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United States' Foreign Policy during the Haitian Revolution: A Story of Continuity, Power Politics, and the Lure of Empire in the Early Republic

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UNITED STATES' FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION:
A Story of Continuity, Power Politics, and the Lure of Empire in the Early Republic

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts

by


Jeffrey B. Nickel

2001

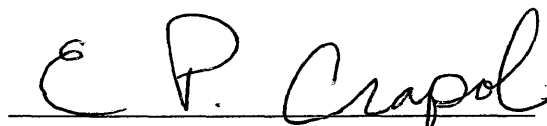
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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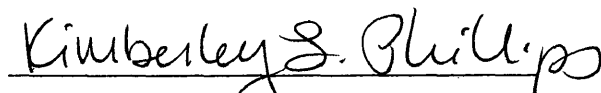

Kimberly Phillips

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ABSTRACT

United States' foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution demands significant attention from historians because it was one of the first events—albeit an event that was played out over thirteen years and three presidential administrations—that illustrated the themes that would predominate nineteenth-century American diplomacy. George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson each pursued these themes—protection of national security, maintenance of freedom of action, expansion of commerce, and pursuit of territorial empire—with remarkable consistency. Although the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris in 1781 and 1782 also highlighted several of these themes, it was not until the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803, which was a direct offshoot of events in Haiti, that they became near dogma for American policymakers.

Furthermore, because American foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution takes place within several important historical contexts, the rivalry with Great Britain, the Quasi-War with France, and the Napoleonic Wars, American policymakers were forced to abandon their Revolutionary War idealist isolationism that forbid involvement in European affairs. If the United States was to defend its national interests, it would have to engage in the power politics so feared by the revolutionaries as unbecoming of a republican government. Although the breakdown of this idealism began with the realization of the need for a Franco-American alliance during the Revolutionary War, the alliance was short-lived and the possibility for retrenchment after the war was significant. The events of the Haitian Revolution, again culminating in the purchase of Louisiana, ensured that the United States could neither retrench inside its borders nor simply use commerce as its only means to externally promote security, republicanism, and territorial expansion.

This study examines the specific policies of these three presidential administrations. Despite their consistency, each administration's policies concerning the Haitian Revolution set important yet distinctive diplomatic precedents. First, George Washington laid out the strategic blueprints for his successors. As early as 1794, Washington committed the United States to protecting its significant commercial interests with Saint Domingue, the French name for the island now called Haiti. Washington's strategy, largely guided by Alexander Hamilton, was to promote French sovereignty while at the same time exploit the Haitian Revolution's commercial opportunities by trading with (and aiding) all sides. Adams and Jefferson would, using different tactics, largely adopt Washington's strategy of promoting the political status quo on the island while exploiting the opportunities offered by the revolution. Second, John Adams took this policy even farther by authorizing the first military intervention in Latin America and the first military intervention in a foreign revolution in United States' history. Third, with the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson ended American diplomatic involvement in the Haitian Revolution with the most significant precedent of all—the United States first territorial acquisition after the Treaty of Paris. Although the tactics of each administration differed significantly, they each pursued clearly defined national interests. However, uncontrollable geopolitical circumstances—the French Revolution, British ambitions in the Caribbean, and Napoleon's desires for a restored New World Empire—forced Washington, Adams, and Jefferson to each devise their own solutions.

**UNITED STATES' FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION:
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Introduction

Four days after declaring independence, the Continental Congress appointed a five-man committee to prepare a treaty to present to the French. Congress knew that declaring independence was only the first step in securing foreign support for the war against England. The Continental Congress knew that it must also offer some sort of treaty of alliance to France. However, the definition of such an alliance was highly controversial among the representatives. Should the newly formed United States offer a full treaty of political alliance or simply a treaty of commerce and friendship? The nature of the colonies' and now the United States' relationships with other nations had been debated since independence was first whispered. Thomas Paine in *Common Sense* wrote, "As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions."¹ The members of the treaty committee ultimately agreed, and John Adams drafted the Model Treaty. Like Paine and many other American revolutionaries, Adams did not want entangling political commitments. Following the Seven Years' War, many American colonists had become resentful of what they felt was their unnecessary involvement in European wars. As England began to tax its colonies more heavily after 1763, many Americans became convinced that such oppression would not occur if they broke their imperial ties to England. In one of his political treatises, Benjamin Franklin wrote in the first person with "I" being America and "you" being England, "you have quarrell'd with all Europe, and drawn me into all your Broils. . . . I have no natural Cause of Difference with France, Spain or Holland, and yet by turns I have join'd with you in Wars against all

of them.”² What had caused them grief in their colonial days, Adams reasoned, would be detrimental to the prosperity and security of the new nation.

Adams’ Model Treaty was largely a commercial treaty that would allow American ships and goods free and unlimited access to French ports, while the French would pour military supplies into the American war effort. The treaty also defined the rights of neutral shippers during wartime. Adams believed that the United States, as a proclaimed neutral, should have the right to carry out commerce with belligerents on any side of a war. Adams was thinking less about the war with England and more towards the United States’ future as a potential commercial power. Hence, the Model Treaty began the United States’ historical policy of “freedom of the seas.”³

Although Adams did not get his wish and the United States signed a formal treaty of political alliance with France to ensure French support, the alliance was effective only for five years and formally abrogated after twenty years. Moreover, Adams, along with fellow peace commissioners John Jay and Benjamin Franklin, personally accelerated the breakdown of the Franco-American alliance in 1782 when he helped to negotiate a separate peace treaty with England even though the terms of the alliance with France forbade one party from concluding a peace treaty without the other. Franklin, Jay, and Adams hinted to the English that they would accept a separate treaty without the French if England would grant complete independence, generous boundaries, and provisions for the resumption of trade. The Model Treaty established an ideal to which American foreign policymakers would aspire well into the twentieth century, and the separate peace negotiations with England evidenced American policy makers’ determination to maintain

the freedom of action to pursue the young nation's interests: independence, commerce, and territorial expansion.

The idealism, and one might say naiveté, of the Model Treaty gave way to the *realpolitik* of the Treaty of Paris. Nevertheless, both treaties confirmed that the guiding principle of American foreign policy would be freedom of action to pursue national interests. This principle would be tested by an event completely unforeseen when Adams drafted the Model Treaty in 1776 or upon the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), a slave revolt turned war for independence, severely tested the will of three presidential administrations, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. Each administration would attempt to reconcile its own ideological and political convictions and American "traditional" foreign policy with circumstances presented by the revolution in order to expand commerce, ensure national security, and eventually, acquire territory.

United States foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution was a battle against European colonialism, the racist fears of American policy makers, and those who would restrict American freedom of action. However, the Haitian Revolution also provided American policymakers the opportunity to further America's commercial and territorial aspirations of empire. According to the philosophy of the American revolutionaries, commerce was more than just a means to achieve fiscal prosperity, as historian Bradford Perkins states, "mutually profitable commerce would lubricate the machinery of peace."⁴ Commerce was the vehicle that would carry European gold to America's coffers and American republicanism to Europe's oppressed. Therefore, treaties of commerce and a liberal definition of neutral rights were essential not only to the United States' war effort,

but to its future and the future of republicanism across the globe. America was to bring the gospel of republicanism to the world with its ships of goods and grain.⁵ Washington, Adams, and Jefferson would each relentlessly seek to maintain and expand the lucrative trade with Saint Domingue (the French name for half of the island of Hispaniola that is now Haiti).

To achieve these goals, the United States would have to play the game of traditional European power politics, eschewing at least temporarily its goal of staying out of European power struggles. Diplomatic relations during the Haitian Revolution did not exist inside a vacuum, but rather American relations with Saint Domingue existed inside the contexts of the French Revolution, the American Quasi-War with France, the American desire for commercial and territorial expansion, and the ever-present rivalry with England. Washington, and especially Adams and Jefferson, found it impossible to secure American interests without involving themselves in what could have been seen as a European affair—the overthrow of French control from Saint Domingue and the eventual effort of Napoleon to reconquer the island. Furthermore, by the end of the 1790s, Saint Domingue was a proxy battleground for the British against the French, all of which threatened the United States' enormously profitable commercial relationship with the island. To combat that threat, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson would engage in the *realpolitik* that Adams himself so tried to avoid in the Model Treaty yet succeeded so well with in the Treaty of Paris.

Although there were many specific differences in policy between the three American administrations in this study, they each displayed two consistent policy strands. Each sought to maintain the commercial statue quo with Saint Domingue—meaning

supporting nominal but loose French control over the island— and to protect American national security at the expense of a European power. American foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution changed over time to adjust for uncontrollable circumstances, but the United State's commitment to trade, as illustrated by the Model Treaty, never wavered. In fact, as opportunities presented themselves during the course of the revolution, American foreign policymakers, as Samuel Flagg Bemis stated, turned "Europe's distress" into "American advantage." The most spectacular "advantage" was Jefferson's doubling of the size of the country with the Louisiana Purchase, which was a direct result of events in Saint Domingue. While in pursuit of these goals, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson established several remarkable precedents in the conduct of American foreign policy. Washington began the policy of supporting the status quo in Saint Domingue to protect American trade. Adams authorized the first use of American military intervention in a foreign conflict in the history of the United States. And Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana went outside a strict constitutionalist interpretation to set a precedent for American territorial expansion. Moreover, the efforts of all three influenced the creation of the first black republic composed of mostly former slaves. James Madison wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1801, "The situation and destiny of that Island is in several points of view deeply interesting to the United States."⁶ The destiny of Haiti was indeed linked with the United States, and American foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution would help to determine the course of both nations' futures far more than any policymaker involved thought possible.

Chapter I: The Washington Administration

Haiti's Significance to the World and the Beginnings of Revolution

In 1789, the colony of Saint Domingue was the diamond in France's West Indian empire. Saint Domingue was the world's largest producer of sugar and coffee, producing more sugar than all of the British West Indian islands combined.⁷ It was the wealthiest and most productive slave colony in the Caribbean. This small island provided more wealth for France than the entire region of Louisiana ever did. Its vast wealth made the colony the crown jewel of the eighteenth-century Caribbean. France obviously placed Saint Domingue high on its colonial priority list. However, the *ancien régime* never played an overly active role in governing the small colony, preferring to allow the local planter aristocracy to maintain tight control over their plantations. As long as the coffee, sugar, and the gold from the sale of those goods kept flowing to France, the government was content to leave Saint Domingue alone. Nevertheless, it was very wary if any other power tried to encroach upon its colonial and commercial rights in Saint Domingue.

The country that tried and succeeded the most in doing so was the young United States. The American colonies began trading with Saint Domingue as early as 1717.⁸ New England used Saint Domingue as a source of cheap molasses and as a market for refuse fish, which the planters used to feed slaves in the colony. Other products like iron, flour, cattle, and house frames flowed from the United States to Saint Domingue.⁹ The colony's cash-crop agricultural economy gave the island much gold but little ability to produce all its own food and manufactured goods. Therefore, the planters had

tremendous purchasing power, but they had to purchase most of what they wanted from outside the colony. The United States was the most willing and able source of trade. France, of course, resented the fact that the gold revenues from sugar and coffee sales were going toward purchasing goods from the United States. France's lack of ability to be the primary supplier and granary of Saint Domingue continually hampered French policy during the upcoming revolution on the island. American merchants, primarily from New England, were more than happy to exploit France's inability to supply her own colony. These merchants coveted their trade with the island and often used their political connections in the Federalist Party to ensure its continuation and protection.

America's trade with Saint Domingue is one of the first examples of American diplomacy seeking to expand and protect a commercial empire in search of foreign markets. As historian Thomas Ott wrote in his work, *The Haitian Revolution* (1973), "The desire of the United States to maintain this rich trade was a primary consideration in its policy toward the Haitian Revolution."¹⁰ In 1790, trade with Saint Domingue amounted to 2.2 million dollars, approximately eleven percent of the United States' total exports.¹¹ By comparison, the United States' largest trading partner in 1790, Great Britain, received 7 million dollars in American exports, or thirty five percent of all exports. However, France, despite its treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States, received less than 1 million dollars in American good. Over thirty-one percent of all American exports with a non-European destination were headed for Saint Domingue in 1790.¹² In 1791 alone, more than 500 ships from the United States engaged in trade with Saint Domingue.¹³ In a highly export-dependent economy, The United States' trade with Saint Domingue was a significant factor in the nation's economic health.

Most members of the island's elite knew that without the agricultural goods from the United States, the colony could never feed itself and still produce the copious amounts of sugar and coffee needed to maintain the island's high income. The French felt that this encroachment of American commercial influence violated France's mercantilist rights and reduced Saint Domingue's value to the mother country. However, the merchants and planters of Saint Domingue were perfectly aware of the importance of American trade to the colony's prosperity. In early 1790, Le Comte Duchillan, governor of Saint Domingue, wanted all restrictions lifted for American shipping, but French merchants successfully prevented this move toward free trade.¹⁴ Despite the failure of this measure, trade between Saint Domingue and the United States became increasingly more liberalized after American independence. Saint Domingue and France had to accept the necessity of liberalizing trade because of the island's dependence on the United States.

France and the United States were hardly the only powers interested in "The Jewel of the Antilles." A pot of gold as rich as Saint Domingue had more than its share of jealous onlookers, ready to snatch up any of the colony's over-flowing wealth. Spain, which owned Santo Domingo on other half of Hispaniola, had always coveted the entire island. Britain had an envious eye on Saint Domingue since 1655. A half-century later in 1706 during the War of Spanish Succession, Britain had tried to force the French from Saint Domingue. The British again tried to invade the island in 1748, capturing only a small part of the island that was soon retaken by the French.¹⁵ The fact that the French had the wealthiest colony in the West Indies, even more so than Cuba, was an affront to British pride and a challenge to British supremacy. Despite their failure to control the

island, the British continually used the threat of blockading and invading Saint Domingue as an effective diplomatic lever throughout the eighteenth century. Britain could not ignore that Saint Domingue provided the greatest competition to its own sugar islands in the West Indies. The necessities of competition forced Great Britain to always keep an eye on events in Saint Domingue.

