentioned him again.⁹⁶ The mayor of Charlestown, Richard Frothingham, who introduced Kossuth on that day, kept a scrapbook of newspaper clippings detailing Kossuth’s visit to Massachusetts.⁹⁷ It was the same phenomenon as the Kossuth hats and books and Hungarian bonds featuring Kossuth’s face; people wanted a piece of Kossuth, wanted a story to tell their children, not an American crusade halfway around the world.

Kossuth left Massachusetts a few days after his final Faneuil Hall address and took up a less hectic schedule in visiting the far reaches of New York. By the time he made his final return to New York City in mid-June, the Kossuth excitement had thoroughly passed everywhere in the country. The most revealing evidence of the state of Kossuth’s popularity and influence was that when he departed the country on 14 July 1852, he did so with no fanfare and under a false name.⁹⁸ He was not making the triumphant return to England he had originally expected, the American government and people had not endorsed intervention for non-intervention, there was little remaining enthusiasm for his cause, and there was almost no money left to show for the sale of Hungarian bonds.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ 3 May 1852, in Tracy Patch Cheever Journal, 1851-1855.

⁹⁷ Scrapbook, 1829-1880 (Series I, Box 1), Richard Frothingham Charlestown Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Another prominent Boston family, the Channings, kept a similar scrapbook of several of Kossuth’s major addresses in the United States. (Box 7, Folder 3), Channing Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁹⁸ James Watson Webb to Daniel Webster, [July 1852], in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 44 (1910-11): 212.

⁹⁹ Based on Kossuth’s own financial records, maintained by members of his traveling retinue, the Hungarian fund only had roughly \$1,100 left in it by June 1852. Komlos, *Kossuth in America*, 157-58.

Kossuth and America

Kossuth's most significant failure was, as the old saying goes, that he did not quit while he was ahead. Despite his self-confidence, his oratorical skills, and the truly sympathetic nature of his story, Kossuth was never going to succeed in the United States; there were simply too many interests – many of them having nothing to do with his actual mission – arrayed against him. His decision to invest six months in touring the nation once he was assured of his mission's failure after his meeting with Fillmore was understandable, but it was a mistake, because he ultimately worked to cement his own legacy of failure in the minds of most Americans. Had he left the United States after being welcomed in front of both houses of Congress and being celebrated at the Congressional banquet, had he left near the height of his popularity, his story would have been different. The American desire to see and hear him would not have been sated, the press would not have begun circulating stories about poor receptions and diminishing interest before it stopped circulating stories at all, and the opposition to him might not have grown so pitched. Once the president had rejected him, there was realistically nothing Kossuth could have done that would have led to the United States committing to intervene on Hungary's behalf, but an early departure could have at least maintained American interest in him and could have prolonged the discussion of intervention for non-intervention in useful ways. Instead, Kossuth's lengthy tour ensured that the enthusiasm his visit generated dissipated entirely; he was still there but Americans stopped caring.

Conclusion

The timing of his departure aside, the biggest reason for Kossuth's failure was his attack on Washington's Farewell Address. The American people understood that intervention for non-intervention flew in the face of Washington's wisdom, but as several pamphlets and speeches demonstrated, this did not mean that they saw no value in the principle. Even those who still believed that the United States needed to maintain Washington's Farewell Address understood that there could come a time in the future when it would be necessary to move past it (or at least to move past the Jeffersonian reconceptualization). As Charles Sumner pointed out, though, Kossuth asked for too much. Had he promoted intervention for non-intervention without asking the government for an official declaration in support of it, without asserting that the people needed to give up their attachment to Washington to believe in it, his principle would have been left to percolate in American minds so that when Hungary did seek independence again, Americans would have been keenly attuned to questions of intervention, and would not have previously ruled against it. Instead, Kossuth gave the American people a specific reason to disagree with him and his opponents a persuasive argument to use against him.

The main result of Kossuth's attempt to convince Americans to abandon the Farewell Address was to reinvigorate popular consideration of and allegiance to it. This renewed interest in the place that the Address and its principles should hold in determining U.S. foreign policy also helped to frame the collective

American memory of Kossuth's time in the United States and the reasons for his failure. As early as the summer of 1852 this framing process had begun. In speaking before the alumni of Harvard University in late July, Robert C. Winthrop, a former congressman and senator from Massachusetts, reflected that because of Kossuth, "The great name, the greater principles, of Washington are suffered to be drawn into dispute, and even to be derided as temporary." Fortunately for all Americans, "The sober second thought has come apace. The danger is over."¹ In a book review appearing in the *North American Review* later in the year, the author lauded the fact that the result of Kossuth's "endeavors to set aside the authority of Washington, and to give a new interpretation to the Farewell Address" had been "not to weaken the influence of Washington's great name and divine wisdom, but to freshen, in the minds of the people, a knowledge of his doctrines, and to exalt their reverence for his character."² The passing of years only served to further confirm this view of Kossuth's visit. An 1856 biography of Millard Fillmore reflected that "The deep, wide-spread sympathy manifested for [Kossuth] wherever he went, was unparalleled; but he misconstrued it, and was much chagrined when forced to discriminate between sympathy and policy. To unsettle the national policy of a country consolidated on the maxims of Washington and Jefferson, was a task he could not accomplish."³ Kossuth had attempted to place the blame for his mission's failure on the

¹ Robert C. Winthrop, *Addresses and Speeches on Various Occasions, from 1852 to 1867* (Boston, 1867), 29.

² "Stiles's *Austria in 1848-49*," *North American Review* 75 (Oct. 1852), 465.

³ W. L. Barre, *The Life and Public Services of Millard Fillmore* (Buffalo, N.Y., 1856), 370-71.

presidential election and slavery, and, at least to a certain extent, it would have been reasonable for Americans to have remembered it that way. Instead they universally remembered Kossuth's mission for his attempts to overturn Washington's Farewell Address, and they remembered his failure because they were unwilling to see him accomplish that.

