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John Quincy Adams as Minister to Russia, 1809-1814: The Ideals and Realities Confronting His Mission

Mary Elizabeth Willwerth

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John Quincy Adams as Minister to Russia, 1809-1814:

The Ideals and Realities Confronting His Mission
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BY

Mary Elizabeth Willwerth

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

To John Quincy Adams, the early nineteenth century proved itself to be not only a struggle for American independence from Europe, but a struggle for the eighteenth century ideal of the recently formed American philosophy of government. This unique philosophy inspired by key figures of the American Enlightenment, such as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, incorporated the vision of America leading the way of enlightened world governments.

Son of the proud American revolutionary, John Adams, John Quincy Adams continued to follow the basic axioms of his father's generation and implement their basic ideals within his own various careers in governmental service. Adams would continue to promote the American ideal of natural law, practical government by the people and citizen equality throughout his entire life and regardless of his distance from the United States.

Adams' diplomatic mission to the Court of Tsar Alexander I in St. Petersburg from 1809-1814, provided the ultimate challenge to Adams' philosophy. While struggling to turn American ideals into realities, Adams confronted the rising wave of a counter movement which eventually overtook

the Enlightenment. This movement was Romanticism, which elevated exactly what Adams attempted all his life to suppress; passionate instincts, intimate feeling, and inner reality. His years in St. Petersburg, played out against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Era, only led him further toward a rigid resolve against such irrational behaviors in favor of reason and order. While the nations of Europe and America succumbed to this new wave of understanding, Adams stood proudly, if fruitlessly, against the temperaments of a new age.

Adams experience in Russia, his last public service outside of the United States, solidified his firm stance regarding America's place among world nations. After 1814, Adams embraced what he considered to be the true American cause for liberty and republicanism. Through his own implementations of isolationist policies as Secretary of State, Adams sought to preserve the American ideals from the Romantic Movement, so characteristic of Europe in the early nineteenth century.

To Harry Joseph Willwerth Jr.
who through his life inspired his neice to
live out her dreams and love life.

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Introduction

Though the Peace of Paris in 1783 had fortified the independence of the newly formed American nation, America would not succeed in freeing itself from European influences until its second victory over England in the War of 1812. This second decisive struggle for American independence and economic neutrality proved to many to be the key unlocking America's future growth. The United States victory and the subsequent Treaty of Ghent launched America's commercial expansion as the former British domination of trade was overridden in favor of United States neutrality. To John Quincy Adams, the young diplomat and architect of the treaty, the early nineteenth century proved itself to be not only a struggle for American independence from Europe, but a struggle for the ideal nature of the recently formed American philosophy of government. This unique philosophy, inspired by key figures of the American Enlightenment, such as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, incorporated the vision of America leading the way of enlightened world republics.

Son of the proud American revolutionary, John Adams, John Quincy Adams continued to follow the basic axioms of

his father's generation and implement their ideals within his own various careers in governmental service. These ideals of the Enlightenment focused upon the resurgence of philosophical thought and the questioning of authority. The movement grew to spread to all facets of man's existence, especially the sphere of politics, empirical analysis, and scientific inquiry. The founding fathers of the United States sought to fulfill the ideals of the age into the creation of a new nation. Adams was a direct product of this movement of the eighteenth century and manifested "in tremendous scope many of the intellectual trends and traditions of that century, both in his acceptance and in his rejection of those trends and traditions."¹

Raised by Puritanical parents and schooled at Harvard and throughout Europe in the eighteenth century traditions of the European Enlightenment, Adams felt it his supreme duty as an American citizen to maintain the permanence of the American ideal established by the generation of his father. Adams would continue to promote this republican ideal of natural law, practical government by the people and citizen equality throughout his entire life and regardless of his distance from the United States.

In 1809, Adams' profound sense of national duty led him to the isolated ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia. Here, amidst the threatening and potentially violent European coalition put together by Napoleon, Adams struggled to keep

America free of all European entanglements which he believed poisoning to the newly created American nation. His every move, both diplomatically and personally had been to achieve the perseverance of the infant American nation, formed out of the minds of the Enlightenment. Because of this, Adams remained convinced of the validity and moral integrity of the American nation over all other nations of the world.