Nevertheless, the great source of Saint Domingue's wealth was neither sugar, coffee, nor trade—it was slaves. By 1787, there were 408,000 slaves in the colony, and they were rapidly increasing. Slavery in Saint Domingue, like other West Indian sugar colonies, was extremely harsh. The death rate was much higher for slaves in Saint Domingue than for slaves in the United States. To offset this rapid loss of slave property, a brisk slave trade kept up the inflow of African-born slaves at a much higher rate than the United States. The primary owners of slaves were the French white planters. With a population around 24,000 in 1787, the whites were by far the wealthiest class in Saint Domingue. Not all whites were planters, however. The highest levels of status and power belonged to the French-born aristocrats in administrative and bureaucratic positions. They were the only real competition for the native-born white planter, or *grand blanc*. If there was a middle class in Saint Domingue, it was composed of the native mulatto population, numbered around 20,000 in 1787, called the *gens de couleur*, and the white artisans, overseers, and merchants, called the *petits blancs*. Mulattos—legally any person of African descent who could also prove partial European descent—held many of the same rights as whites. Most importantly, Mulattos could own property. Although they held a lower legal and social status, many of the laws discriminating against persons of mixed blood were disregarded and ignored. Some mulattos were slave

owners themselves and treated their slaves with equal severity. Slave holding was the path to riches in Saint Domingue, and many mulattos were determined to make the racist doctrines of the day work in their favor. The mulattos composed most of the military and were often sent to France for education and training. Out of this class arose many of the political and military leaders of the Haitian Revolution.¹⁶

By 1789, tension between all classes had reached new heights. A year earlier, the society of *Les Amis des Noirs*, an organization devoted to establishing full mulatto rights and abolishing slavery, was founded in France. Using them military, planters tightened their control over slavery and mulatto rights were further reduced. Wealthy mulattos, facing increased discrimination despite their wealth, petitioned the recently called Estates-General in May for full rights of citizenship. In December, their petition was declined and harassment of mulattos in Saint Domingue intensified. Class hatred became rampant, and the *petit blanc* resentment of wealthy mulattos further enflamed the growing crisis. Acts of violence soon broke out, and reports, if not proof, of horrific atrocities became common. The mulattos once again submitted a petition to the National Assembly for full rights, which was again denied on December 3. Mulattos continued to make speeches and protest their treatment, arousing much public sentiment among blacks. The Revolution in France had spread to Saint Domingue.¹⁷

For two years, mulattos and whites battled for control of the colony. On March 8, 1790, the National Assembly in France declared that the colonies had control over their own affairs, thereby washing their hands of burgeoning revolution in Saint Domingue. The responsibility fell on the island's Colonial Assembly. However, in 1791, the nature of the conflict in Saint Domingue would take a radical turn that forced France to rethink

its policy. This shift was so profound, that its ramifications would be studied and contemplated by the world's major powers for the next century. Very late on the night of August 22, 1791, a white-hating voodoo priest and fugitive slave from Jamaica, a man known only as Boukman, rallied slaves from several plantations on the Plaine du Nord. Ransacking their plantations and shooting their overseers, the slaves swept through the countryside, gathering strength and power as the number of slaves in revolt swelled to 100,000 in the North Province. The Revolution was now also a slave revolt. In 1794, the French National Assembly issued a decree of emancipation for the French colonies.¹⁸ The slave revolt had succeeded, but the Revolution was far from over.

Reaction to the Revolution: 1791-1795

Emboldened by the spirit and rhetoric of the French Revolution, the black slaves and the mulattos eventually joined forces against the whites. They believed liberty, equality, and fraternity belonged to them as much as it did the French. Over the next few years a bloody, atrocity filled war ravaged Saint Domingue. Slogans such as "death to all whites" predominated throughout. Unlike the American and French Revolutions, the Haitian Revolution was as much a racial struggle as it was an economic, political, or social one. The French National Assembly could no longer ignore the dramatic and terrible events in their colony. In 1792, The National Assembly sent a French battalion of troops under General Le Salle to Saint Domingue. These troops, ardent with revolutionary fervor, had hats and banners that read "Live Free or Die." General Le Salle ordered his troops to remove or cover up the slogan, fearing the implications if the slaves

or mulattos (who would tell the slaves what it said since most slaves could not read) saw such inflammatory rhetoric.¹⁹

The British were also alarmed by the revolt in Saint Domingue. Not having yet abolished the slave trade, Britain's first reaction was to send aid to the white planters. They were concerned that the slave revolt might spread to Jamaica and other English colonies, and they would lose their commerce. In 1791, Governor Effingham of Jamaica sent military aid and supplies to the planters in Saint Domingue. Britain wanted desperately to contain the ideology of the Haitian Revolution.²⁰

The United States was also extremely concerned about the events in Saint Domingue. Like the French National Assembly, the United States did not become overly concerned with the revolution in Saint Domingue until it transformed into a slave revolt. A slave revolt involving near a half million slaves not very far from the continent had potentially enormous consequences for the slave holding United States. However, the multitude of reactions to the Haitian Revolution, especially at this early stage can be better understood by examining the state of slavery in the United States in the early 1790s. In 1791, slavery was arguably on the decline. All states north of Maryland had made provisions for emancipation, and the Federal government had forbidden slavery in the Northwest Territory. Eli Whitney did not patent his cotton gin until 1793, and slavery had not yet become the divisive issue it would be in the nineteenth century. However, 700,000 slaves resided in the United States, which had a total population at this time around 3 million. These slaves still represented an enormous economic investment. Although the argument that slavery was a benevolent institution would not appear until the next century, the racial doctrines of the 1790s still held that a slave revolt would be a

threat to liberty itself.²¹ Slavery was the “measuring rod” of freedom. In the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Americans increasingly measured freedom against the debasement of black slavery. In other words, to be free meant not to be a slave. Hence, the elimination of slavery would have required an utterly new definition of freedom that would have challenged nearly all the racial, social, and gendered prejudices of the time.²² Slavery as an institution was not defended by fire-eating pro-slavery advocates of a Slave Power, but by policymakers who felt that a slave revolt would lead to the loss of white liberty at the hands of slaves, just like in Saint Domingue.

Early American reactions to the revolt were hence varied and ambiguous. George Washington referred to the revolt as “the unfortunate insurrection of negroes” in a letter to the French Minister to the United States, Jean Baptiste de Ternant, in October 1791. Southern newspapers cried out in horror using rhetoric that would become familiar to the Civil War generation. Nathaniel Russell wrote to Ralph Izard, a United States Senator from South Carolina, in 1794, “I hope some effective measures will be adopted to prevent any evil consequences from that diabolical decree of the national convention which emancipates all the slaves in the french (*sic*) colonies, a circumstance the most alarming that could happen to this country.”²³ Historian James Sidbury, in his article “Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1790-1800,” stated that Virginians were “nonplussed” by the revolt and the subsequent emancipation. They could not understand how the French planters could lose control or how the slaves found a way to organize themselves. Others thought it was simply abominable.²⁴ Several states, such as Georgia and Izard's own South Carolina, even temporarily stopped importing slaves from the West Indies, fearing some slaves

"infected" with the spirit of revolt from Saint Domingue might spread their dreaded disease.²⁵

White Americans were not the only people disturbed by the revolt in Saint Domingue. According to Peggy Liss, "The reverberation in Spanish colonies of the French Revolution in Saint Domingue in 1792 contributed not only to the scarcity of foodstuffs but also to racial tension and official headache."²⁶ Spanish authorities felt the largest shockwaves in the Spanish Caribbean, New Spain, and Brazil. Although Spanish officials discovered two minor conspiracies in Guatemala in 1794, the government became increasingly afraid of the "large numbers" of émigrés and refugees from Saint Domingue. In a 1795 revolt in Coro, on the Venezuelan coast, several thousand black and part black slaves killed whites.²⁷

The United States developed two primary strains of policy in reaction to the events in Saint Domingue. The first strain was in deference to the interests of southern slave owners and those who feared the "evil consequences" from a general slave uprising in the United States. However, fears of slave revolts were not strictly a southern phenomenon, as many in the northern states also were wary of Saint Domingue's implications. The specifics of this line of American policy began to develop when representatives from Saint Domingue's Colonial Assembly visited the American government in Philadelphia in 1791. The French National Assembly ordered the Colonial Assembly of Saint Domingue to send agents to the United States to seek assistance from the colony's other major trading partner. The French assumed that the United States, even more so than Britain, would be more than happy to contain and destroy the dangerous revolt in Saint Domingue. After all, France and the United States

were still close allies, and a certain spirit of cooperation existed between the two nations. Ironically, American fears of the Haitian Revolution spreading to other slave colonies would eventually bring the United States and Great Britain, not France, closer together in 1796.

In late 1791, Jean Baptiste de Ternant, the French Minister to the United States, approached President Washington asking for financial aid to relieve the French planters and for supplies to put down the revolt. De Ternant also hinted that France would be willing to accept direct American military intervention as well. Washington refused to engage militarily, but in a letter to de Ternant in September, Washington authorized the first \$40,000 of an eventual sum of near \$725,000 that would go towards purchasing materiel, arms, and supplies for the French planters in Saint Domingue. He clearly elucidated the American position towards these early stages of the Haitian Revolution, "I am happy in the opportunity of testifying how well disposed the United States are to render every aid in their power to our good friends and allies, the French, to quell 'the alarming insurrection of the Negroes in Hispanola,' and of the ready disposition of the executive authority to effect it."²⁸ Spurred on by Alexander Hamilton, Washington planned to use his discretionary powers as President to take a lead role in foreign policy towards Saint Domingue. Thomas Jefferson, Washington's Secretary of State, was also anxious to get supplies and aid to the planters and put down the slave revolt. The Francophilic Jefferson saw this aid as an opportunity to bind the two nations even closer. Jefferson wrote de Ternant in November of 1792 that by aiding France in Saint Domingue the United States "could not better evidence our friendship."²⁹ Neither Washington, Jefferson, nor Hamilton, the three people who most controlled U.S. foreign

policy in the early 1790s, was "a crusader in behalf of slavery."³⁰ While each of their specific areas of concern differed, each thought they were pursuing the national interest. However, Washington and Jefferson owned slaves themselves, and all three, especially Jefferson, were still sensitive to the interests of slave owners.

The second strain of foreign policy concerning Saint Domingue aimed at protecting, maintaining, and increasing the United States' vast trade with the colony. As previously mentioned, eleven-percent of all American overseas trade was with Saint Domingue. The conflict on the island could potentially disrupt the rich trade, however, it also opened up new opportunities for American merchants. War meant that the demand for goods would skyrocket and the trading would be even more lucrative. Armies needed to be fed, and the United States was the most available source of food. Moreover, American merchants, mostly from New England, had few qualms about with whom they traded. Gold from the mulattos or blacks was equally as valuable as gold from the planters. These merchants often stretched French neutral shipping laws beyond their intended boundaries. Initially, the merchants wanted to maintain "business as usual." However, the circumstances of war quickly forced them to adopt different tactics. Hamilton realized that the revolt in Saint Domingue could open up new opportunities to extract more trade concessions from France. If France needed American aid, it would have to accept such aid on American terms.

Moreover, Hamilton received numerous letters from New England merchants complaining of French abuses.³¹ He wanted to use the carrot of American aid to goad France into accepting further trade concessions. Gouverneur Morris, the new minister to France, wrote Jefferson in January 1792 that his "most important (duty) is the patronage

of our commerce, and the extension of the privileges, both in France and her colonies, but most especially in the latter."³² Undoubtedly, Hamilton knew that any further opening of trade with Saint Domingue would result in more trade with the revolting blacks and mulattos as well as with the beleaguered planters. However, this fact made little difference to the New England merchants, who were mostly Federalists and largely indifferent to the racial and social implications of their profiteering, unlike their Jeffersonian compatriots. Jeffersonians Republicans, who in 1792 were starting to form a collective identity, were much more likely to be slave owners and agrarian minded. To the Jeffersonians, trading with rebelling slaves was antithetical to natural law because it violated the "natural" racial order. Furthermore, it was immoral and threatened their position as slave owners.

Southern slaveholders were indeed well aware of their northern brethren's actions. Most of the southern states, especially South Carolina, called for a total trade embargo with Saint Domingue or for only limited trade using French ships. Southerners, especially the Jeffersonian Republicans, were incensed that the greed of Northern Federalist merchants could compromise their liberties. The formation of the first French Republic in 1793 further complicated the issue. Hamilton argued that the United States' commercial and political treaties were now void and that the United States could ignore the restrictions of trade with the French colonies stipulated in the treaty. Unregulated trade would more easily allow supplies and food to reach all warring parties in Saint Domingue. Jefferson did not believe in advocating an embargo or in severely restricting trade. Nevertheless, he believed all trade with Saint Domingue should exist within the current relationship between France and the United States. Unlike Hamilton, Jefferson

did not want to abrogate the treaties with France and believed that the establishment of a Republic in France only enhanced the relationship between the two nations. Jefferson thought that the formation of the Republic in 1793 "as a link which binds still closer [the] interests and affections" of the United States and France.³³ On December 30, 1792, Jefferson wrote to Gouverneur Morris in France concerning the possibility of abrogating the treaties with France:

We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded, that every one may govern itself under whatever forms it please, and change their forms at its own will, and that it may transact its business with foreign nations through whatever organ it thinks proper, whether King, convention, assembly, committee, President, or whatever else it may chuse (sic). *The will of the nation is the only thing essential to be regarded.*³⁴

Jefferson considered these treaties to be with the nation and not with the specific government, as Hamilton believed. It was the right of France to depend on its relationship with the United States. Not surprisingly, Jefferson was only referring to France in this letter. Jefferson was ignorant of the ironies of such a statement in the context of the Haitian Revolution. For the remainder of the decade, Jefferson would lobby to suppress "the will of the nation" in Haiti. The freedom to express such a will belonged to free white men, not slaves in revolt. For the rest of Washington's administration, Jefferson continued to fight trade excesses in Saint Domingue and for further aid to France.

Some southerners and Republicans saw the Washington administration's policy of aiding France while enhancing trade to be conflicting goals. Indeed some historians have agreed with them. Thomas Ott wrote that these two strains of policy were contradictory, and that the policy of promoting trade usually won out because of the influence of Hamilton and the Federalist control of the government.³⁵ Although Hamilton obviously was more partial to the interests of the New England merchants and Jefferson was more

sensitive to the interests of the south and slave owners, Washington played his usual role of compromising between the two positions. The Washington administration most likely saw these two policy goals as harmonious. The United States wanted to maintain the French presence in Saint Domingue, fearing either that the British would fill the void left by France and the United States would then lose the trade with the island, or that a loss of French control would result in a further expanding slave revolt. In the early 1790s, aiding the French to put down the Revolution was the United States' best opportunity to control the effects of the slave revolt and maintain commercial hegemony over the island. After all, the United States had profited immensely when France had controlled the island. Washington, Jefferson, and Hamilton saw little reason why the country would not profit in the future if the French controlled the island. Jefferson stated the administration's opinion in 1795, "France enjoys the sovereignty over them (Saint Domingue) and we, the profit from them."³⁶ France having "sovereignty" meant that they had the political and moral responsibility for controlling the slaves. The United States simply reaped the economic benefits.