As the Kossuth episode demonstrated, the majority of Americans still drew wisdom from Washington's Farewell Address and believed that continued adherence to its maxims was of great importance to America's present and future growth and happiness. It also made clear that American understandings of the Farewell Address had evolved over time. Washington had intended the Address as a warning to all Americans to always be guided by the nation's best interests when constructing foreign policy, as he recognized that those interests would change over time as the nation grew and matured. With the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, though, most Americans began to view the Address with a more isolationist conception of what those best interests were. In many ways this process culminated in the all-or-nothing approach taken in the debate over the Congress of Panama. Whereas John Quincy Adams asserted that the United States had more interests in common with the new nations of Latin America than it did with Europe, and thus should pursue a different relationship with each region of the world, his opponents in Congress in 1826 argued that "entangling alliances with none" prohibited any such closer relationship. In the twenty-five years after this debate, more Americans began to recognize (largely unknowingly)

the validity of Adams's original arguments, extending the United States' sphere of interests to cover places like Hawaii, Texas, and ultimately all of North America as being free from European interference. By 1852, then, the debate over the Farewell Address centered not on the question of whether or not the United States had common interests with other nations, or should take an interest in European actions in other countries, but on how broadly those common interests should be defined and how far they were willing to extend a blanket of protection (or at least how far they were willing to declare that blanket to exist). Proponents of Young America and others who had moved far beyond the Farewell Address in their conception of the proper relationship of the United States with the rest of the world favored the broadest possible sphere of American interests; however, most Americans had a stricter definition of American interests more in line with their understanding of Washington's original intentions.

Of course, for America's future, it was Tyler and Polk's more aggressive interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine rather than an expanded view of the Farewell Address that would increasingly influence U.S. policymakers. By manipulating long-standing national principles to achieve goals reflective of short-term and largely regional interests (slavery), they not only undermined the sanctity of the principles of the Farewell Address but set a dangerous precedent for the future. Polk's attempt to see the United States intervene in Yucatan in 1848 was only the first time this altered vision of the Doctrine would be used to justify foreign policies otherwise questionable in light of American principles.

Looking back to 1812 and James Madison's judgment to go to war against Great Britain, it had been interpreted with some legitimacy by many opponents of the war as a violation of the Farewell Address, but there were truly national objects at stake in the decision. Economically, prosecution of the war had the greatest negative impact on the North, but the freedom of commerce it sought to protect would be in the North's best interests in the long term. For Tyler and Polk in the 1840s, no such universal objects were at stake, and rather than accomplishing a long-term good at the expense of short-term disquietude from one region of the country, the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico deepened an already dangerous divide and likely hastened the onset of the Civil War less than two decades later.

Kossuth's tour of the United States also reaffirmed the widespread popular interest taken in foreign revolutions and revolutionary leaders. Seen in support expressed (and carried out) for the French Revolution in the 1790s, that of Spanish America in the 1810s, Spain and especially Greece in the 1820s, Texas in the 1830s, the European revolutions of the 1840s, and in the individual personages of Lafayette, Bolivar, and Kossuth, Americans were always impressed with revolutionary movements and individuals they saw as having taken after the American example. More often than not they were left disappointed or disillusioned by the results, but the existence of republican revolution abroad only served to confirm their own conceptions about the importance of the United States as a guide to the rest of the world as to what was possible as an alternative to

monarchy and despotism. This mindset was fostered by the Farewell Address, as American presidents encouraged sympathy but nothing else for foreign revolutionary movements because Washington's maxims called for non-involvement. This non-interference brought on by the Address not only allowed the United States the time at peace necessary to grow and prosper, but it reinforced in most Americans' minds how persuasive of an example the United States truly was.

The most important revelation highlighted by the American reaction to Kossuth was the great significance still attached to the Farewell Address more than fifty years after it was first published. It did not rise to the level of sacred text until after Washington's death, and Americans may have maintained largely false interpretations of it at the hands of the Jeffersonian reconceptualization, but it remained the single most important document in shaping Americans' conceptions of their foreign policy principles and the relationship of their nation with the rest of the world. From the Washington Benevolent Societies to the Panama debate to Centennial celebrations to the reception of Kossuth, the Farewell Address remained a key component of American popular political culture. Even in the face of the increasingly tense ordeal of the Union of the 1840s, and especially after the Compromise of 1850 as slavery came to dominate the American political landscape, Kossuth's suggestion that the United States had somehow outgrown the Farewell Address or that it never meant what they thought that it did only served to reaffirm and reinforce its status as a fundamental

statement of American principles. Understanding the cultural, political, and diplomatic significance attached to Washington's Farewell Address not only illuminates the history of the Address itself, but also the development of the American nation in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Appendix A: The Foreign Policy Portion of Washington's Farewell Address

. . . Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. And can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that in place of them just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation prompted by ill will and resentment sometimes impels to war the government contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject. At other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility, instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitions, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country without odium, sometimes even with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for

public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter. Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection

as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me

not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the Government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon

real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish--that they will control the usual current of the passions or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good--that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism-- this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a

right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position.

Having taken it, I determined as far as should depend upon me to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity toward other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes. . . .¹

¹ George Washington, "Farewell Address," 19 September 1796, in George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), 35:231-37.

Appendix B: The Monroe Doctrine

. . . At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at St. Petersburg to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the North West coast of this continent. A similar proposal had been made by His Imperial Majesty to the Government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The Government of the United States has been desirous by this friendly proceeding of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the friendship of the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his Government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. . . .

. . . It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe,

with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators.