Adams' experience away from his native country from 1809 to 1814, were years of importance to the development of United States' prosperity and growth. While Adams was in St. Petersburg, the growing number of aggressive Republican members in Congress, led by Henry Clay, began expressing the desire to set America upon a course Adams perceived to be contrary to the wishes of the founding fathers. In the passionate world of early nineteenth century Europe, American neutrality was completely disregarded by the aggressive European powers. In light of this fact, Clay and many of his contemporaries grew desirous of achieving American neutrality through force. This growing opinion within America and the general advancement of Romanticism in Europe led to the further disappearance of the enlightened ideal originally established for the American government.

The Romantic movement was characterized by the reassertion of the imagination and an emphasis upon human sentiment. Begun within Europe, Romanticism spread to the young American republic and stood in direct contrast to the

Enlightenment and subsequently the American principles of government. The Romantic thrust toward new individualism in thought and expression was the antithesis of the restrictive formality of classicism. Placed within the continent of Europe during this period, Adams saw himself as the last vestige of enlightened thought and principles.

Despite the overwhelming tides of reaction to the American Enlightenment, Adams clung as best he could to what he believed to be the qualities and principles of the ideal American set forth through the American Constitution. These beliefs were expressed through his duty to the nation of his birth, his strong moral obligation to God and his meticulous adherence to the use of logic and reason in order to fulfill the most stringent philosophies of the Age of Reason. These three basic beliefs of the ideal American made up the driving force behind the man -- John Quincy Adams. Each grew more and more inseparable from the others as his years of government service spanned into the nineteenth century.

Nowhere better was the spirit of the man and the ideal spirit of the nation he represented better displayed than at the Court of Tsar Alexander I in St. Petersburg. Here, Adams' every motive, action and word exemplified the frantic struggle to keep the American ideal alive through the constant insistence on American neutrality in European affairs. As a strong minority within the United States Congress grew to receive the majority support of the

American people in their declaration of war, Adams maintained his idealized views of American neutrality. Though, in later life, he would adopt many concepts of the new American philosophy of progress into his principles for American government, the bulk of his philosophy while serving his nation in St. Petersburg remained embedded within the major concepts of the American Enlightenment.

The American declaration of war in 1812 caused Adams to reassess his convictions about the philosophy of the United States. Though he remained convinced of the ideals expressed through the American Enlightenment, the War of 1812 forced Adams to accept the new concepts of nineteenth century Romanticism within the framework of his eighteenth century principles; his nation's similarities to Europe and America's aggression and passionate stance in early nineteenth century world affairs.

During the crucial era in American history highlighted by the War of 1812, Adams attempted to cultivate the ideals of the American Enlightenment through his constant efforts to maintain the peace and neutrality of the American nation. By preserving the neutrality of America, Adams believed that the ideal government inspired by the philosophes of the European Enlightenment could be firmly established within America for the benefit of the entire world. His experience outside the borders of the United States only solidified his resolve to keep America free of outside influences damaging

to the success of this American mission.

This paper proposes to explain the contradictory ideals and growing influences present in America during the early nineteenth century which undermined the efforts of Adams during his diplomatic mission at the Court of Tsar Alexander I. Through a thorough analysis of how Adams' confronted the obvious changes occurring within the American nation in the early nineteenth century, one can achieve a strong sense of the overwhelming conflict which led to the shift in American ideology from a sense of mission to the more realistic belief in establishing American progress. Despite the overriding influences of nineteenth century liberals within American government, Adams' contributions remain landmark to the American ideal which remains the cornerstone to American governmental philosophy.