The administration's task was further complicated by the entrance of hundreds of white refugee planters from Saint Domingue into the United States. Fleeing from the revolting hordes, these émigrés posed numerous problems for the state and federal governments. Approximately 5000 such émigrés entered the United States by 1793, a number that would mushroom to 20,000 by 1797.³⁷ Most of these refugees were wealthy planters whose plantations were threatened by the conflict in their homeland. These refugees had a two-fold impact on American policy. Naturally, most had aristocratic and royalist leanings and were disdainful of the French Revolution. Therefore, they quickly

became involved in the Federalist Party, which held an antipathy toward Republican France and a greater toleration of monarchial feelings. These were the very people aware that Saint Domingue's prosperity depended on trade with the United States. Their presence strengthened the Federalist Party and gave it a new impetus to increase trade with Saint Domingue.

However, the émigrés carried with them two important things that would feed the fears of slave revolt—their horrifying tales of persecution at the hands of the revolting slaves and the planters' slaves themselves. The refugees' stories, certainly overly sensationalized, spread quickly throughout the country. Testimony of blacks raping all white women and murdering all white men enflamed the worst fears of slave owners and even non-slaveholders who shared their racist ideology. Many Americans felt that events in Saint Domingue confirmed their suspicions about blacks: that left to their own devices, blacks would intrinsically murder all whites and were unfit for freedom. Southerners up until the Civil War would promulgate these conclusions. The Haitian Revolution became the ultimate damning evidence against emancipation.

Furthermore, many whites feared that the slaves the French émigrés brought with them would "infect" the American slaves with ideas of revolt and revolution. Some 10,000 slaves from Saint Domingue entered the United States in the early 1790s, and many southern states passed restrictions or outright bans on the importation of slaves from the West Indies.³⁸ Indeed there were numerous connections between slave revolts in the United States and the Haitian Revolution. As early as 1791, a small insurrection in Louisiana was tied to events in Saint Domingue.³⁹ In 1792, a slave conspiracy was discovered in Richmond, Virginia that had been influenced at least partially by the

Haitian Revolution. In 1793, other Virginians discovered the existence of a vast network of "Secret Keepers," a secret slave network designed to transmit and coordinate plans of insurrection, many of whom had come from Saint Domingue.⁴⁰ Free blacks and slaves no doubt heard the stories of the Revolution from these newly imported slaves. They also heard their white masters discussing the "tragedy" of Saint Domingue as printed in the local newspapers. Some American blacks also witnessed it first hand. One of the few occupations open to free blacks was the merchant marine. In 1791 alone, five hundred to six hundred ships visited Saint Domingue from the United States totaling about five thousand sailors. Approximately fifteen percent of all sailors were black, which meant around seven-hundred-fifty blacks could have visited the island per year. Denmark Vesey was himself a sailor and could not have failed to be inspired by the Haitian example several decades later.⁴¹

Several historians have argued that the revolt in Saint Domingue caused a shift in the ideology of slave rebellions. Slavery historians David Geggus and Eugene D. Genovese have argued that after the early 1790s "slaves increasingly aimed not at secession from the dominant society but at joining it on equal terms."⁴² The idea of freed black on "equal terms" was terrifying to the slave holding whites. All of the predominant emancipation schemes of the day, such as those of Jefferson, called for all of the freed slaves to leave white society, by either returning to Africa or migrating to Central and South America. The goal of a slave revolt was now inclusion, which is what most whites, slaveholding and non-slaveholding, feared the most.

Jefferson, as Washington's Secretary of State, was deeply concerned on how to handle the refugee planters and contain the spread of slave revolt. He was torn between

his empathy for the émigré's plight, his anti-royalist leanings, and his fear of a slave revolt. Most of the émigrés, having fled Saint Domingue quickly and without most of their wealth, arrived in the United States quite destitute. They sought aid from the federal government to allow them to live until their possessions could be recovered from their homes and plantations. Jefferson believed that it was unconstitutional for the federal government to give direct aid to private individuals and that the state governments were responsible for providing relief. Moreover, Jefferson had difficulty accepting that aristocratic royalists were deserving of government aid. Nevertheless, his sympathy for their plight eventually won over. He wrote to James Monroe in 1793, "The situation of the St. Domingo fugitives (aristocrats as they are) calls aloud for pity and charity. Never was so deep a tragedy presented to the feelings of man."⁴³ Undoubtedly, Jefferson would have wanted similar sympathy should he experience a threatening slave rebellion. For a man that had thought British oppressions and tyranny so great as to advocate revolution two decades earlier, to say that he had never seen "so deep a tragedy" as the conflict in Saint Domingue was a momentous expression. Jefferson continued to express to Monroe his serious concern at what had occurred in Saint Domingue and could occur in the United States:

I become daily more and more convinced that all the West India Islands will remain in the hands of the people of colour and a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly and possibly ourselves (south of the Potomac) have to wade through, and try to avert them.⁴⁴

If Jefferson was so sure that the Haitian Revolution would lead to a similar bloody revolt in the United States, why did the Washington administration pursue a non-interventionist policy in the early 1790s and not take more steps to "avert" and contain the revolution in Saint Domingue? Although by 1795 the United States provided France

with over \$700,000 in aid, which was credited to the war debt with France, more American ships than ever traded in Saint Domingue. This trade kept all sides of the Haitian Revolution fed and supplied. A trade embargo or at least trade only through French merchants arguably would have done more to break the rebelling blacks and mulattos than any amount of intervention or aid to France. If Jefferson's slave rebellion "domino theory" was so pervasive, as it appeared to be in southern newspapers and in the rhetoric of southern politicians, why did the Washington administration not pursue a more direct policy of containment? The administration chose to be relatively non-interventionist because a more activist policy would have sacrificed other primary policy goals. Although Jefferson was Secretary of State and had definite fears of a slave revolt, he was not the President. Furthermore, he resigned his position in 1793, feeling that he had lost the ear of the president. Washington's most influential advisor was arguably Hamilton, and Jefferson's departure from the cabinet increased Hamilton's influence. In the early 1790s, the new nation was hardly on sound economic footing and needed to exploit foreign markets to sell its surplus agricultural production. For Hamilton, who had worked a good part of his life to abolish slavery in his home state of New York, to sacrifice this rich trade with Saint Domingue in order to assuage irrational fears of a slave revolt was a direct affront to his policy vision. War in the colony was an opportunity for the United States to enhance trade even further. Of course, unlike Jefferson, he did not mind that France was incensed at this American audacity as well. Hamilton and Jefferson agreed, however, that if the United States would not trade with Saint Domingue, the British would assume America's position as the colony's primary trading

partner. Neither France nor the United States wanted Britain to get its claws of empire into Saint Domingue. Once there, they would be very difficult to remove.

Despite Hamilton's anti-French tendencies, the administration officially took a pro-France position. The revolt in Saint Domingue provided the first opportunity for the United States to uphold its responsibilities stipulated in the Treaty of Alliance with France. The national government did give France significant aid, and the various state legislatures passed bills providing aid for the refugee planters. The United States' official policy in the early 1790s was no doubt in France's favor. The French forces in Saint Domingue still received the bulk of American trade. The only question being debated was why did the administration not do *more* to aid France and destroy the rebellion. Even though the rhetoric of southern slaveholders was often outlandish in regards to the threat posed by the rebelling slaves in Saint Domingue, there was increasing evidence that the Haitian Revolution was influencing American slaves. Nevertheless, other than several states banning the importation of slaves from Saint Domingue, the United States government took little action to directly contain the "infection" of slave rebellion. The Washington administration believed that its policy of supporting French sovereignty in Saint Domingue was the best strategy to contain the Haitian Revolution and to maintain America's profitable trade relationship with the island. Hamilton considered the American trade with both sides of the Revolution a fortuitous opportunity to expand American commerce; Jefferson thought it a betrayal of France and a threat to slave owners. France had less than a decade earlier helped the United States to win its independence. To ignore France's requests for aid was unthinkable. Just as Hamilton wanted to use the conflict in Saint Domingue to expand trade, Jefferson fully planned to

exploit the Haitian Revolution as an opportunity to strengthen the Franco-American Alliance. In 1792 and 1793, the horrors of the Reign of Terror and Napoleon's coup were yet to come. Therefore, the alliance with France gave southerners and Jeffersonians the chance to advocate the containment of the Haitian Revolution under the pretext of this alliance.

The Washington administration succeeded in its goals of aiding the French and expanding trade. However, in its third goal, the prevention of British involvement in Saint Domingue, it was a failure. Arguably, this fact was no fault of the administration itself. France did not help matters any when on February 1, 1793 it declared war on Britain, entangling further the world's greatest power in the French Revolution.⁴⁵ Wary that the rebellion in Saint Domingue might spread to the English colonies and anxious to displace France from its own colony, the British invaded Saint Domingue on September 20 of the same year. Prime Minister William Pitt and Secretary of War Henry Dundas believed in the revolutionary confusion of 1793 that they could take over the French West Indian colonies.⁴⁶ For the next five years, Britain would fight the French, the Spanish, and the black revolutionaries to attempt to gain control over Saint Domingue. In 1793, the Spanish also entered the war in Saint Domingue, and a young black later known as Toussaint Louverture joined the Spanish army to help drive out the French. By the end of Washington's second term in 1796, Toussaint had switched sides to the French, driven the Spanish out of Saint Domingue, and proceeded to win several victories against the British. This brilliant and dynamic leader would become the focal point of American diplomacy with Saint Domingue for the next two Presidential administrations.

Chapter II: The Adams' Administration

The Challenge of *Quasi-Diplomacy*

John Adams inherited a complex diplomatic situation in regards to Saint Domingue when he took over the Presidency in 1797. America's foreign relations were going through a dramatic reorientation that began in Washington's second term. A crisis with Britain had been avoided by the signing of Jay's Treaty in 1794, and normally volatile relations with Britain were at their most stable point since the end of the Revolution. Conversely, Jay's Treaty alienated and offended France, which became increasingly hostile towards American shipping on the high seas, including the trade with Saint Domingue. Although these changes in the traditional diplomatic paradigm already presented Adams with a unique and difficult challenge, developments in Saint Domingue further complicated Adams' task. With Toussaint's ascendancy, Saint Domingue had a black leader that equated total emancipation with independence, although his feelings about independence were not always clear to the British, French, or Americans. For the next eight years, the United States could no longer simply develop a foreign policy *concerning* Saint Domingue; it would have to develop diplomacy *with* the emerging nation of Haiti. Worsening relations with France made the prospects of aiding France's reconquest of Saint Domingue less palatable to American policy makers. Changing circumstances and policy goals would force the United States to deal with Toussaint explicitly.

The Adams administration would have to reconcile America's own changing alliances within the context of the Quasi-War with France. From 1796 to 1800, the United States would fight a *quasi* war against its former ally France, enter into a *quasi* alliance with its former enemy Britain, and deal with the *quasi* government of Toussaint, to which the United States would eventually grant *quasi* recognition, later repudiated after Haitian independence.⁴⁷ Although Adams' time in office was the shortest of the first three Presidents, the shifts in American policy concerning the Haitian Revolution during his term were the greatest.

To fully understand American policy, one must understand the political and military situation in Saint Domingue in 1797. After the British invasion in September 1793, Toussaint was still fighting for the Spanish. His force of four thousand troops was the most well-armed and well-trained of the black troops. After the February 1794 decree by the French National Convention abolishing slavery in Saint Domingue, Toussaint, with his still growing army, changed sides to Republican France and killed the white Spaniards under his command. By the end of 1795, Toussaint had driven the Spanish back into Santo Domingo, defeated the English in several battles, and eliminated most of his black and mulatto rivals. By the time Adams entered the Presidency in early 1797, Toussaint had become the commander in chief of all French armies in Saint Domingue and was the most powerful man on the island.⁴⁸ From the American perspective, these were remarkable accomplishments. An astute diplomat as well as military strategist, Toussaint increasingly sought to convert his military successes into diplomatic capital. He would prove adept at manipulating the changing circumstances to his advantage.

The circumstance that aided Toussaint the most was the deteriorating relationship between France and the United States. The government of Republican France, having initiated war with England in 1793, found Jay's Treaty an affront to its friendship with the United States. France was incensed that the United States continued to maintain heavy trade with Great Britain and Saint Domingue. On July 2, 1796, the Directory ordered that American ships be treated like the British, thereby suppressing American neutral rights and de facto nullifying the 1778 Treaty of Amity and Commerce.⁴⁹ The United States was on its way to the Quasi-War with France. Adams' inherited this naval conflict when he took office, which started late enough in Washington's presidency that he did not have time to establish a coherent policy. The Quasi-War significantly compromised the Washington administration's strategy of maintaining French sovereignty on Saint Domingue in order to secure American commerce and isolate the slave rebellion. Explicit aid to France was now out of the question. Moreover, France, much to the dismay of Toussaint and American merchants, had forbidden American trade with Saint Domingue. American merchants now had to directly thwart France in order to continue commerce with Saint Domingue.

Adams had to develop a new policy to reflect the circumstances. Nevertheless, many of the same goals were carried over from the Washington administration. Adams, a Federalist, was still extremely interested in maintaining commerce with Saint Domingue. Jefferson, relegated to the Vice-Presidency, was not in a position of power to combat Adams. Toussaint, knowing the importance of American supplies, was worried that his army would lose strength without American aid.⁵⁰ Hence, Adams knew that once American ships reached Saint Domingue, they would be free under Toussaint's

supervision to conduct commerce. Toussaint became increasingly unwilling to enforce the French decree. Only the French navy in the Caribbean, which was no small impediment, could stop American ships from trading with Saint Domingue. The goal of trade, besides profit, was now to injure France.

The other policy carryover from the Washington administration was the goal of keeping Britain off the island. Adams and his administration had the delicate task of trying to reduce French influence over Saint Domingue while not letting the British fill the vacuum. In 1797, Toussaint handed the British several more defeats and had pushed them to the far western edge of the island.⁵¹ British military domination of the island was looking increasingly unlikely. Nevertheless, Adams was determined to keep the United States and not Britain in the good graces of Toussaint, lest the British, who were far less vulnerable to French naval attacks, dominate trade with Saint Domingue.