The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do.

It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers.

The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted.

We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere, but with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose

independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal shew that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers whose governments differ from theirs are interested, even those most remote, and surely none more so than the United States.

Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and

manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none.

But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course. . . .¹

¹ James Monroe, "Seventh Annual Message," 2 December 1823, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 11 vols. (New York: National Bureau of Literature, 1908), 2:209, 217-19.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

- Adams Family Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
Channing Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
Cheever, Tracy Patch, Journal, 1851-1855, Massachusetts Historical Society,
Boston.
Dana Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
Frothingham, Richard, Charlestown Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society,
Boston.
Pickering, Timothy, Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

Newspapers

- Alexandria Expositor, and the Columbian Advertiser*
The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser
The Bee (New Haven, CT)
Boston Courier
Boston Gazette
Boston Herald
Boston Pilot
Charleston Courier
Christian Observer (Louisville, KY)
Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser (Philadelphia)
The Columbian (New York)
Connecticut Journal (New Haven)
The Daily Advertiser (New York)
Daily National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.)
Democratic Republican; and Commercial Daily Advertiser (Baltimore)
The Farmers' Cabinet (Amherst, NH)
Federal Gazette (New York)
German Reformed Messenger (Philadelphia)
The Independent Chronicle (Boston)
National Era (Washington, D.C.)
New-York Daily Times
New York Evangelist
New York Observer and Chronicle
Philadelphia Gazette
The Pittsfield Sun (Pittsfield, MA)
Richmond Enquirer
Rural Repository (Leominster, MA)

Government Documents

- Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, *Proceedings of the Alaskan Boundary Tribunal: convened at London, under the treaty between the United States of America and Great Britain, concluded at Washington, January 24, 1903, for the settlement of questions . . . with respect to the boundary line between the territory of Alaska and the British possessions in North America*, 7 vols. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1904.
- American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States*, Class I: Foreign Relations, 5 vols. Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832-61.
- Annals of Congress*
Congressional Globe
- The Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States, on the Subject of the Mission to the Congress at Panama, Together with the Messages and Documents Relating Thereto*, 22 March 1826, 19th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 68.
- Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. National Archives Microfilm Publication M662, roll 1. Records of the Department of State Relating to the First Panama Congress, 1825-27; Records of United States Participation in International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, Record Group 43.
- Message From the President of the United States, Upon the Subject of an Appropriation to Carry Into Effect a Mission to Panama*, 17 March 1826, 19th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 162.
- National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. National Archives Microfilm Publication M77, roll 9. Instructions, American States, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801-1906, Record Group 59.
- Register of Debates*
Senate Executive Journal

Primary Sources – Books, Pamphlets, Magazine Articles, Broadides

- T. A., "Kossuth in America," *The Mercersburg Review* 4 (Jan. 1852).
- Abbot, Abiel. *An Eulogy On the Illustrious Life and Character of George Washington; Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Haverhill, On His Birth Day, 1800, At the Request of Their Committee*. Haverhill, MA: Seth H. Moore, 1800.
- Adams, John Quincy. *An Address Delivered at the Request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington; on the Occasion of Reading the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1821*. Washington, D.C.: Davis and Force, 1821.
- Address Delivered Before the Philodemic Society, of Georgetown College, D. C., on the 22d February, 1842, by John M. Heard, of Maryland. To which*

- are Prefixed the Remarks of Joseph Johnson, of Mississippi, Previous to His Reading the Farewell Address of Washington.* Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1842.
- An Address Delivered Before the Washington Benevolent Society, Brimfield, February 22d, 1813.* Brookfield, [MA]: E. Merriam & Co., 1813.
- American Art-Union, "American Art-Union. New-York, January 2, 1852.: The committee of management of the American Art-Union . . .," January 2, 1852, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.
- Allen, David. *An Oration Delivered in the Brick Church in Lansingburgh, July 4th, 1809.* Lansingburgh, [NY]: Tracy & Bliss, 1809.
- Authentic Life of His Excellency Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary. His Progress from his Childhood to his Overthrow by the Combined Armies of Austria and Russia, with a Full Report of the Speeches Delivered in England, at Southampton, Winchester, London, Manchester, and Birmingham. To Which is Added, his Address to the People of the United States of America.* London: Bradbury and Evans, 1851.
- Bancroft, Aaron. *An Eulogy on the Character of the Late Gen. George Washington. Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Worcester, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on Saturday the 22d of February 1800.* Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, Jun., 1800.
- Barre, W. L. *The Life and Public Services of Millard Fillmore.* Buffalo, N.Y., 1856.
- Bates, Isaac C. *An Oration, Pronounced Before the Washington Benevolent Society of the County of Hampshire, On Their First Anniversary, 1812. In Commemoration of the Nativity of Washington.* Northampton, MA: William Butler, 1812.
- Bayard, James A. *Speech of the Hon. James A. Bayard, In the Senate of the United States, Upon His Motion, Made on the 16th of June, to Postpone the Further Consideration of the Bill Declaring War Against Great Britain, to the 31st of October.* Wilmington, DE: Riley, 1812.
- Blair, John D. *A Sermon On the Death of Lieutenant General George Washington. Delivered in the Capitol in Richmond.* [Richmond, VA]: Meriwether Jones, 1800.
- Boardman, H. A. *The New Doctrine of Intervention, Tried by the Teachings of Washington: An Address Delivered in the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on Monday and Tuesday Evenings, the 23d and 24th of February, 1852.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1852.
- Boston Committee on the Death of Washington, *Boston, January 6, 1800. The Committee Chosen By the Town . . .* Boston, 1800.
- Burges, Tristram. *Liberty, Glory and Union, or American Independence: An Oration, Pronounced Before the People of Providence, July 4th, A.D. 1810.* Providence, RI: Dunham & Hawkins, 1810.
- Caldwell, Charles. *A Discourse of the First Centennial Celebration of the Birth-Day of Washington, Delivered by Request, to the Citizens of Lexington, On*