Chapter One

"A Question of Character: The Mind of John Quincy Adams"

Mr. Adams was a practical Christian. This is proved by his spotless life, his strict honesty and integrity, his devotion to duty, his faithful obedience to the dictates of conscience, at whatever sacrifice, his reverence to God, of Christ, his respect for religion and its institutions, and recognition of its claims and responsibilities.²

As a statesman of the early nineteenth century, Adams reflected the previous generation of the founding fathers through his ideology and his principles. In order to understand the diplomacy of John Quincy Adams as Minister Plenipotentiary to the court of Tsar Alexander I from 1809 to 1814, one must first examine the character of the man and ideology which shaped his interpretations. Though an individual, Adams possessed the basic qualities of his eighteenth century Puritan parentage, the American Enlightenment, and the American Revolution "although most of his mature life was spent in the nineteenth."³

Adams, first and foremost, was a man fully embodied by American principles and devotion to the newly established American nation. This basic truth permeated his actions and reactions as a statesman and as an individual. Though he

embraced the philosophy of his government within the context of his own life, the character of the man was ultimately shaped and molded by his own meticulous control over the emotions. Along with Adams' deep sense of duty and control lay an even deeper and highly influential past rich in both the rigorous teachings and missionary ideal of New England Puritanism, and the idealistic thinkers of the Enlightenment. These two powerful forces merged together to shape the foundation of the American nation and subsequently, the mind of John Quincy Adams.

Adams was the personification of everything involved in the triumph of the American colonies. Complete with a patriotic parentage and a long line of New England ancestry, Adams was a direct product of the Revolution; a rationally thinking citizen equipped with the belief in the blessings of a divine Providence. It is essential to examine these roots of his intellect; his reason, belief in God and devotion to duty in order to grasp the overwhelming conflict between the two divergent ideologies of early nineteenth century America.

Central to Adams' life was his profound reliance on reason, intellect and natural law as professed by the intellectual leaders of the American and European Enlightenment. As a student of the teachings of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, Montesquieu, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, Adams

attempted from an early age to live by the philosophies of these individuals. Life, as idealized and rationalized by these men appeared to form natural truths which Adams sought to transform into his nation's reality. "He found the world about him confined and controlled by a paramount law of nature, superior to the regulations of humans, a law which the logical mind could discern and apply to every situation."⁴ This distinct philosophy became the foundation of all Adams encountered throughout his life. All his observations of the world about him held a sense of reason and order when applied to the basic principles of the Enlightenment.

Reason became the primary focus of his life beginning at an early age. All decisions, opinions and duties could and should be rationalized, a practice Adams diligently followed on a daily basis through self reflection in his diary. So influenced was he by the Enlightenment that he maintained a "rigid adherence to the course that he deemed right" in all matters of existence.⁵ Before action came reflection and a lengthy process of assessing the logic and determination of any given question. His course in life led him toward "a singular ambition for the right" in all the situations he encountered.⁶ Though many thought him much too reflective and moral, few could deny his constant striving for the truth. These efforts reflect not only the man, but also the ideology of his beloved country which was

so much a part of his existence.

The ideology central to the rebellion of the American colonies was greatly inspired by the writings and speeches of Thomas Paine nearly forty years prior to Adams' diplomatic mission to St. Petersburg. Paine, through his 1776 essay, "Common Sense," merged the ideals of the Renaissance with the more recent writings of enlightened philosophes and Puritanical millenarianism in order to form the basic principles of American ideology. Paine fully incorporated these ideals into one unique philosophy unprecedented in history. His writings inspired many American colonists to believe that Americans would play a key role in the history of the world. He wrote, "The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the events of a few months."⁷ Paine also incorporated John Locke's principles of the importance of individual conduct and utility over the precedents of Old World governmental tradition. By serving themselves in this way, Paine felt that Americans would exist for the benefit of the entire world.⁸ American intellectuals grew to accept Paine's belief that the primary example of enlightened government "would set relations between nations on a new basis" and help create "a new world order."⁹

Although Thomas Paine influenced the masses with his

revolutionary rhetoric, it took the refined implementations of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to set the ideals of America into practical and realistic foundations of government. Jefferson envisioned an ideal world of Americans setting the course for the entire world to follow. Adapting the general writings of the Enlightenment, Jefferson added the component of God in order to fully encompass the American experience in a divine light. Jefferson's vision comprised all the positive characteristics of the Enlightenment; "nature, man, law, happiness, beauty and order."¹⁰ Though Jefferson's impact upon the American Enlightenment remained the cornerstone to the formation of American eighteenth century ideology, Benjamin Franklin's contribution rested in his exposure to both European and American philosophy of the Enlightenment.