France also had to develop new policies to combat American trade. Knowing that Toussaint would not enforce the ban on American shipping and that the French navy would not be able to stop all American ships headed to Saint Domingue, French policymakers began to discuss a creative solution. Essentially, France knew it was fighting against the law of supply and demand. Toussaint and Saint Domingue required certain supplies, which the Americans could readily and cheaply provide because of their resources and geographical position. If France could supply Saint Domingue as easily as the Americans did, it would be able to compete with American shipping, prevent Britain from ever controlling the island's trade, and in all probability, reestablish a firm control over Saint Domingue. The problem was that France needed somewhere in the New World to supply Saint Domingue. As early as 1794, with the conclusion of Jay's Treaty,

France began to discuss the possibility of Spain's retrocession of the Louisiana Territory. In theory, Louisiana could be the needed granary and woodshop for Saint Domingue. Citizen Edmund Genêt, Republican France's first minister to the United States, said in 1795, "Louisiana extends her arms to us; we find there all we have to hope for from America, and we fortify ourselves double in that way against all we may fear from her."⁵² Louisiana and Saint Domingue would become increasingly linked in the minds of French and American policymakers, so much so that by Jefferson's Presidency the two issues could not be separated. However, Spain was not anxious to cede such a significant section of territory, and Genêt's suggestion remained a suggestion only. For the remainder of Adams' term, France would have to find other methods to control trade and rebuff the Americans.

Meanwhile, British troops had suffered devastating losses at the hands of Toussaint, and yellow fever had decreased their ranks even further. By early 1798, Toussaint, commanding all French forces in Saint Domingue, had cornered the British forces under General Maitland on the far western edge of the island. Anxious to extricate themselves from a losing position and to salvage some gains from their costly expedition, the British Government ordered General Maitland to negotiate a treaty with Toussaint. Despite knowing that he had the British defeated and on the run, Toussaint also was eager to end the fighting with the British. A rival general from a mulatto faction, Antoine Rigaud, was challenging Toussaint for supremacy on the island, and war between the two looked increasingly likely. Toussaint needed to free his army to prepare to fight Rigaud.⁵³ Toussaint and Maitland entered into negotiations in May of 1798, and on August 31, they signed a secret treaty. In exchange for British withdrawal and a promise

never to invade Saint Domingue again, Toussaint agreed to secure British trade with the island and promised not to invade Jamaica. Interestingly, Toussaint also stipulated that the British must allow American trade to reach Saint Domingue should it be resumed.⁵⁴ Although this demand must have been hard to accept for the British, Maitland's precarious military position allowed him little leeway in the negotiations.

This secret treaty became controversial almost immediately. It is unknown how France and the United States first became aware of the agreement, but neither the British nor Toussaint made any special efforts to hide the compact. Initially, spectators in France and Britain questioned its legality. Toussaint signed the agreement in the name of the French Republic, but he technically had no legal authority to negotiate. Rufus King, the United States' minister to Great Britain, was concerned to the degree it was legally binding. Perhaps earlier than anyone outside Saint Domingue, King realized that despite Toussaint's claims to the contrary, he was acting as if Saint Domingue was an independent nation, which, King concluded, therefore, must be his ultimate goal. King wrote to the British Secretary of State in December 1798 justifying the legality of American trade with the island, "If St. Domingo is an Independent State, we as well as you may trade with there." King realized that the independence of Saint Domingue would be beneficial for American trade. Nevertheless, he believed that Maitland's treaty could have "mischievous effects" on American slavery. Toussaint was indeed preparing for eventual independence. Why else would an apparent agent of France enter into an agreement that was in spirit anti-French? By entering into this agreement with Maitland and securing trade with Great Britain and the United States, Toussaint ensured British and American supplies should there be a break with France. However, at the time, the

needs of the Quasi-War, the Franco-British War, and the racist belief in the impossibility of a free and independent black state clouded this fact.

Refugees, Congress, and the "Toussaint Clause"

The departure of British armies from Saint Domingue created another problem for American policymakers. Thousands of planters that had relied upon the British for protection from the revolting blacks fled to the United States. The British had not allowed these planters and their slaves passage to their islands, lest its own colonies become "infected" with the stories told by the slaves from Saint Domingue. However, the British were more than happy to escort these refugees to the United States. This second wave of émigrés numbered about ten thousand with most arriving in Delaware and Virginia. Many of these refugees were free mulattoes and free blacks, which deeply concerned many southerners. Jefferson wrote in August of 1797,

Perhaps the first chapter of this history, which has begun in St. Domingo, and the next succeeding ones, which will recount how all the whites were driven from the islands . . . where shall the colored emigrants go? And the sooner we put some plan underway, the greater hope there is that it may be permitted to proceed peaceably to its ultimate effect. But if something is not done, and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children . . . and only a single spark is wanting to make that day to-morrow.⁵⁵

Certainly Jefferson represented the extreme end of such racist fears, but as the leader and ideological figurehead of the emerging Republican party, his influence should not be underestimated. Jefferson's statement, especially considering its strong language, represents a real fear, a belief that events in Saint Domingue endangered slavery; a belief, in the great paradox of pre-Civil War America, that black slavery guaranteed white liberty.

Henry Tazwell, a United States Senator from Virginia, wrote to James Madison and estimated that about four thousand planned to settle in Virginia alone. He also informed Madison that the Governor of South Carolina issued a proclamation forbidding any refugees from Saint Domingue, black or white, from entering the state. No doubt, such actions were based on a fear of a spreading slave revolt rather than with a concern for monetary assistance to the planters. Many states, as with the previous wave of émigrés from Saint Domingue, were calling for Presidential help in dealing with this unstable situation. A bill was submitted in the Senate that would give the President the power "to prohibit the landing of any Negroes, mulattoes, or white persons . . . (that) might be dangerous to our repose." Tazwell and Madison, being strict constitutionalist Republicans, believed that such fears were exaggerated and that the plight of the refugees "was soon seen to be a fit occasion here for the acquirement of a new power to the Executive at the expense of the Constitution."⁵⁶ Tazwell and Madison feared that Adams might exploit the situation in Saint Domingue to expand the powers of the executive office, which is exactly what he would do a year later. Tazwell and Madison, like Jefferson a few years earlier, were fearful of expanding federal power and believed the problem of the immigrant situation was a matter for the individual states to decide. Most Federalists even were not willing to grant the president such sweeping powers, and the measure died on the Senate floor.

Although the measure failed, the issue proved to be a catalyst for a lengthy Congressional debate of American policy towards Toussaint, France, and Saint Domingue. In late 1798, with the Quasi-War at its height and Toussaint fighting his rival Rigaud for control of Saint Domingue, the Senate discussed the relationship between the

United States and Saint Domingue. The outcome of this debate would determine the United States' future relationship with Toussaint Louverture.

The Senate, taking an unusually active role in foreign policy, debated whether or not to cease trade with all France's colonies, which would be standard practice considering a state of war existed between France and the United States. However, such a measure would prevent trade with Saint Domingue, thereby cutting off Toussaint's main source of supply. Therefore, the Senate debated what would be known as the "Toussaint Clause," which would allow the President to resume by executive order trade with any individual French colony. Tazwell accused the Federalists of conspiring with England "of involving this Country in a War with France" by allowing the émigrés to enter the United States. He charged that England wanted to "influence" the Southern states and push the United States into war with France.⁵⁷

Although Tazwell saw the Federalists as plotting with England against the South, the debate fell into ambiguous sectional and party divisions. Federalist Senator James Otis from Massachusetts supported the "Toussaint Clause" and went so far as to state that Toussaint should declare independence and the United States should grant recognition to his government. He argued this stance for two reasons. First, the United States should obey the standing principle of recognizing de facto whoever controlled the government. Second, such action would maintain commercial relations and assure that Saint Domingue would not be forced to resort to piracy and "buccaneering."⁵⁸ Many Senators, especially Federalists with merchant connections, were concerned that if Toussaint was isolated and trade was forbidden with Saint Domingue, Toussaint would turn his island into a haven for pirates, which would disrupt commerce all over the Caribbean. Otis

argued that the Haitians "if driven to despair . . . could inflict deep wounds on our commerce."⁵⁹ Robert Goodloe Harper from South Carolina argued with his fellow Federalist, saying that the "Toussaint Clause" says to other colonies, "rise and shake off your allegiance." Yet he argued that such a policy, if handled correctly, would give the United States the opportunity to expand its influence and trade in the absence of the European powers.

Albert Gallatin, the staunch Republican from Pennsylvania, agreed with Harper that such a measure was essentially telling Toussaint to continue on a course for total independence. However, for Gallatin that independence would be a dire threat to the security of the United States. He argued that the population of Saint Domingue has:

been initiated to liberty only by that series of rapine, pillage, and massacre, that have laid waste and deluged that island in blood; of men, who, if left to themselves, if altogether independent, are by no means likely to apply themselves to peaceful cultivation of the country, but will try to continue to live, as heretofore, by plunder and depredation. . . . I am against any measure which may embody (*sic*) so dangerous a description of men in our neighborhood.⁶⁰

Gallatin's racist paternalism would set the tone for foreign relations with Haiti for over a century. He was saying explicitly that a free and independent Saint Domingue was not prepared for independence and would be a threat to American liberty and freedom. For Gallatin, the issue transcended the mere pecuniary interests of commerce. Gallatin continued to argue that the interests of this black nation would be "black only," and an independent black state would always be "eternally hostile" to the slaveholding United States. Therefore, the policy of the United States must aim to discourage Haitian independence and aid France in maintaining sovereignty over the island, which meant ending the Quasi-War and resuming normal relations with France.

Such a policy of rapprochement was more agreeable to the pro-French Republicans than to the sometimes Francophobic Federalists. Thomas Pinckney, another

South Carolina Federalist, retorted that although he did agree that a free Saint Domingue was a threat to the South and lamented that "nothing which we can do . . . can bring back the internal state of that island to the state it was formerly in," he believed that Saint Domingue was a greater threat to the South if it remained in the hands of France. His argument was threefold; France could use Saint Domingue as a staging point for an invasion of the United States, which would certainly threaten the South; if Saint Domingue was independent, the United States could act unilaterally should the island become hostile; and finally, Pinckney believed that Toussaint would turn to the British for aid should the United States neglect him.⁶¹ Pinckney's argument would prove prophetic, as Thomas Jefferson would eventually come to agree with this logic during his presidency.

The debate over the "Toussaint Clause" revealed several fascinating ideological divisions. Republicans, most of whom were from the South, agreed with Gallatin and were adamantly against any action that might lead to Haitian independence believing that it would be detrimental to slavery and Southern liberty. Northern Federalists, like Otis, were mostly in favor of keeping open trade with Saint Domingue. They were more worried than were their Southern colleagues about the loss of trade and the possibility of Saint Domingue becoming a Caribbean pirate stronghold. Southern Federalists, like Harper and Pinckney, held a moderate position that ultimately decided the fate of the "Toussaint Clause." Although they acknowledged that an independent black state under Toussaint would be an intrinsic symbolic and real threat to slavery and the South, it was more important that the United States seize the opportunity to destroy France's influence in the region and to expand the American sphere of power and commerce. The United

States, being the strongest power in the region, would naturally fill the vacuum left by France's absence. Now that England had left the island, this opportunity was even greater. Moreover, the Southern Federalists believed that if properly managed, the United States could control any adverse effects of Haitian independence.

The bill forbidding all commerce with France and its colonies, yet giving the President the authority to resume trade with an individual colony, passed the Senate largely along party lines. The Southern Federalists proved to be the deciding votes. Jefferson was concerned that the Federalists were trying to further the break with France by continuing trade with Saint Domingue. He wrote to James Monroe that the "Toussaint Clause" debates "will be a circumstance of high aggravation to [France]."⁶² He was incensed that the Federalists openly admitted that the purpose of the bill was "to facilitate the separation of the island from France." Jefferson wrote to Aaron Burr that the Southern states were fearful of the Haitians' "free ingress and intercourse with their black brethren." He warned that the South must be "guarded against the cannibals of the terrible republic."⁶³ Jefferson believed that Toussaint's treaty with Maitland was "the best thing for us" because "the English will probably forbid them the ocean, confine them to their island, and thus preventing their becoming an American Algiers."⁶⁴ Once again, Jefferson was articulating the deep-seated fears of a large portion of the population that opposed the Federalist policy towards Saint Domingue. Unknown to Jefferson, he would have to confront these fears more directly than he ever imagined when he assumed the Presidency in two years.

Adam's Dilemma

President Adams now faced a difficult decision. Although the "Toussaint Clause" passed under largely Federalist support, the bill still closed trade with Saint Domingue and other French colonies, and it only gave Adams the *option* to reopen it. The decision, and therefore the bulk of the responsibility fell on Adams, not the Senate. The debate in the Senate prefaced the crux of Adam's dilemma. Should he pursue a policy that assumed eventual Haitian independence? If so, what policies should the United States enact that would diminish any threat to American interests, be they protection of slavery or the maintenance of commerce, and would maximize American power and influence? Adams believed, as his Secretary of the Treasury, stated in a letter to him, "On the renewal of commercial Intercourse the Island of St. Domingo would be declared independent."⁶⁵ Adams agreed with Senators Pinckney and Harper that resuming trade with Toussaint would be both an opportunity and a responsibility. The Maitland Treaty removed British forces from Saint Domingue and further removed the threat of British control over the island. Adams believed that the removal of Great Britain from the island freed the United States to pursue a more activist policy. The United States could now concentrate on prosecuting the Quasi-War with France and be less concerned with the ramifications for the British in Saint Domingue. Adams realized that the United States and Britain essentially held the same goals concerning Saint Domingue: continuing trade and diminishing French power on the island. For both nations, this course meant one thing—supporting Toussaint Louverture.

Adams decided upon a set of remarkable diplomatic tactics to further these goals; he would send secret aid to Toussaint, as a struggle between him and the pro-French Rigaud was becoming imminent; he would instruct King in London to open a dialogue with the British to explore joint action in support of Toussaint; and after a small delay, Adams would reopen regular trade with Saint Domingue under the powers granted by the Toussaint Clause. Historian Rayford Logan described these tactics as a "quasi-diplomatic revolution" in the United States.⁶⁶ Adams was proposing to give direct military aid to a black leader of a slave revolt-turned-revolution and to enter into a concert with the United States' traditional archrival. While this "revolution" may have been short lived, it nevertheless was a drastic and controversial shift in traditional American diplomacy. Adams hoped to play a double-sided card. He wanted to support Toussaint's bid to control Saint Domingue, even recognizing that such a move might eventually lead to independence, while at the same time try to control the dangerous ramifications of allowing the creation of a black state composed of former slaves.