- the 22nd of February, 1832.* Lexington, KY: Printed by N. L. Finnell & J. F. Herndon, 1832.
- Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington.* New-York, February 22, 1832. [New York, 1832].
- [Cobbett, William]. *Our Anti-Neutral Conduct Reviewed.* [1817].
- The Constitution of the State of Massachusetts, and That of the United States; the Declaration of Independence, with President Washington's Farewell Address.* Salem, MA: Cushing & Appleton, 1811.
- Curtius [John Taylor]. *A Defence of the Measures of the Administration of Thomas Jefferson.* Providence, RI: William Olney, 1805.
- Dana, Daniel. *A Discourse on the Character and Virtues of General George Washington: Delivered On the Twenty-Second of February, 1800: The Day of National Mourning for His Death.* Newburyport, MA: Angier March, 1800.
- Dwight, Jasper [William Duane]. *A Letter to George Washington, President of the United States: Containing Strictures on His Address of the Seventeenth of September, 1796, Notifying His Relinquishment of the Presidential Office.* Philadelphia, 1796.
- Eulogies and Orations on the Life and Death of General George Washington, First President of the United States of America.* Boston: Manning & Loring, 1800.
- "Grand Civic and Military Procession in Philadelphia, February 22d, 1832 . . ."
Philadelphia, 1832.
- Gray, Francis C. *Oration Delivered before the Legislature of Massachusetts, at their Request, on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington.* Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1832.
- Hincks, William and Francis Hickox Smith. *Washington's Birthday: Congressional Banquet at Washington, In Honor of George Washington, and the Principles of Washington, February 22, 1852.* Boston: Dutton & Wentworth, 1852.
- Hough, Franklin B. *Washingtoniana: Or, Memorials of the Death of George Washington, Giving an Account of the Funeral Honors Paid to His Memory, with a List of Tracts and Volumes Printed Upon the Occasion, and a Catalogue of Medals Commemorating the Event,* 2 vols. Roxbury, MA: Elliot Woodward, 1865.
- "The Hungarian Victory." *Littell's Living Age*, 16 June 1849.
- Irving, Helen. "Mount Vernon." *Ladies' Wreath, a Magazine Devoted to Literature, Industry and Religion*, 1 July 1852, 85-88.
- Key, Francis Scott. *An Oration.* Alexandria, VA, 1814.
- "Kossuth and the Friends of Peace." *Advocate of Peace* 10 (Feb. 1852).
- Kossuth in New England: A Full Account of the Hungarian Governor's Visit to Massachusetts; with His Speeches, and the Addresses That Were Made to Him, Carefully Revised and Corrected.* Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1852.

- “Kossuth in Washington.” *Advocate of Peace* 10 (Jan. 1852).
- Krauth, C. P. *Address Delivered on the Anniversary of Washington’s Birth-Day, at the Request of the Union Total Abstinence Society of Gettysburg*. Gettysburg, [PA]: H. C. Neinstedt, 1846.
- Lewis, Morgan. *An Oration Delivered in the Middle Dutch Church, in the City of New-York, Before the Common Council and Citizens, on the First Centennial Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington, the Father of His Country*. New York: G. F. Hopkins & Sons, 1832.
- Lindsley, Philip. *An Address Delivered at Nashville, Ten. Feb. 22, 1832, at the Request of the Citizens of Nashville and its Vicinity, on the Occasion of the Centennial Birth Day of George Washington*. Nashville, TN: Hunt, Tardiff & Co., 1832.
- Loring, Jerome. *An Oration Pronounced at Hingham, July 4, 1815, in Commemoration of American Independence*. Boston: Rowe and Hooper, 1815.
- Mexico and Mr. Poinsett. Reply to a British pamphlet, entitled ‘Observations on the instructions given by the President of the United States of America to the representatives of that republic, at the Congress of Panama, in 1826, on the conduct of Mr. Poinsett, Minister of the United States at Mexico, and generally on our relations with Spanish America, with a copy of the instructions.’* Philadelphia, 1829.
- Morse, Jedidiah. *A Prayer and Sermon, Delivered at Charlestown, December 31, 1799; On the Death of George Washington; Late President; and Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States of America; Who Departed This Life, at Mount Vernon, in Virginia, On the 14th of the Same Month, in the 69th Year of His Age: With an Additional Sketch of His Life*. Charlestown, MA: Samuel Etheridge, 1800.
- National Republican Party Convention, *Proceedings and Address of the Convention of Delegates, that Met at Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 28, 1827, to Nominate a Ticket of Electors Favorable to the Reelection of John Quincy Adams, President of the United States, to be Supported at the Electoral Election [sic] of 1828*. Columbus, OH: P. H. Olmsted, 1827.
- Oration Pronounced by the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, on the Fourth of July, 1848, on the Occasion of Laying the Corner-Stone of the National Monument to the Memory of Washington. With an Introduction and an Appendix*. Washington, D.C.: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1848.
- Philo-Jackson, *The Presidential Election, Written for the Benefit of the People of the United States, but Particularly for Those of the State of Kentucky; Relating, Also, to South America, a War with the Holy Allies; and to an Alliance with Great Britain. Fifth Series*. Frankfort, KY: Printed for the author, 1824.
- Pickman, Benjamin, Jun. *An Oration, Pronounced, February 22, 1797, Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Salem, in Massachusetts, Assembled to*

- Commemorate the Birth-day of George Washington, President of the United States of America.* Salem, MA: Thomas C. Cushing, 1797.
- A Political Primer, For the Use of Schools in the State of Maryland.* Abingdon, MD: Ruff, 1806.
- “The Policy of Non-Intervention.” *The American Whig Review* 9 (Jan. 1852).
- President II. Being Observations On the Late Official Address of George Washington: Designed to Promote the Interest of a Certain Candidate for the Executive, and to Explode the Pretensions of Others. Addressed to the People of the United States.* Newark, NJ: Daniel Dodge, and Co., 1796.
- “Presidential Courtesies.” *Democrat’s Review* 30 (Jan. 1852).
- Proceedings, Speeches, &c., at the Dinner Given to Louis Kossuth, at the National Hotel, Washington, Jan. 7 1852.* Washington, D.C., 1852.
- Randolph, Edmund. *A Vindication of Mr. Randolph’s Resignation.* Philadelphia: Samuel H. Smith, 1795.
- Reed, William B. *A Few Thoughts on Intervention.* Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1852.
- Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Common Council of the City of New York, to Make Arrangements for the Reception of Gov. Louis Kossuth, the Distinguished Hungarian Patriot.* New York: McSpedon & Baker, 1852.
- Resolution of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, Approving of the Declaration of the President of the United States in Favor of the Cause of Liberty in the Western Hemisphere.* Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1824.
- Rush, Richard. *Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London, Comprising Incidents Official and Personal from 1819 to 1825. Including Negotiations on the Oregon Question, and Other Unsettled Questions between the United States and Great Britain.* Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845.
- Sedgwick, Theodore. *Thoughts on the Proposed Annexation of Texas to the United States: First Published in the New-York Evening Post, Under the Signature of Veto.* New-York: D. Fanshaw, 1844.
- A Selection of Orations and Eulogies, Pronounced in Different Parts of the United States, in Commemoration of the Life, Virtues, and Pre-eminent Services of Gen. George Washington, Who Died, at Mount Vernon, December 14, 1799; in the 68th Year of His Age.* Amherst, NH: Samuel Preston, 1800.
- Spanish America. Observations on the Instructions Given by the President of the United States of America to the Representatives of that Republic, at the Congress Held at Panama, in 1826; On the Conduct of Mr. Poinsett, Minister of the United States in Mexico; and Generally on Our Relations with Spanish America; with a Copy of the Instructions.* London: Effingham Wilson, 1829.

- Speeches and Other Proceedings at the Public Dinner in Honor of the Centennial Anniversary of Washington. To Which is Added, Washington's Farewell Address.* Washington, D.C.: Jonathan Elliot, 1832.
- Sprague, William B. *An Address Delivered on the Evening of the Twenty Second of February, MDCCCXLVII. Before the Young Men's Association of the City of Albany.* Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1847.
- "Stiles's *Austria in 1848-49.*" *North American Review*, 75 (Oct. 1852).
- Sullivan, William. *An Oration Delivered Before the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts On the Thirtieth day of April, 1812, Being the Anniversary of the First Inauguration of President Washington*, 2nd ed. Boston: John Elliot, Jun., 1812.
- Temple, Samuel. *The Child's Assistant in the Art of Reading. Being a Collection of Pieces, Suited to the Capacities of Children, In the Early Stages of Education. Designed as a Medium between the Spelling-book, and the American Selection of Lessons, American Preceptor, and Other Books of a Similar Kind*, 2nd ed. Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1802.
- Trescot, William Henry. *A Few Thoughts On the Foreign Policy of the United States.* Charleston, [SC]: John Russell, 1849.
- Walker, Robert J. *Speech of the Hon. Robert J. Walker, Late Secretary of the American Treasury, at the Banquet Given by the Mayor & Municipal Authorities of Southampton to M. Lewis Kossuth, Late Governor of Hungary, On the 28th Day of October, 1851, In Reply (By Request) to a Toast, in Favour of the Constitutional Governments of England and the United States.* London: Waterlow and Sons, 1851.
- Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania, *Constitution and By-Laws of the Washington Benevolent Society, of Pennsylvania.* [Philadelphia]: Thomas T. Stiles, 1813.
- . *A Summary Statement of the Origin, Progress, and Present State of the Washington Benevolent Society of Pennsylvania: With an Account of the Opening and Dedication of the Washington Hall, on the First of October, 1816.* Philadelphia: United States' Gazette, 1816.
- "Washington's Birth Day. Centennial Celebration." Philadelphia, 1832.
- Washington's Valedictory Address to the People of the United States. Published in September, A. D. 1796, Printed in Pursuance of a Resolution of the Senate of Pennsylvania, Adopted on the 24th of February, A. D. 1832.* Harrisburg, PA: Henry Welsh, 1832.
- The Washingtoniana: Containing a Sketch of the Life and Death of the Late Gen. George Washington; With a Collection of Elegant Eulogies, Orations, Poems, &c., Sacred to His Memory. Also, an Appendix Comprising All His Most Valuable Public Papers, and His Last Will and Testament.* Lancaster, PA: William Hamilton, 1802.
- Webster, Noah. *Elements of Useful Knowledge. Volume II. Containing a Historical and Geographical Account of the United States. For the Use of Schools*, 3rd ed. New Haven, CT: Increase Cooke & Co., 1808.

West, Samuel. *Greatness the Result of Goodness: A Sermon, Occasioned By the Death of George Washington, Late Commander in Chief of the Armies, and First President, of the United States of America, Who Died December 14, 1799, Aged 68.* Boston: Manning & Loring, [1800].