Adams believed that the United States needed Great Britain's help to achieve these goals. King in London proceeded to discuss with the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Grenville, the possibilities of Haitian independence and joint Anglo-American action. King had the task of convincing Great Britain that it was in their interests to act in concert with the United States, no small feat in 1798 and 1799. He wrote to Grenville, "Would not the independence of Saint Domingue inevitably have a great influence upon Jamaica and the other islands . . . and would not the independence of Saint Domingue predicate the abolition of the white Colony System in that quarter of the world?"⁶⁷ To King, the downfall of the "Colony System" was inevitable as was Haitian independence.

King was arguing to Grenville that Great Britain needed to take action with the United States "to employ such measures as seem best adapted to diminish the Evils of the event when it arrives."⁶⁸

King proposed to Grenville that Great Britain and the United States develop "a comprehensive as well as cautious Policy to protect those interests and to turn to profit if possible the changes of which the *Independence of Saint Domingo* is the forerunner . . . (and) to apprehend some inconveniences from the influence of the example upon our slaves in the Southern States."⁶⁹ Grenville indicated to King that he thought that Saint Domingue would indeed soon become independent and that the United States and Great Britain should act in concert to control trade and limit the "domino effect" of slave insurrections. Believing that Haitian independence was probable if not inevitable, the United States and Great Britain could use Toussaint to injure France and enhance their trade. King and Adams were moving further in the direction of a traditional European realist policy of national interest. By accepting the eventual independence of Saint Domingue, Adams opened new policy options, namely working with Great Britain to secure American commercial and security interests. Adams and King were playing European power politics, not the "new diplomacy" that Adams outlined in his Model Treaty.

In Saint Domingue, Toussaint was increasingly making evident his desire for autonomy. "The War of Knives" had broken out between Toussaint and the more pro-French mulatto Rigaud in early 1799. Toussaint had rebuffed every attempt by the French government to control his authority. Because Napoleon was just beginning to consolidate his power and was occupied in Egypt, Saint Domingue did not yet receive the

full attention of the French government. However, Toussaint was anxious to secure outside help for any upcoming conflict with France. On May 22, 1799, Toussaint entered into a tripartite treaty with the United States and England. Very similar to Maitland's treaty, this treaty of 1799 stipulated that all ports in Saint Domingue under Toussaint's control would be open to British ships carrying either British or American goods, that Toussaint would not attack Jamaica or the Southern United States, and guaranteed that the British would not interrupt commerce or harass Toussaint's small navy.⁷⁰ However, the treaty did not apply to the southern part of the island that Rigaud controlled. Toussaint viewed this treaty as somewhat of a coup since he was not planning to invade anywhere. Although he was unhappy about having to use British merchants and ships to get American supplies, his skillful manipulation of American and British fears won him much needed commercial and military support on the eve of civil war with Rigaud.

Jefferson and the Republicans were strongly opposed to the treaty for the same reasons they were opposed to the Toussaint Clause. However, the only change to the treaty that they were able to enact was adding an amendment "opposing the indoctrination of the slaves of both [England and the United States] with 'dangerous principles.'" ⁷¹ Adams was breaking all the traditional diplomatic rules, while at the same time, abandoning the high moral diplomatic principles of American "new diplomacy." This tripartite treaty was for all practical purposes recognition of Toussaint's government and of the eventual independence of Saint Domingue. This entire policy was coming from the man who wrote the Model Treaty!⁷² Adams' Haitian policy was beginning to show all the characteristics of traditional European style power politics. Adams could not overlook this opportunity to expand the American commercial and political empire at the

expense of a European power. Adams and his fellow Federalists placed more emphasis on the balance of power than did their Republican counterparts. Permitting France to maintain control over Saint Domingue would increasingly tilt that balance towards France. This would be an unacceptable course of action while the United States could relatively inexpensively prevent it. Although American support would not guarantee Toussaint's survival much less independence, Adams wanted to be in Toussaint's good graces, lest he turn to the British for help or reconcile with France.

Alexander Hamilton, though not in a position of power during Adams' Presidency, strongly supported Adams' policy. In fact, he was outspoken in his support for the independence of Saint Domingue. Born in the West Indies and being the quintessential Federalist and Francophobe, Hamilton salivated over the opportunities that Haitian independence would provide. He believed that the United States should be tactful in its support of Toussaint.

The United States must not be committed to the Independent of St. Domingo. No guaranty—no formal treaty—nothing that can rise up in judgment. It will be enough to let Toussaint be assured verbally, but explicitly, that upon his declaration of independence a commercial intercourse will be opened, and continue while he maintains it, and gives due protection to our vessels and property. I incline to think his declaration of independence ought to proceed.⁷³

Hamilton did not want to sign any formal treaty or agreement with Toussaint that guaranteed American support for Haitian independence. Rather he thought a more passive approach was necessary. Hamilton knew that Toussaint needed the United States more than the United States needed him, and Hamilton realized that this advantage allowed the United States to be formally noncommittal to Toussaint. Nevertheless, he strongly favored Haitian independence. In a letter to Timothy Pickering, Hamilton even outlined the form of government that he believed Toussaint ought to adopt. Hamilton called for an extremely strong executive. He argued that the President should have the

power to declare war and control trade, while tax and criminal regulation should be left to an assembly of generals and military officers. A legislative branch, elected by the educated and wealthy, should exist only to handle trivial matters.⁷⁴ No doubt Hamilton's faith in the population of Saint Domingue to establish a proper republic was little greater than his more racist southern colleagues. Hamilton believed that by giving the executive the powers of war and trade, the United States would be able to easily manipulate Saint Domingue because of its significant commercial and military advantages. It would only have to control one person in the form of the executive. A powerful legislative branch would complicate matters significantly for future American policymakers.⁷⁵

Escalation and Peace

In early 1800, the British discovered agents from Saint Domingue in Jamaica that were allegedly stirring up rebellion and preparing the way for an invasion from Saint Domingue. The British were infuriated that Toussaint would violate the tripartite treaty. However, they were not prepared to totally cut off support for him. Therefore, in retaliation the British destroyed Toussaint's small fleet of gunboats and frigates, thereby eliminating any threat of invasion. Toussaint insisted that the agents were sent there by a subordinate and that he was unaware of them. This explanation seems to be consistent with the evidence. At no time did Toussaint ever indicate that his goals extended beyond the island. Toussaint was hoping to use his fleet to attempt a land and sea attack on Jacmel, Rigaud's last stronghold in the south. However, the British action opened the door for an escalation of American involvement. Adams sent the American navy to fill

the void left by the destruction of Toussaint's ships. The American frigates *Boston*, *Connecticut*, *Constitution*, and the *General Greene*, supported Toussaint in the operation by bombarding Rigaud's forces and destroying his privateering barges.⁷⁶ Toussaint cited this naval support as key to his victory. Adams set precedents with the first incident of direct military intervention in a foreign revolution and the first military intervention in Latin America in American history. Although Adams' could argue that his support of Toussaint was simply an extension of the prosecution of the Quasi-War against France, Rigaud was more a rival faction to Toussaint than an extension of French authority.

Meanwhile, Congress began to become concerned again with the implications of Toussaint's imminent victory. Congress was still hesitant to accept de facto Haitian independence and the creation of a black state, but support for Toussaint remained strong. In February 1800, Congress passed a seemingly contradictory bill. The act stipulated that Saint Domingue would be considered a French protectorate, but it also established provisions for the recognition of Toussaint's government.⁷⁷ By passing this bill, Congress was preventing any future debate on formal recognition of Haiti should Toussaint or one of his successors declare independence. However, Congress wanted to ensure that the United States would still have a friendly relationship with their southern neighbor. America could not afford a hostile Saint Domingue.

Adams also hoped to walk this fine line. In early 1800, events led him to undertake two seemingly incongruous initiatives. First, Adams had already escalated American involvement in the Haitian Revolution by sending naval support to Toussaint, but he went even farther by using the powers given him in the Toussaint Clause. In September, Adams signed a decree opening all ports in Saint Domingue to American

shipping.⁷⁸ Toussaint was no doubt pleased that he could openly receive supplies from the United States again without having to use the British intermediaries. The British viewed this decree as a violation of the 1799 tripartite treaty and began seizing the American ships heading to Saint Domingue. The short-lived quasi-alliance with England was broken, and relations with Britain would continue to deteriorate until the War of 1812.

Second, American agents in France signed the Treaty of Mortfontaine in September of 1800, ending the Quasi-War with France. Despite Adams' overt support for Toussaint, the nation and Adams were tiring of the Quasi-War. Interestingly, the treaty made no mention of Saint Domingue. The omission was probably in the best interests of the United States considering Adams and Congress wanted to maintain ostensible French control over the island while maintaining the commercial status quo. As long as Toussaint controlled Saint Domingue under the guise of French authority, the United States would be safe from French aggression and from Toussaint spreading the evils of slave insurrection. France and Toussaint would be a double check upon each other. As long as both shared authority in Saint Domingue, the best interests of the United States would be served.

Adams realized that his policies might lead to eventual Haitian independence, but by late 1800, that possibility did not seem as likely as it did in early 1799. By September of 1800, when Adams reopened trade, Toussaint had driven out Rigaud and was the master of the island. Yet, he gave no public indication of wanting to declare independence. Adams, with the support of Congress, wanted to ensure Toussaint's control of Saint Domingue while ensuring at least nominal French sovereignty over the

island. As with the Washington administration, the United States wanted to continue to reap the commercial benefits of trade with Saint Domingue while leaving France with the responsibility of containing the rebelling blacks to their island. Adams was willing to go farther than his predecessor because a strong French presence in Saint Domingue became a greater threat to American national security than it was during Washington's terms in office. Through some extraordinary measures—the alliance with England, the direct military and commercial support of Toussaint, and the recognition of Toussaint's authority—Adams was able to achieve these goals. What Adams accomplished with his foreign policy concerning Saint Domingue was a key factor in the success of the Treaty of Mortfontaine, and it laid the groundwork for Jefferson's success with Louisiana. Furthermore, trade with Saint Domingue was booming. By 1800, American trade, not including re-exports, had increased to 4.8 million dollars, which amounted to fifteen percent of all American exports.⁷⁹ Ironically, in the process of securing American commercial and security interests, the author of the Model Treaty utterly dismissed its principles during his term in office. Adams proved to be a practitioner of European *realpolitik* to the highest degree, and to his credit, adjusted the “status quo” policy of Washington to successfully account for the changes in the international political climate.

However, the political climate in the United States and the world at large was changing further in 1800. Federalists suffered astounding defeats in the elections of 1800, and Thomas Jefferson—Francophile, slaveowner, and staunch critic of Adams policies—ascended to the presidency. The era of Federalist diplomacy was at an end, and the continuation of support for Toussaint Louverture rested in the hands of a slave owner. Just as significant for Saint Domingue, Napoleon Bonaparte's attention began to shift to

his small island. Napoleon was at the same time fascinated and frustrated by the success of Toussaint. Over the next four years, Napoleon would try to regain absolute control over Saint Domingue and attempt to restore the now destroyed plantation system. This reconquest Toussaint could not accept. Once again, American policymakers would turn their attention to Saint Domingue, and the consequences of the events during Jefferson administration would give rise to one nation and double the size of another.

Chapter III: The Jefferson Administration

Continuation or Departure?

When Thomas Jefferson was inaugurated in 1801, the United States had been dealing with the revolution in Saint Domingue for nearly a decade. Jefferson was inheriting ten years of foreign policy concerning and with Saint Domingue. He had to decide whether or not to continue in the spirit of his predecessors, of whose policies toward Saint Domingue he was often critical. Despite Adams' successes, the specter of slavery and Jefferson's domino theory never disappeared from the table. Jefferson would have to either accede to or combat the fears of southern planters and politicians, who had quickly gained power and influence in the federal government with the rise of Jeffersonian Republicanism. Like Washington and Adams, Jefferson would have to make difficult decisions concerning American foreign policy towards Saint Domingue and Toussaint Louverture. Although he publicly denied it, Toussaint believed it was the destiny of Saint Domingue to become a free and independent nation. Jefferson believed it was the destiny of the United States to spread across the continent. Unforeseen by either, each would use savvy diplomacy and an unlikely coincidence of interests to secure both nations' futures.

Jefferson entered the presidency optimistic towards the future of Saint Domingue, meaning that he was confident that France would maintain sovereignty and the rebellion would be contained to the island. With the rise of Jefferson and the Republicans, the Federal government became momentarily less concerned with commerce, and Jefferson's

administration initially had a more pro-French stance than its predecessor. Madison perhaps best summed up the administration's initial attitude towards France and Saint Domingue when he wrote to Tobias Lear, the American consul in Cap-Haitien, "The United States would withdraw from Saint Domingue rather than hurt relations with France."⁸⁰ The Treaty of Mortfontaine had given Jefferson hope that the United States' problems with France were behind it. Jefferson wrote on March 21, 1801, "It ought to be the very first object of our pursuits to have nothing to do with European interests and politics."⁸¹ Jefferson did not want his policies encumbered by European wars and intrigues. His mission was to clean up the mess of Federalism at home and be an example to the world abroad. The messy revolution in Saint Domingue could only detract from both of these goals.

Jefferson's isolationist tendencies and his negrophobia seemingly did not bode well for Toussaint and Saint Domingue. The Treaty of Mortfontaine greatly distressed Toussaint, who used the conflict of the Quasi-War to ensure American aid. However, Toussaint was not an American puppet nor did he act like one. To show his displeasure and to illustrate to the Americans how crucial trade with Saint Domingue was, Toussaint raised tariffs on American goods and restricted certain ports from American trade. This action also had the effect of placating France at a time when Toussaint was most vulnerable.⁸² Nevertheless, France was still unable to devote any significant attention to Saint Domingue because of the war with England.