Published Primary Source Collections/Memoirs

- Adams, Henry, ed. *Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1905.
- Adams, John. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States.* Ed. Charles Francis Adams. 10 vols. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1850-56.
- Adams, John Quincy. *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848.* Ed. Charles Francis Adams. 12 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-77.
- . *The Writings of John Quincy Adams.* Ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford. 7 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913-17.
- Anderson, Richard Clough, Jr. *The Diary and Journal of Richard Clough Anderson, Jr., 1814-1826.* Ed. Alfred Tischendorf and E. Taylor Parks. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964.
- Bolivar, Simon. *El Libertador: Writings of Simon Bolivar.* Trans. Frederick H. Fornoff. Ed. David Bushnell. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Boutwell, George S. *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in Public Affairs.* 2 vols. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1902.
- Brownson, Henry F. *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson.* Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, Publisher, 1885.
- Buchanan, James. *The Works of James Buchanan, Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence.* Ed. John Bassett Moore. 12 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1908-11.
- Calhoun, John C. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun.* Ed. Robert L. Meriwether. 28 vols. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1959-2003.
- Carter, Susan B., et al, eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States,* Millennial edition online. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006-.
- Clay, Henry. *The Life and Speeches of the Hon. Henry Clay,* 2nd ed. Ed. Daniel Mallory. 2 vols. New York: R. P. Bixby & Co., 1843.
- . *The Life and Speeches of Henry Clay.* Ed. James B. Swain. 2 vols. New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1843.
- . *The Papers of Henry Clay.* Ed. James F. Hopkins. 10 vols. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-91.
- Coleman, Mrs. Chapman. *The Life of John J. Crittenden, with Selections from His Correspondence and Speeches.* 2 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1871.
- Committee on Washington's Valedictory Address. "Papers Relative to the Valedictory Address of President Washington." *Memoirs of the Historical*

- Society of Pennsylvania*. Ed. Edward Armstrong. Vol. 1, Being a Republication. Philadelphia: McCarthy and Davis, 1826. Reprint, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864.
- Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*. 3 vols. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
- Farrand, Max, ed. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, revised edition. 4 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966.
- Ford, Worthington C. "Some Original Documents on the Genesis of the Monroe Doctrine." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 2nd ser., 15 (1902).
- Gallatin, Albert. *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*. Ed. Henry Adams. 3 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879.
- Garrison, William Lloyd. *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison*. Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1852.
- Gibbs, George. *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams: Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury*. 2 vols. New York: W. Van Norden, 1846.
- Great Britain, Foreign Office. *British and Foreign State Papers*. 170 vols. London: James Ridgway and Sons, 1834-1977.
- Hamilton, Alexander. *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*. Ed. Harold C. Syrett. 27 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-87.
- Hill, Hamilton Andrews. *Memoir of Abbott Lawrence*, 2nd edition. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1884.
- Jackson, Andrew. *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*. Ed. John Spencer Bassett. 7 vol. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926-35.
- Jay, John. *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*. Ed. Henry P. Johnston. 4 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-93.
- Jefferson, Thomas. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Ed. Julian P. Boyd. 36 vols. to date. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-.
- . *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*. Ed. Paul Leicester Ford. 12 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5.
- . *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. Ed. Paul Leicester Ford. 10 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-99.
- Kossuth, Louis. *Memories of My Exile*. Trans. Ferencz Jausz. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1880.
- Madison, James. *The Papers of James Madison*. Eds. William T. Hutchinson and William M.E. Rachal. 17 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962-91.
- . *The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*. Ed. Robert J. Brugger. 8 vols. to date. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986-.

- . *The Writings of James Madison, Comprising His Public Papers and His Private Correspondence, Including Numerous Letters and Documents Now for the First Time Published*. Ed. Gaillard Hunt. 9 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.
- Manning, William R., ed. *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1925.
- McCormack, Thomas J. ed. *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896: Life-Sketches Written at the Suggestion of His Children*. 2 vols. Cedar Rapids, IA: The Torch Press, Publishers, 1909.
- Miller, Hunter, ed. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*. 8 vols. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-48.
- Monroe, James. *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of his Public and Private Papers and Correspondence now for the First Time Printed*. Ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton. 7 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898-1903.
- Newman, Francis W. *Select Speeches of Kossuth: Condensed and Abridged, with Kossuth's Express Sanction*. New York, 1854.
- Plumer, William, Jr. *Life of William Plumer*, ed. Andrew P. Peabody. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1857.
- Polk, James K. *Correspondence of James K. Polk*. Ed. Herbert Weaver. 10 vol. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969-.
- . *The Diary of James K. Polk, During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*. Ed. Milo Milton Quaife. 4 vols. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910.
- Prince, Hezekiah, Jr. *Journals of Hezekiah Prince, Jr.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1965.
- Richardson, James D., ed. *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908*. 11 vols. New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908.
- Sargent, Epes. *The Life and Public Services of Henry Clay*, New Ed. New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1844.
- Severance, Frank H., ed. *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society, Volume XI: Millard Fillmore Papers, Volume Two*. Buffalo, NY: Buffalo Historical Society, 1907.
- Sumner, Charles. *The Selected Letters of Charles Sumner*. Ed. Beverly Wilson Palmer. 2 vols. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, ed. "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797." *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904.
- Walsh, Robert, ed. *Select Speeches of the Right Honorable George Canning; with a Preliminary Biographical Sketch, and an Appendix, of Extracts from His Writings and Speeches*. Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1835.

- Washington, George. *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series*. Eds. W. W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. 6 vols. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992-97.
- . *The Papers of George Washington: Presidential Series*. Ed. Dorothy Twohig. 15 vols. to date. Charlottesville; University Press of Virginia, 1987-.
- . *The Papers of George Washington: Retirement Series*. Ed. Dorothy Twohig. 4 vols. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998-99.
- . *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*. Ed. John C. Fitzpatrick. 39 vols. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44.
- Webb, James Watson to Daniel Webster, [July 1852]. In *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 44 (1910-11): 212.
- Webster, C. K., ed. *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830: Select Documents from the Foreign Office Archives*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Webster, Daniel. *The Papers of Daniel Webster*. Ed. Charles M. Wiltse. 15 vols. Hanover, NH: University Press of New Hampshire, 1974-89.
- . *The Works of Daniel Webster*, 14th ed. Ed. Edward Everett. 6 vols. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1866.
- Winthrop, Robert C. *Addresses and Speeches on Various Occasions, from 1852 to 1867*. Boston, 1867.