Toussaint had his own goals and ambitions to pursue no matter who occupied the White House (or who was in control of France). Still acting under ostensible French authority, Toussaint defeated his mulatto rival Rigaud in 1800, and in January 1801, he

invaded the Spanish half of the island, Santo Domingo, in the name of France. By instituting a system of forced labor, Toussaint had revived the island's economy and brought back relative prosperity. By the summer of 1801, Toussaint had reached the height of his power.⁸³

Visions of Empire

Two months after writing that the United States' primary interest was to stay out of the affairs of Europe, Thomas Jefferson received a bit of news that would not only change that policy but the course of American, French, and Haitian history as well. On May 26, 1801, Jefferson wrote a letter to James Monroe revealing the news and a new policy: "There is considerable reason to apprehend that Spain cedes Louisiana and the Floridas to France. It is a policy very unwise in both, and very ominous to us."⁸⁴ Jefferson further elucidated his fears in a letter to William C. Claiborne, Governor of the Mississippi Territory:

With respect to Spain our disposition are sincerely amiable and even affectionate. We consider her possession of the adjacent country as most favorable to our interests, and should see, with extreme pain any other nation substituted for them . . . Should France get possession of that country, it will be more to be lamented than remedied by us, as it will furnish ground for profound consideration on our part, how best to conduct ourselves in that case.⁸⁵

The implications of this news and Jefferson's feelings about the retrocession have been well covered in the historiography of the Louisiana Purchase. However, in relation to Toussaint and Saint Domingue, the historian cannot underestimate the profundity of the possibility of the retrocession of the Floridas and Louisiana to France. In short, it changed everything.

Napoleon's visions of empire were beginning to encompass the New World as well as the Old. He wanted to use Louisiana as a breadbasket and wood shop for Saint Domingue. In Louisiana, France could develop the resources to maintain a large military presence and supply its Caribbean colonies. This possibility raised numerous problems for the Jefferson administration. The United States had an informal policy of cultivating friendly relationships with weaker neighbors in order to eliminate the balance of power struggles that had plagued Europe.⁸⁶ French control over Saint Domingue was tolerable and welcome because it posed no strategic threat to the United States. If France ever decided to use the island as a staging point for an invasion, the United States could simply cut supplies to the island or establish a naval blockade. Moreover, the British would not likely tolerate a strong French military presence in Saint Domingue because it would be perceived as a threat to its colonies as well. French control of Louisiana and Florida was a different matter. Napoleon was an aggrandizing leader whose ambitions knew no boundaries. Considering the expanse of the territory, the United States could hardly cordon off Louisiana and Florida from American soil. Furthermore, Napoleon would not nearly be as pliable as the Spanish were in permitting American goods pass through New Orleans. In a time of crisis, the United States would have an aggressive and powerful nation along its entire western border.

Jefferson was not willing to tolerate such a situation, and this new possibility all but eliminated the Jefferson administration's overt Francophilia. Jefferson and Madison knew that the key to Louisiana was Saint Domingue. Saint Domingue was a stepping-stone to the occupation of Louisiana for France. Napoleon was unarguably a strategic and tactical genius, but he could not work logistical miracles. Successful control of Saint

Domingue would be necessary in order to occupy Louisiana.⁸⁷ There was one other person besides Jefferson and Madison who had a significant interest in thwarting Napoleon's plans—Toussaint Louverture. Once again, the black general became a de facto American ally.

Jefferson decided to resume trade with Toussaint quietly. Obviously, Toussaint was happy with the resumption of American trade. In August of 1801, Tobias Lear, the American consul in Saint Domingue wrote to James Madison that Toussaint was willing to open the island to further American trade: "Recent arrival of large number of American ships is pleasing to Toussaint and profitable to the treasury. At first opportunity will urge opening of all island ports and reduction of current twenty percent export duty on island produce."⁸⁸ Toussaint knew that he needed American provisions, and he was willing to make concessions to get them. The previous month, Toussaint had issued a new constitution for Saint Domingue that proclaimed him governor for life and gave him the right to name his successor. His recognition of French authority was purely nominal by the fall of 1801, and he was anticipating a conflict with Napoleon and France.⁸⁹ Fortunately, the resumption of prosperity the previous year allowed by Toussaint's forced-labor system could be parlayed into the necessary specie needed to by American supplies. Jefferson's timing was fortuitous for Toussaint.

James Madison further elaborated the administration's evolving policy to Robert Livingston, the newly appointed United States Minister to France. He wrote, "The peculiar and equivocal attitude taken by the island of Saint Domingo makes it proper that you should fully understand the present relations of the United States to it."⁹⁰ Madison wanted to press upon Livingston the importance of Saint Domingue, but he either did not

want to reveal how far the administration was willing to go to protect its interests in Saint Domingue or he was unsure himself of how far Jefferson would go. Madison assured Livingston that the United States would have no direct and official contact with Toussaint "that could excite suspicion or give offence to the French Republic." The goal of the United States was to maintain a policy of "strict and honorable neutrality." Such a policy was a far cry from the openly French rhetoric that marked the early days of the administration, and it would allow the United States to continue to trade with Toussaint. However, the United States could not afford to provoke Napoleon either. Such a provocation might hasten French possession of Louisiana and give Jefferson and Madison less time to develop a solution.

Madison wanted Livingston "to relieve the French Government from any doubts or errors they may be under as to the proceedings or views of the United States towards St. Domingo." Yet Madison ended his communiqué telling Livingston to keep him constantly informed of French ambitions and attitudes towards Saint Domingue.⁹¹ Jefferson and Madison, like Washington and Adams before them, wanted to maintain status quo in Saint Domingue. In the context of 1801 and 1802, the most important aspect of that status quo hinged on Spanish control of Louisiana and the lack of a sizeable French military force in the Western Hemisphere. From Jefferson's perspective, Toussaint's authority was tolerable because his power acted as a significant roadblock to French occupation of Louisiana, and it did not hurt that American trade with Saint Domingue was filling the coffers of both countries.

The Chess Game

Jefferson and Madison were playing for time. Whether they did so calculatingly, believing it would weaken Napoleon's resolve to pacify Toussaint and occupy Louisiana, or because they lacked any other viable solution was debatable and well covered in the Louisiana Purchase historiography. However, in relation to Saint Domingue, Jefferson's meetings with the French *chargè d' affaires* Louis Pinchon during 1801 and 1802 revealed a President who could skillfully manipulate global circumstances to achieve national goals. To be sure, Jefferson's purchase of the *entire* Louisiana territory was completely unforeseen by him in 1801 and 1802 as he only had his eyes on the Floridas and New Orleans, but this was only because he viewed the acquisition of the entire territory as unrealistic.⁹² Jefferson's chess game with Pinchon and by proxy Napoleon resulted in a magnificent victory for the United States. The most powerful piece on Jefferson's side was Saint Domingue, and Jefferson intended to play it patiently. This metaphor does not mean to imply that Toussaint and the other Haitian nationalists were merely pieces played by the United States. Rather, they were co-equal participants in this high-stakes game. The astute historian could also argue that Toussaint used Jefferson and American ambitions to secure Haitian independence as much as Jefferson used Toussaint and Haitian ambitions to secure American territorial aggrandizement. This study does not pursue that argument further because of the lack of sources to provide this Haitian voice, which would be necessary to deduce Toussaint's thought process.

The newly appointed Pinchon, like Jefferson, believed that after the Treaty of Mortfontaine relations between the United States and France would become more

amicable. Once Jefferson was elected, Pinchon's hopes rose even higher.⁹³ Pinchon knew of Jefferson's affinity for France and wished to cultivate that affinity into a willingness to help France achieve its goals in the Western Hemisphere. The first of these goals was the reestablishment of real French sovereignty in Saint Domingue and the ousting of Toussaint Louverture. When Toussaint had submitted his new constitution to Napoleon for approval in July of 1801, he all but dared Napoleon to a direct confrontation. Pinchon, Napoleon, Jefferson, and Madison all knew that Toussaint was heading for independence and that the world's most powerful man would not allow such impertinence in one of his own colonies. The question was when that confrontation would come and in what form. Pinchon believed that Jefferson might be a willing partner in such an attempt. After all, Jefferson traditionally had been friendly to France, and Pinchon knew of Jefferson's fears of slave rebellion.⁹⁴

However, Jefferson's first goal was to delay that confrontation, which would most likely be an invasion force, for as long as possible. After a meeting with Madison in June of 1801, Pinchon became less confident of any American aid when Madison stated that "the United States accepts things in [Saint Domingue] that colony without attempting to judge them" and the "administration could not risk falling out with Toussaint."⁹⁵ This seemingly enlightened statement of non-judgment was meant to illustrate to Pinchon that France could not expect any American concessions on Saint Domingue if it occupied Louisiana. Madison cautioned Pinchon of the inherent dangers if France continued to pursue the retrocession of Louisiana from Spain. Madison warned that "this measure (the retrocession) . . . might compromise good harmony and cause to be suspected the reality . . . that France since the Revolution had never ceased to think of that possession."⁹⁶ As

early as the summer of 1801, there was explicitly no distinction between the United States' Louisiana policy and its Saint Domingue policy. The same could be said for France.

Jefferson did not want to completely alienate France yet, nor did he want to seem completely unreceptive to the idea of an American and French concert. Besides, Jefferson had no love for Toussaint nor a great wish for Haitian independence. Jefferson and Madison also wanted to maintain the once again profitable trade relationship between the United States and Saint Domingue, and they stated this desire explicitly to Pinchon. Jefferson told Pinchon that he did not want Haitian independence but that he merely wanted to ensure the continuation of commerce. Pinchon assured Jefferson that France had no desire to disrupt American commerce with Saint Domingue, which would drive Toussaint to the British, but he wanted assurances of American aid should France attempt to retake the island. Jefferson responded by saying that such an attempt would cause difficulty with the British. He suggested that "in order that this concert be complete and effective you must make peace with England, then nothing will be easier that to furnish your army and fleet with everything and to reduce Toussaint to starvation."⁹⁷ Jefferson stated further that it was logical that the United States show no special favors to Toussaint because he represented "a menace to two-thirds of the states."

Pinchon interpreted this statement as a promise of American aid. However, by suggesting that France end its war with Britain, Jefferson was tacitly buying more time. Whether or not Jefferson was using the slavery issue merely as a pretext to deceive Pinchon is unclear, but most likely Jefferson wanted to keep all options open, especially considering the possibility of France taking control of Louisiana. Jefferson knew that

Saint Domingue was his "ace in the hole" and he wanted to play his trump card at the proper moment.⁹⁸ For his part, Pinchon was wise in his choice of points on which to negotiate, namely slavery and commerce. Until Louisiana entered the picture, these were the salient two issues in American Saint Domingue policy. With the specter of French control of Louisiana, the primary issue became national security. It was this threat to national security that was the catalyst for the eventual purchase of Louisiana and the main reason why Jefferson continued to allow the United States to supply Toussaint.

Confrontation Comes At Last

Meanwhile, Jefferson's wish that France make peace with England came true sooner than expected. On October 1, 1801, the Peace of Amiens ended the war, and now Napoleon was free to concentrate upon his dreams of empire in the Western Hemisphere.⁹⁹ During the peace negotiations, Napoleon received a nominal pledge from England to support a campaign to retake Saint Domingue. The British had implied that they no longer wished to see Toussaint in power because he was threatening British Caribbean colonies. Napoleon now believed, because of Jefferson's statement to Pinchon and the British statements made during peace negotiations, that he had the active support of the Americans and at least the passive support of Britain. Napoleon was hoping that at minimum he could count on the British to not interfere. On December 14, General Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, Napoleon's brother-in-law, sailed from Brest for Saint Domingue with a force of 17,000 veteran French troops.¹⁰⁰ Napoleon indeed wanted to use Saint Domingue as the springboard for an extensive reconquest of France's New

World empire, a prospect made all the more lucrative with Spain's retrocession of Louisiana.¹⁰¹

Jefferson's initial response to the invasion was to propose to Pinchon that France recognize Saint Domingue as independent under the joint "protection" of Great Britain, the United States, and France. Pinchon reported Jefferson to have said:

Why will France not declare it independent under her protection and that of the United States and England? Perhaps that would be wisest . . . Why should not the three powers unite to confine the pest on the island? Provided that the Negroes are not permitted to possess a navy, we can allow without danger to exist and we can moreover continue with them very lucrative commercial relations.¹⁰²

Such a solution would have been in accordance with traditional American foreign policy towards Saint Domingue—it would have maintained the status quo. The idea of a concert to maintain nominal French sovereignty over the island in order to maintain commercial relations and contain the blacks was exactly what both Washington and Adams wished to do. Although Jefferson did not mention Louisiana in this conversation, in the context of 1801 and 1802, his idea would also have the benefit of eliminating the possibility of France using Saint Domingue as a staging point for the reconquest of its North American empire.

Pinchon and Napoleon became less confident of American support after this exchange. Pinchon repeatedly tried to get explicit support from Jefferson by assuring him that the French invasion was in the best interests of the United States. Pinchon prophetically wrote to Napoleon that "any plan which is not supported by this country [the United States] and which does not, above all, have the assurance of a constant supply of money and supplies will fail."¹⁰³

Jefferson's growing interest in Louisiana and increasing pressure from northern merchants not to disrupt trade were steadily solidifying his opposition to the Leclerc expedition, which would soon land in Saint Domingue. Angered by the American insistence on maintaining commerce, France attempted to blockade all ports of Saint Domingue. Pinchon requested to Jefferson that he inform his merchants to abide by the provisions of the blockade. Jefferson responded that it was impossible to stop merchants from trading, and he could only leave the merchants to risk their own fate.¹⁰⁴ Coming from the President who would later order a national export embargo, Jefferson indeed believed he had the power to stop American merchants to a large degree. In 1801 and 1802, he simply did not want to.

Pinchon was increasingly frustrated by Jefferson's intransigence. Jefferson did not become any more flexible even when Pinchon played the race card. Pinchon announced that Toussaint intended "to throw off all submission to France, to the white race and to civilized nations."¹⁰⁵ Pinchon was obviously attempting to ignite the racial fears of the American President to garner support for France. If the United States would not help France for reasons of goodwill and mutual interest, then maybe it would help France out of mutual fears. Reports from Saint Domingue were also potentially inflammatory to Jefferson's racial sensibilities. Tobias Lear wrote to Madison in January 1802 of the extreme fear in Saint Domingue that the France sought to reestablish slavery. Lear believed that slavery could only be restored if France chose to invade the island (he did not know that the expedition was already on its way) and chose to "destroy blacks in a contest." France "would have to do so for I do not believe they would ever again submit to the yoke of slavery: but before they could be extirpated, they would kill all

whites in their power, and lay waste all the property that could be developed."¹⁰⁶ Despite such reports, which seemed to confirm Jefferson's earlier feelings about the sanguinary nature of slave rebellions, Jefferson did not show any further inclination to aid France. What perhaps cemented Jefferson's feelings was a report from Madison in February in which he stated his belief "that a part of the force allotted for St. Domingo is directly or eventually destined to take possession of Louisiana."¹⁰⁷ No amount of racial posturing could distract Jefferson from his primary policy goal of keeping France out of Louisiana.

In a desperate sounding letter to Talleyrand, Pinchon expressed his fear that the American thirst for commerce was greater than its fear of a free and independent black state.¹⁰⁸ Pinchon got it half right. Jefferson was still acting from a position of national security as much as he was from a desire for commerce. Realist diplomatic historians like Norman A. Graebner have argued that successful diplomacy results from clearly defined national interests.¹⁰⁹ Jefferson's primary national interest was indeed clear: protect American borders from a hostile and aggrandizing neighbor. While commerce was extremely important, the issue allowed Jefferson a less offensive pretext for his position on Saint Domingue. The American position would have been less politically tenable if Jefferson explicitly stated that its goal was the prevention of French control of Louisiana. Jefferson deserves credit for this careful balancing act. Pinchon and Leclerc became increasingly aware of France's precarious position. They realized that it was now their responsibility not to initiate a break in relations with the United States. Pinchon wrote to Leclerc that "the first pretext for a rupture would cause us to be driven out of Louisiana before we even took possession of it."¹¹⁰ They had the unenviable task of

protecting French interests in Saint Domingue and Louisiana while acting as a parry against American interests in the same regions.

Success

American merchants continued to trade with Saint Domingue even after Leclerc's arrival, and this trade continued to be the main source of friction between the United States and France in 1802. Throughout 1802 a clear pattern developed; American merchants continued to supply Toussaint, and French soldiers continued to die of yellow fever. Even though Leclerc's troops were consistently defeating Toussaint, they were losing men faster than they were winning battles. By April, five thousand French troops were dead, five thousand were in the hospital, and seven thousand were active.¹¹¹ American merchants seemed almost oblivious to the carnage and to the race of those with whom they traded. One trader even commented that he did not care "whether he carried on trade with black, yellow, or white men."¹¹²

Despite French difficulties in Saint Domingue, Jefferson was becoming increasingly anxious about Louisiana. His famous letter to Robert Livingston in April, 1802 left no doubt as to Jefferson's position: "There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market." Jefferson went on to say that with Spain in possession of Louisiana, "her feeble state" limited any threat that Spain posed. Moreover, the time would come when "circumstance might arise which might make the cession of it to [the United States] the price of something of more worth

to her." France, however, posed a much greater threat and the likelihood of cession by France to the United States was minimal: "The impetuosity of her temper, the energy and restlessness of her character . . . render it impossible that France and the U.S. can continue friends when they meet in so imitable a position . . . From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet."¹¹³ It is likely that Jefferson never elucidated a policy goal so clearly as he did in this letter to Livingston. In short, the United States needed to possess New Orleans and was willing to go to extraordinary means, even by going to the British, to get it.

Jefferson suggested to Livingston that if France would cede the Floridas and New Orleans to the United States, it would ameliorate tensions between the United States and France. However, the question of Saint Domingue was still linked in Jefferson's mind to Louisiana. Such an accession by France "would at any rate relieve us from the necessity of taking immediate measures for countervailing such an operation by arrangements in another quarter."¹¹⁴ Undoubtedly, this other "quarter" meant Saint Domingue. Jefferson did not want to have to help the slave revolt-turned revolution, but he would protect American interests above at all costs. Believing that the troops sent to Saint Domingue were eventually bound for Louisiana, Jefferson's only hope was to delay them by illicitly supporting Toussaint with food, supplies, and arms.

However, Jefferson's policies toward Saint Domingue were causing domestic nervousness. The fear of slave insurrections was rampant throughout many southeastern states. Plans for slave insurrections were discovered in North Carolina and Virginia that were assumed to be connected to Saint Domingue. Jefferson himself wrote to Rufus King about these difficulties: "The course of things in the neighboring islands of the West

Indies appears to have given a considerable impulse to the minds of the slaves in the different parts of the United states. A great disposition to insurgency has manifested itself among them."¹¹⁵ As during the earlier debates on the "Toussaint clause," many southern Republicans were calling for Jefferson to support the complete restoration of French sovereignty so that their property might be safe from "infection."¹¹⁶ The fact that Jefferson still pursued a foreign policy of national and not sectional interest illustrated that he was not captive to his racism and fears of slave rebellion. Because he had so clearly defined the national interests, Jefferson was able to prioritize successfully his foreign policy goals.

During the summer of 1802, events in Saint Domingue took an unexpected turn. Toussaint Louverture was arrested and deported in chains to France. Despite the loss of their dynamic leader, the black Haitians' resolve never faltered. Leclerc proclaimed, "To have been rid of Toussaint is not enough; there are two thousand more leaders to get rid of as well."¹¹⁷ By the fall, Leclerc was losing one hundred men a day to yellow fever and was weakened further by significant defections despite successes on the battlefield. Jefferson's delay tactics were paying off. Leclerc wrote to Napoleon, "Saint Domingue is lost for France if I have not received at the end of January ten thousand men sent at one time."¹¹⁸ In light of France's precarious position in the fall of 1802, Spain's decree of October 16 that revoked the United States' right of deposit in New Orleans had fortuitous timing for Jefferson and Madison. Nine days later came the order of transfer of Louisiana to France from Spain. Napoleon must have thought that the reinforcements that he was planning to send to Saint Domingue were going to be adequate.

Jefferson also knew that only France's difficulties in Saint Domingue were preventing a national crisis for the United States. He wrote to Madison in November 1802, "St. Domingo delays [France] taking possession of Louisiana, and they are in the last distress for money for current purposes."¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, the revocation of the right of deposit forced Jefferson to finally act, and he hurriedly sent James Monroe to France as minister plenipotentiary to negotiate the sale of New Orleans and the Floridas to the United States. Jefferson viewed this sale as so vital to the national interest that he wrote to Monroe in January 1803 saying if his mission should fail, "it may be necessary to cross the channel." Jefferson was willing to break his primary foreign policy goal that he stated at the very beginning to his Presidency—not getting involved in European "interests and politics"—to secure New Orleans. It must have been particularly onerous for Jefferson knowing that he would have to seek Britain's help. Jefferson further elaborated on the consequences should Monroe fail: "We shall get entangled in European politics and figuring more, be much less happy and prosperous. This can only be prevented by a successful issue to your present mission."¹²⁰ If taken in conjunction with his earlier letter to Livingston about New Orleans, one can easily discern Jefferson's sense of urgency.

He concluded his letter to Monroe saying "the moment is critical in France." Jefferson's analysis was deft. Jefferson knew of Napoleon's need for money and of his difficulties in Saint Domingue. If the sale was to be made, the time was now. Pinchon wrote to Talleyrand that same month with an equally accurate analysis of France's position:

Our colonies cannot at any time exist without the friendship of the United States . . . [France] could occupy and hold Louisiana only with the greatest regard for the wishes of the United States .

. . We are dependent on her in time of peace and at her mercy at the first outbreak of war with England.¹²¹

Both Jefferson and Pinchon had sound logic. As France and England moved closer towards war once again, Napoleon must have found such logic increasingly persuasive because on April 30, 1803 he sold the entire Louisiana territory to the United States for fifteen million dollars. On May 12th, France declared war on Britain.

Conclusion

Two Questions of Credit

From an American perspective, Jefferson's Saint Domingue policy was a resounding success. Although he did not acquire the Floridas, the acquisition of the entire Louisiana territory, including New Orleans, is arguably the greatest triumph in American diplomacy—the consequences of which are beyond the scope of this study and would be needlessly covered here. However, by seamlessly connecting Jefferson's Saint Domingue policy with his Louisiana policy, the historian can get a better grasp on the amount of credit Jefferson deserved for the acquisition of Louisiana. While it was true that the *immediate* circumstances that led to the sale of Louisiana, France's imminent war with England and the conflict in Saint Domingue, were totally out of Jefferson's control, Jefferson skillfully used diplomacy to arrive at the position in which he was able to buy Louisiana. Jefferson's calculated willingness to supply Toussaint and his successors, his refusal to bow to the interests of slaveholders and to his own racial fears, his refusal to aid the country to whom he had been most friendly, and most impressively, his ability to avoid a "rupture" with France throughout the entire affair illustrate that Jefferson and his administration played an incalculable role in the success of the Louisiana purchase.

Was the only possible outcome of Jefferson's Saint Domingue policy the sale of Louisiana? Unlikely. Jefferson had no control over the oncoming of war between France and Britain nor over the mosquitoes in Saint Domingue. However, would the sale of Louisiana have occurred without Jefferson's Saint Domingue policy? Definitely not.

American aid was unquestionably crucial in the success of Toussaint before and after Leclerc's expedition. Moreover, the idea of aiding France to quell a potentially dangerous slave rebellion and to prevent the creation of a free black state in the Caribbean could not exactly have been repulsive to Jefferson considering his rhetoric of the 1790s. During the Washington administration, Jefferson had actively promoted aiding France to suppress the revolt. Jefferson was able to defeat these interests, both personal and external, because he clearly defined the *national* interest.

What should not be missed was the fact that Jefferson's Saint Domingue policy was not a great departure from that of his predecessors. The only thing from which it was a departure was his own previous recommendations. Washington and Adams both wanted to maintain the status quo in regards to Saint Domingue. All three administrations sought to maintain American trade with Saint Domingue and control the social and political ramifications of the Haitian Revolution. As late as 1802, Jefferson was still trying to maintain the status quo when he proposed to Pinchon that France should declare Saint Domingue nominally independent and the United States, Britain, and France should share responsibility for "containing" the blacks. Jefferson only broke with this policy once France threatened Louisiana and Spain revoked the right of deposit.

Furthermore, Jefferson's aid to Toussaint and the other black revolutionaries was hardly new either. Arguably, Adams did more to aid Toussaint Louverture militarily and logistically than Jefferson ever did. Without the help of the American navy in 1799, Toussaint may never have defeated Rigaud. Taken into a larger context, if Washington had forbidden trade with Saint Domingue during his terms in office, which was not an unthinkable possibility either, practically all external supplies to the black revolutionaries

would have been cut off. In short, the geopolitical position in which Jefferson found himself in relation to Saint Domingue was largely the result of the policies of his predecessors. For these reasons, Jefferson's success in Louisiana cannot be separated from Washington's and Adam's Saint Domingue policies. Jefferson would never have had the opportunity to purchase Louisiana if Washington or Adams had closed trade with Saint Domingue or if Adams had failed to aid Toussaint. To be sure, Washington and Adams were hardly overt supporters of Haitian nationalism, and they often expressed their ire about the possibility of an independent Haiti. The fact that their policies aided Toussaint and the rebelling blacks was often a side effect of their other objectives, whether it was the maintenance of commerce or to protect national security. Nevertheless, the fact remained that these policies were highly advantageous to the black revolutionaries.

American successes in Saint Domingue and Louisiana were due to effective realist policies of national interest as pursued by Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. Their policies hardly looked like those recommended by the Model Treaty, but rather they were examples of Americans beating the European powers at their own game of complex, international, and entangling diplomacy. Credit should be given to all three administrations for maintaining distinctly an American position, defending American interests, and, with the exception of the Quasi-War, generally staying out of a European war. All three presidents exploited the United States' favorable trade position to gain concessions from France and England, expanded and secured trade in the Caribbean, and sought to minimize the threat to slavery posed by the Haitian Revolution. However, despite the initial success, after Haiti declared independence in 1804, the United States'

trade with Haiti atrophied to only just over three percent of total American exports, or 1.32 million dollars, by 1821 after reaching a high of fifteen percent in 1800.¹²² Furthermore, 1.32 million dollars in exports was a tenfold increase from the total a decade earlier.¹²³ Jefferson's trade embargo, the War of 1812 with England, and American prejudice destroyed the gains in trade made in the late 1790s and early 1800s. The United States could accept Saint Domingue—a colony in revolt against its European masters. It could not accept Haiti—a republic of black former slaves.

The primary strategy to achieve these goals was to promote the status quo of nominal French control over Saint Domingue while preventing the island from becoming a French (or British for that matter) military staging point. Napoleon's ambition to regain France's New World empire drastically changed Jefferson's tactics, not his goals. The acquisition of Louisiana achieved two goals. First, it prevented the establishment of a potentially dangerous and unpredictable European power on the United States' indefensible western border. Second, it made the reconquest of Saint Domingue unnecessary because it was no longer needed as a staging point for the occupation of Louisiana.

The other question of credit deals with Haitian independence. While the acquisition of Louisiana was a major triumph for the United States, France did not magically withdraw its troops from Haiti upon the sale. The sale of Louisiana was essentially irrelevant to the black troops fighting in Saint Domingue. In fact, the first half of 1803 was an extremely difficult time for the black revolutionaries. Although Leclerc had died of yellow fever the previous November, his troops, now under the command of Rochambeau, were mostly acclimated and ready to conduct a war of extermination. By

the beginning of April 1803, Toussaint had died a prisoner in France and Napoleon was preparing to send thirty thousand reinforcements.¹²⁴ However, the declaration of war between France and England was extremely relevant to the black revolutionaries. Just as French troops were beginning to make significant progress in Saint Domingue, British ships surrounded the island in a total blockade, which not even American ships were willing to challenge. By the end of June, Rochambeau and his troops were cut off from France and from the help of the French navy. Aided by the British navy, black troops under Dessalines conquered the coastal towns and eventually moved through the island's interior, destroying all French opposition. On December 31, 1803, Dessalines announced the Haitian Declaration of Independence.

Haitian independence was guaranteed by the British victories at Trafalgar and Waterloo. Never again would France, under any leader, have the energy or the resources for a reconquest of Haiti. The world would have to live with the creation of a free and independent black republic. Many factors contributed to the success of the Haitians. In the immediate sense, the British blockade and military aid secured the Haitian victory. Rayford Logan credited the blockade, the valor of the black troops in Saint Domingue, Jefferson's "wait and see" policy, and yellow fever as the primary reasons for the success of the Haitians.¹²⁵ This study adds two more things to that list. The first is not adequately covered here, but without the leadership of Toussaint Louverture Haitian nationalism would probably not have survived the late 1790s. His skill not only as a military leader and administrator but also as a diplomat crystallized the energies of the Haitian Revolution into a viable force. Like Jefferson, he manipulated a given set of circumstances to his advantage, as he illustrated in the Maitland Treaty and in the

Tripartite Treaty with the United States and England. Considering his limited resources, his accomplishments are all the more remarkable. The second item to add to Logan's list is once again the policies of Washington and Adams. Their support during the 1790s provided a lifeline to the black revolutionaries and to Toussaint once he gained power. Unknowingly, they contributed to the creation of an independent Haiti. Without these policies in the 1790s, Toussaint would not have had the necessary resources to combat his rivals or the French, and Jefferson would not have been able to purchase Louisiana, which drastically decreased the value of reconquering Saint Domingue.