Dissertations

- Leffler, Andor M. "The Kossuth Episode in America." Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve University, 1949.
- May, Arthur James. "Contemporary American Opinion of the Mid-Century Revolutions in Central Europe." Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1927.

Secondary Sources

- Albanese, Catherine L. *Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976.
- Ammon, Harry. "The Genet Mission and the Development of American Political Parties." *Journal of American History* 52 (Mar. 1966): 725-41.
- Anna, Timothy E. *Spain and the Loss of America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
- Banner, James M. *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815*. New York: Knopf, 1970.
- Belohlavek, John M. "Let the Eagle Soar!": *The Foreign Policy of Andrew Jackson*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. "The Background of Washington's Foreign Policy." *Yale Review* 16 (Jan. 1927): 316-37.
- . *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy*. New York: Macmillan, 1923.
- . "John Quincy Adams and George Washington." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1945): 365-84.
- . *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*. New York: Knopf, 1949. Reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981.
- . *The Latin American Policy of the United States, an Historical Interpretation*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943.
- . "Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence." *American Historical Review* 39 (Jan. 1934): 250-68.
- Binney, Horace. *An Inquiry into the Formation of Washington's Farewell Address*. Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, Publishers, 1859.
- Borden, Morton, ed. *George Washington*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1969.
- Boyd, Julian P. *Number 7: Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy, with Supporting Documents*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Brown, Everett Somerville. *The Constitutional History of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803-1812*. Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2000.
- Browne, Stephen Howard. *Jefferson's Call for Nationhood: The First Inaugural Address*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003.
- Bryan, William Alfred. *George Washington in American Literature, 1775-1865*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952.
- Bushnell, David. *Simon Bolivar: Liberation and Disappointment*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004.
- Cayton, Andrew R. L. "The Debate Over the Panama Congress and the Origins of the Second American Party System." *Historian* 47 (Feb. 1985): 219-38.
- Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.
- Clark, J. Reuben. *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930.
- Coles, Henry L. *The War of 1812*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Combs, Jerald A. *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. *The Presidency of James Monroe*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996.
- Curti, M. E. "Young America." *American Historical Review* 32 (Oct. 1926): 34-55.
- Dauer, Manning J. *The Adams Federalists*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953.
- Davis, Elmer. *History of the New York Times, 1851-1921*. New York: The New York Times, 1921.

- Davis, Thomas B., Jr. "Carlos de Alvear and James Monroe: New Light on the Origin of the Monroe Doctrine." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 23 (Nov. 1943): 632-49.
- DeConde, Alexander. *The Quasi-War; Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France 1797-1801*. New York: Scribner, 1966.
- . "Washington's Farewell, the French Alliance, and the Election of 1796." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43 (Mar. 1957): 641-58.
- Elkins, Stanley and Eric McKittrick. *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.
- Estes, Todd. *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006.
- Eyal, Yonatan. *The Young America Movement and the Transformation of the Democratic Party, 1828-61*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Fischer, David Hackett. *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965.
- Fleming, Thomas J. *The Louisiana Purchase*. Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley, 2003.
- Flexner, James Thomas. *George Washington: Anguish and Farewell (1793-1799)*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.
- . *Washington: The Indispensable Man*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974.
- Ford, Worthington C. "John Quincy Adams and the Monroe Doctrine." *American Historical Review* 7 (July 1902): 676-96.
- Fry, Joseph A. "Washington's Farewell Address and American Commerce." *West Virginia History* 37, no. 4 (1976): 281-90.
- Furstenberg, François. *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Garrity, Patrick J. "Warnings of a Parting Friend." *National Review* 45 (Fall 1996): 14-26.
- Gilbert, Felix. *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Gough, Barry M. *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579-1809*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980.
- Greenberg, Amy S. *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hackett, Charles Wilson. "The Development of John Quincy Adams's Policy with Respect to an American Confederation and the Panama Congress, 1822-1825." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8 (Nov. 1928): 496-526.

- Hargreaves, Mary W. M. *The Presidency of John Quincy Adams*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1985.
- Harper, John Lamberton. *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Hart, Albert Bushnell. *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916.
- Heidler, David S. and Jeanne T. Heidler. *Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1996.
- . *The War of 1812*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Inman, Samuel Guy. "The Monroe Doctrine and Hispanic America." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 4 (Nov. 1921): 635-76.
- Kahler, Gerald E. *The Long Farewell: Americans Mourn the Death of George Washington*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008.
- Kammen, Michael. *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.
- Kaplan, Lawrence S. *Entangling Alliances with None: American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1987.
- Kastor, Peter J. *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Kazanjian, David. *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Ketcham, Ralph. *Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789-1829*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Kinsbruner, Jay. *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions, and Underdevelopment*, 2nd ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- Komlos, John. *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852*. Buffalo, NY: East European Institute, 1973.
- Kurtz, Stephen G. *The Presidency of John Adams*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.
- Laderman, Gary. *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Lawson, Leonard Axel. *The Relation of British Policy to the Declaration of the Monroe Doctrine*. New York: Columbia University, 1922.
- Lewis, James, Jr. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Lockey, Joseph Byrne. *Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920.
- Longley Lawrence D. and Neal R. Peirce. *The Electoral College Primer*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.