Epilogue-Reflections for Further Study

The United States foreign relations' with Haiti did not end with the sale of Louisiana or with the Haitian Declaration of Independence. Jefferson continued to promote trade with Haiti even after independence, much to the dismay of his southern colleagues. The ramifications of the success of the Haitian revolution were indeed profound. Some historians have compared the shock in the white slaveholding world of watching the creation of a republic of former slaves to the effect of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917. Ironically, despite the vast amount of American aid to the revolutionaries during the revolution itself, the United States never recognized the Republic of Haiti until 1862, when the United States was itself going through a revolution over its own national identity.

As the nineteenth century progressed and as sectionalism began to polarize the United States, the meaning of the Haitian Revolution became much more controversial. Was the racial struggle in the United States to follow the path of Haiti? Haiti had achieved its independence in a very similar manner as the United States. With the tremendous help of foreign powers, it had defeated one of the most powerful nations in the world and thrown off the chains of colonialism (and slavery). The similarities were remarkable. Why then would the United States not recognize Haiti until the Civil War? Thomas Hart Benton gave the best answer when he testified before the Committee for Foreign Affairs in 1825:

We purchase coffee from her [Haiti] and pay for it; but we interchange no consuls or ministers. We receive no mulatto consuls or black ambassadors from her; and why? Because the peace of eleven States in this Union will not permit the fruits of a successful negro insurrection to be exhibited among them. It will not permit black consuls or ambassadors to establish themselves in our cities, and to parade through out the country, and to give their fellow-blacks in the United

States proof in the hands of honors that await them in a like successful effort on their part. It will not permit the fact to be seen and told, that for the murder of their masters and mistresses they are to find friends among the white people of the United States.¹²⁶

The success of the Haitian Revolution was at all costs to be kept from the shores of the United States. For some, the recognition of Haiti would have unnecessarily disturbed the growing rift in the United States between North and South. For others in all parts of the country, recognition of Haiti was antithetical to their racist precepts. Surely no government by blacks could be legitimate. Most importantly, to recognize Haiti would have been to recognize the fact that a slave revolt could succeed. As pro-slavery ideology developed in the South, recognition would have been a repudiation of the doctrine of slavery as a positive good.

The effect of slavery upon foreign policy lasted long after the end of the Haitian Revolution, and the examination of which belongs in another study. However, the United States' foreign policy during the Haitian Revolution should play a large part of such a study. Washington, Adams, and Jefferson each took slavery into account when formulating their foreign policy towards Saint Domingue. It is a tribute to all three that the interests of slavery did not yet dominate the national interests and that their foreign policies did not reflect slavery's dominance. Commerce, national security, and empire each took priority. Albeit reluctantly and at times unwittingly, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson contributed to the success of the modern world's most significant slave rebellion.

Notes

Introduction

¹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (New York: Wiley, 1942) 30-2.

² Quoted in Bradford Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Vol. I: The Creation of an American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993) 23.

³ Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Foreign Relations A History: To 1920, Vol. I* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath and Company, 1995) 10.

⁴ Perkins, 22.

⁵ Perkins, 21-3.

⁶ James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 21 April, 1801, *The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, Vol. II, ed. Robert J. Brugger (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1987), 143.

Chapter I

⁷ Julius Sherrand Scott III, "Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986), 13-4.

⁸ Rayford W. Logan, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, 1776-1891* (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1941) 5.

⁹ Thomas O. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804* (Knoxville: The Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1973) 8.

¹⁰ Ott, 7.

¹¹ Robert Debs Heinl, Jr. and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1971* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978), 157.; United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington D.C., 1960), 538. Here after referred to as *Historical Statistics*. The figure for U.S. trade with Saint Domingue includes re-exports because the 1790 figures did not differentiate between exports and re-exports. However, in 1791 and 1792, re-exports represented less than one-percent of total U.S. exports. Total amount of trade also was relatively constant between 1790 and 1792. Total trade in 1790 was 20 million, in 1791 19 million, and in 1792 was 21 million. Hence, there is little reason to believe that re-exports from France or Britain represented any significant trade with Saint Domingue. Although I have not found any source that explicitly gives the total amount of U.S. trade with Saint Domingue, Heinl and Heinl give the percentage of trade with Saint Domingue at eleven percent in 1790 and *Historical Statistics* gives the total at 20 million. Hence: (.11 x 20m=2.2million)

¹² *Historical Statistics*, 551.

¹³ "Statistical View of the Commerce at Port-au-Prince," Consular Dispatches, Cape Haitian, microfilm M-9, roll 6, RG 59, NA.

¹⁴ Ott, 8.

¹⁵ Logan, 5.

¹⁶ Ott, 9-13. Ott provides the numbers of population that I use here. His source for them is the *London Times*, January 7, 1792. Ott also provides a nice description of the status of the classes in Saint Domingue. I do not want to belabor how the varying class conflicts within Saint Domingue led to the Revolution. That is not the point of my argument. See Ott for an analysis of how the class differences on the island contributed to the growing revolution.

¹⁷ An appendix in Madison Smartt Bell's *All Souls Rising* provided this timeline for events: Madison Smartt Bell, *All Souls Rising* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995) 505-507. Bell's novel, although fictional, provides a good feel for events of the period. The historian can appreciate its perspective, which is taken from that Haitian side.

¹⁸ Ott, 47-8.

¹⁹ Scott, 3-4.

²⁰ Ott, 52-53.

²¹ Logan, 34-5.

²² Winthrop D. Jordan goes into this subject at length in *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro: 1550-1812*. Jordan argues that starting in the-seventeenth century, whites began to identify and define "freedom" in comparison to the "slavery" of blacks. The two terms were dependent on each other. In other words, with out the measuring rod of slavery, who could really be considered free? To address that question would have been to question the other relatively unfree labor practices in colonial America, especially in labor short Virginia and Maryland.

²³ Quoted in Ulrich B. Phillips, "The South Carolina Federalists Part II," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4. (Jul., 1909), 735.

²⁴ James Sidbury "Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1790-1800," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. LXIII, No.3, (Aug., 1997) 537 Sidbury gives a good account of the influence of the Haitian Revolution on Virginia. He also notes significantly that the new slaves from Saint Domingue were much more likely to be African born than then American slaves. Therefore, their different customs, language, and religion often hampered communication and association between the two groups.

²⁵ Ott, 53.

²⁶ Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1719-1826* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983), 163.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ George Washington to Jean Baptiste de Ternant, 24 September 1791, *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. Jarred Sparks (Boston: Russell, Shattuck, and Williams co., 1836), 194. The figure for the total amount of American aid to France came from Logan, *Diplomatic Relations*, 35. Also note, this is one of the first examples of the Executive using his discretionary powers in foreign policy. Only four years after the ratification of the Constitution, the Executive branch was already becoming the primary branch engaged in foreign policy.

²⁹ Thomas Jefferson to Jean Baptiste de Ternant, 20 November 1792, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 1792-1794*, Vol. VI, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1895), 136.

³⁰ Logan 35

³¹ See letters from Ambrose Vasse, Nov. 21, 1792 p. 211-2 vol. XIII, George Lalimer, Jan. 2, 1793 p. 443-7 vol. XIII, James Waters, Dec. 6, 1792, p. 292 vol. XIII, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969).

³² Quoted in Logan, *Diplomatic Relations*, 40. n. 22.

³³ Thomas Jefferson to Jean Baptiste de Ternant, 23 February, 1793 *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VI, 189.

³⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Governour Morris, 30 December, 1792, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VI, 449-50.

³⁵ Ott, 55.

³⁶ Quoted in Logan, *Diplomatic Relations*, 44.

³⁷ Logan, 46.

³⁸ Logan, 49.

³⁹ Logan, 49-50.

⁴⁰ Sidbury, 539.

⁴¹ W. Jeffrey Bolseter, "An Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves," *Through a Glass Darkly*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997) 440. Scott also sees connection between Haiti and Denmark Vesey's revolt, noting that Vesey claimed that the Haitians would come to the aid of his revolt: Scott 307.

⁴² Quoted in Sidbury, 544.

⁴³ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 14 July 1793, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VI, 349-50. Parenthetical comments were in the original text.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Logan, 54.

⁴⁶ Ott, 78.

Chapter II

⁴⁷ Logan, 68.

⁴⁸ Bell, 516-8.

⁴⁹ Logan, 59.

⁵⁰ Ott, 109-110.

⁵¹ Bell, 518.

⁵² Logan, 56.

⁵³ Ott, 103-105.

⁵⁴ Logan, 65-6. Logan has translated the entire treaty. My information comes from that translation.

⁵⁵ Thomas Jefferson to St. George Tucker, Aug 28, 1797, *Writings of Jefferson*, Vol. II, 168.

⁵⁶ Henry Tazwell to James Madison, *Papers of Madison: Sec. of State Series*, Vol. II, 158-159.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁸ *Annals of Congress*, 5th Cong., 3rd sess., 2744-5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 5th Cong., 3rd sess., 2752.

⁶¹ *Annals of Congress*, 5th Cong., 3rd sess., 2766-7.

⁶² Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Jan 23 1799, *Writings of Jefferson*, Vol. VII, 321.

⁶³ Thomas Jefferson to Aaron Burr, Feb 11 1799, *Writings of Jefferson*, Vol. VII, 348.

⁶⁴ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Feb 5, 1799, *Writings of Jefferson*, Vol. VII, 343.

⁶⁵ Secretary of the Treasury to President John Adams, Nov 18, 1799, *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War between the United State and France*, Vol. IV, ed. Capt. Dudley Knox, (Office of the Naval Records and Library, Naval Department) 415.

⁶⁶ Logan, 68.

⁶⁷ Rufus King to Lord Grenville, London, 7 Jan 1799, *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II, 485-486.

⁶⁸ Rufus King to the Sec of State .No. 17, London, 10 Jan 1799, *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II, 499-500.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ Ott, 114, 123.

⁷¹ Ott, 110.

⁷² The Model Treaty was written by John Adams for the purpose of creating a "new diplomacy," distinct from the entangling alliances and deceitfulness of Old World diplomacy. The Model Treaty was essentially a commercial treaty only that did not commit the United States to any reciprocal commitments. In addition to creating a national government free from the corruption and authority of Europe, the Founders wanted to create a diplomacy free from European intrigue and deceit. Clearly, Adams' Haitian policy was much more akin to European style *realpolitik*.

⁷³ Alexander Hamilton to Timothy Pickering, Feb 9 1799, *Works of Hamilton*, 342.

⁷⁴ Alexander Hamilton to Timothy Pickering, Feb 21 1799, *Works of Hamilton*, 345.

⁷⁵ In many ways, Hamilton's ideas were well a head of their time. He essentially wanted to make Haiti a client state and Toussaint an American puppet. Well into the twentieth-century, the United States would be supporting dictators in Latin American and Caribbean nations in exchange for their support.

⁷⁶ Ott, 114.

⁷⁷ Logan, 110.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁹ Heinl and Heinl, 157.; *Historical Statistics* 538. Once again, Heinl and Heinl cite the percentage at 15% and *Historical Statistics* gives the total, not including re-exports, at 32 million dollars. Hence: (.15x32m=4.8 million)

Chapter III

- ⁸⁰ Quoted in Ott 120 n107 Madison to Lear, Feb. 28, 1802, Consular Dispatches, Cap-Haitien, vol. 4.
- ⁸¹ Thomas Jefferson to Doctor George Logan, 21 March 1801, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* Vol. VIII, 23.
- ⁸² Logan, 113.
- ⁸³ Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the United States: The Psychological Moment* (Athens and London: The Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), 519.
- ⁸⁴ Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, 26 May 1801, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VIII, 58.
- ⁸⁵ Thomas Jefferson to William C. Claiborne (date unknown), *Writing of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VIII, 71.
- ⁸⁶ For a discussion of this theme, see James E. Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1998).
- ⁸⁷ Ott, 142.
- ⁸⁸ Tobias Lear to James Madison, 4 August 1801, Cap-Français, *Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, Vol. II, 17.
- ⁸⁹ Plummer, 519.
- ⁹⁰ James Madison to Robert Livingston, 28 September 1801, *Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series* Vol. II, 143.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹² See Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: the Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990).
- ⁹³ Logan, 113-114. Once again I am relying on Logan to provide the account of the meetings between Pinchon and Jefferson. However, as before, I am simply using his names, dates, and quotes and not his interpretations.
- ⁹⁴ Logan 118
- ⁹⁵ Quoted in Logan 117-118.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁷ Quoted in Logan, 120.
- ⁹⁸ Logan, 121.
- ⁹⁹ Plummer, 520.
- ¹⁰⁰ Logan, 123.
- ¹⁰¹ Logan also discusses the possibility that a side goal of Napoleon was the restoration of white supremacy in Saint Domingue. While Napoleon was no lover of slavery, he not doubt believed in the inferiority of blacks. Moreover, Napoleon only called for the reinstatement of slavery well after the invasion was on its way. He was probably further incensed that a black man was rising up to challenge his authority. He was equally intrigued and fascinated by the "black Napoleon" as he was frustrated by him.
- ¹⁰² Quoted in Logan, 125-6.
- ¹⁰³ Quoted in Logan, 127.
- ¹⁰⁴ Logan, 130.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶ Tobias Lear to James Madison, Cap-Haitien, 17 January 1802, *Papers of Madison: Sec. of State Series*, Vol. II, 404-405.
- ¹⁰⁷ James Madison to Tobias Lear, Washington D.C. , 26 February 1802, *Papers of Madison: Sec. of State Series*, Vol II, 490.
- ¹⁰⁸ Logan, 131.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Norman A. Graebner, *America as a World Power: A Realist Appraisal from Wilson to Reagan* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1984).
- ¹¹⁰ Quoted in Logan, 133.
- ¹¹¹ Plummer, 520.
- ¹¹² Quoted in Logan, 137.
- ¹¹³ Thomas Jefferson to Robert Livingston, 18 April 1802, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VIII, 144-145.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Rufus King, 13 July 1802, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VIII, 161.

¹¹⁶ Logan, 136.

¹¹⁷ Plummer, 521.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Logan, 141.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Logan, 134.

¹²⁰ Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Jan. 13, 1803 *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. VIII, 191.

¹²¹ Quoted in Logan, 145.

Conclusion

¹²² Heint and Heint, 157.; *Historical Statistics*, 538.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Plummer, 522.

¹²⁵ Logan, 146.

Epilogue

¹²⁶ Quoted in Wilson, 116.

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