- Lycan, Gilbert L. *Alexander Hamilton & American Foreign Policy: A Design for Greatness*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.
- Lynch, John. *Simon Bolivar: A Life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Malanson, Jeffrey J. "The Congressional Debate over U.S. Participation in the Congress of Panama, 1825-1826: Washington's Farewell Address, Monroe's Doctrine, and the Fundamental Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy." *Diplomatic History* 30 (Nov. 2006): 813-38.
- Manning, William R. "The Nootka Sound Controversy." *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1904*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905: 281-478.
- Markowitz, Arthur A. "Washington's Farewell and the Historians: A Critical Review." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 94 (Apr. 1970): 173-91.
- May, Ernest R. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.
- May, Robert E. *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- McDonald, Forrest. *The Presidency of George Washington*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1974.
- . *The Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1976.
- Merk, Frederick. *The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, 1843-1849*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.
- Miller, David Hunter. *Secret Statutes of the United States: A Memorandum*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918.
- Mitchell, Broadus. *Alexander Hamilton: The National Adventure, 1788-1804*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962.
- Murphy, Gretchen. *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Oliver, John W. "Louis Kossuth's Appeal to the Middle West – 1852." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 14 (Mar. 1928): 481-95.
- Paltsits, Victor Hugo. *Washington's Farewell Address, In facsimile, with transliterations of all the drafts of Washington, Madison, & Hamilton, together with their correspondence and other supporting documents*. New York: The New York Public Library, 1935.
- Pasley, Jeffrey L. "The Tyranny of Printers": *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.
- Pasley, Jeffrey L., Andrew W. Roberston, and David Waldstreicher, eds. *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Perkins, Bradford. *Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.

- Perkins, Dexter. "Europe, Spanish America, and the Monroe Doctrine." *American Historical Review* 27 (Jan. 1922): 207-18.
- . *A History of the Monroe Doctrine: A New Revision of the Book Originally Published Under the Title HANDS OFF: A History of the Monroe Doctrine*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963.
- . "John Quincy Adams." In *The American Secretaries of States and Their Diplomacy*. Ed. Samuel Flagg Bemis. 20 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927-85.
- . *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.
- . *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933.
- Peterson, Merrill D. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Pethick, Derek. *First Approaches to the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver: J. J. Douglas Ltd., 1976.
- Phillips, Walter Alison. *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813-1823 as an Experiment in the International Organization of Peace*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914.
- Pratt, Julius W. *Expansionists of 1812*. Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1957.
- Reinhold, Frances L. "New Research on the First Pan-American Congress Held at Panama in 1826." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 18 (Aug. 1938): 343-50.
- Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- . *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991.
- . *John Quincy Adams*. New York: Times Books, 2002.
- . *Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Reuter, Frank T. *Trials and Triumphs: George Washington's Foreign Policy*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1983.
- Robertson, William Spence. "The Monroe Doctrine Abroad in 1823-24." *American Political Science Review* 6 (Nov. 1912): 546-63.
- . "The Recognition of the Hispanic American Nations by the United States." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (Aug. 1918): 239-69.
- . "South America and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828." *Political Science Quarterly* 30 (Mar. 1915): 82-105.
- Robinson, William A. "The Washington Benevolent Society in New England; A Phase of Politics during the War of 1812." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 49 (1916).
- Rodríguez O., Jaime E. *The Independence of Spanish America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- Rossignol, Marie-Jeanne. *The Nationalist Ferment: The Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1792-1812*. Trans. Lillian A. Parrott. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004.
- Rutland, Robert Allen. *The Presidency of James Madison*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990.
- Schellenberg, T. R. "Jeffersonian Origins of the Monroe Doctrine." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 14 (Feb. 1934): 1-31.
- Schwartz, Barry. *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol*. New York: The Free Press, 1987.
- Shepherd, William R. "Bolivar and the United States." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (Aug. 1918): 270-98.
- Spalding, Matthew and Patrick J. Garrity. *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington's Farewell Address and the American Character*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.
- Spencer, Donald S. *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy 1848-1852*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977.
- Stagg, J. C. A. *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Széplaki, Joseph, ed. *Louis Kossuth "The Nation's Guest": A Bibliography of His Trip in the United States, December 4, 1851-July 14, 1852*. Ligonier, PA: Bethlen Press, 1976.
- Temperley, Harold. "Documents Illustrating the Reception and Interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in Europe, 1823-4." *English Historical Review* 39 (Oct. 1924): 590-93.
- . *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World*, second ed. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1966.
- Tollas, Tibor, ed. *Gloria Victis: Szabadsagharcunk a világirodalomban, 1848-1849 (Glory to the Vanquished: The Hungarian War of Liberation in World Literature, 1848-1849)*. München, 1973.
- Turner, Lynn W. "The Electoral Vote Against Monroe in 1820 – An American Legend." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42 (Sep. 1955): 250-73.
- Updyke, Frank. *The Diplomacy of the War of 1812*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1915.
- Vardy, Steven Béla. "Louis Kossuth and the Slavery Question in America." *East European Quarterly* 39 (Jan. 2006): 449-64.
- Waddell, D. A. G. "International Politics and Latin American Independence." In *The Independence of Latin America*. Ed. Leslie Bethell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Waldstreicher, David. *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

- Weinberg, Albert K. "International Affairs: The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation." *American Political Science Review* 34 (Jun. 1940): 539-47.
- . "Washington's 'Great Rule' in its Historical Evolution." In *Historiography and Urbanization: Essays in American History in Honor of W. Stull Holt*. Ed. Eric F. Goldman. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941.
- Widmer, Edward L. *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Wills, Garry. *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984.
- Wilson, Major L. *The Presidency of Martin Van Buren*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984.
- Wright, Louis B. "The Founding Fathers and 'Splendid Isolation.'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 6 (Feb. 1943): 173-96.