While maintaining the initial premise of Paine's notion of the primary importance of American independence from the Old World, Jefferson and Franklin subtly rejected the violent and aggressive nature of the American Revolution in favor of American neutrality.

In foreign affairs, a policy of aloofness was calculated to be the best way of preserving liberties Americans had achieved and of allowing them to develop still further as a free people. Geographic distance from a rapacious and turmoil prone Europe already promised peace.¹¹

Thus, American leaders felt the need to keep the newly established American nation free from the influences of

Europe. Adams fully adopted this policy of neutrality and isolationism, established early in the existence of the United States. In fact, Adams, as a young adult opposed Paine's aggressive ideals. "In opposing the thrusts of Paine, the supreme romanticist of the age, Adams necessarily fought with the weapons of conservatism."¹² Adams would continue to cling to this eighteenth century ideal, despite the developing notion of American progress and aggression in the early nineteenth century.

Though reason transformed the framework and organization of the American nation, it was ultimately the irrational passions of men which brought such a product as the American Revolution into being. Much Romantic passion as embodied through the speeches of Thomas Paine, became vital to the success of the American Revolution. Men such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, though contributory to the development of American philosophy, would never have personally contributed as soldiers in their pursuit of reason. However, men with passions would. Revolutions are not won by the intellectuals, but by the passionate vigor of those taking an active part in fighting for victory. John Adams commented on the indecisiveness of the majority of the American people and believed that the lower class of men failed to understand such concepts as natural rights and human truths.

The theory that man's reason must be protected against his passions, the axiom that members must be balanced

against property, still more the suggestion that wisdom was likely to lie with the smaller part, could not be used to appeal to a mass electorate.¹³

The average man in America would never risk his life for far reaching intellectual concepts, but he could fight for a more tangible cause such as independence from a dominant and repressive mother country.

Like the intellectual founding fathers before him, Adams formulated a position regarding the American Revolution that purposely eliminated the violence and anarchy which were central to the success of the Revolution. Instead, Adams chose to exalt the ideals which the Revolution inspired. Distance from the revolutionary conflict further stimulated the abandonment of the violent aspects of the war for independence, in favor of the pristine qualities of enlightened thought.

Adams fully accepted the ideals and policies brought forth through the creation of the American republic. He easily incorporated these beliefs within the framework of his own understanding of existence. His strong belief in logic and reason led him to devote an entire lifetime to the validity of the Declaration of Independence, which he viewed as the ultimate right for all of mankind. His nation had molded and shaped itself by the principles of the Enlightenment, so too did the feelings of his heart and mind. Raised in such an atmosphere of successful adherence to the rights of man led Adams to exalt the Age of Reason

and emulate its teachings throughout his life and in every way possible for the good of all his fellow Americans. Thus, what better way to live out the teachings of the Enlightenment than by serving the nation which had adopted those very teachings to its organization and policies of government. As one whose "most earnest determination was to pursue and support principles to which in reason he could subscribe," Adams pursued a life long devotion in service to his government.¹⁴

Adams believed that a high level of empirical analysis could be employed in every rational decision. Diplomacy, especially, could successfully implement this use of collecting information in order to answer questions and solve problems rationally and correctly. In assessing the European situation while in St. Petersburg, Adams soon concluded that the Napoleonic Continental System would ultimately aid Great Britain. He viewed his conclusion as a product of detailed analysis based on reasonable inquiry. Because of this, he felt obliged to tell the Emperor of his conclusions. When resolving any issue through the use of reason, Adams felt no assessment could be false or questionable. Though this practice led his contemporaries to view Adams as slightly arrogant, "self-centered," "pedantic," and "singularly humorless," they could not deny his meticulous stubbornness and use of reason to support his conclusions.¹⁵

Adams viewed himself in a superior light when discussing any particular problem or issue in contrast with the opinions of others. Reason was correct; Adams employed the highest level of reasoning, therefore, he believed his conclusions were the only possible ones. This rationality also applied to other men's views of Adams' ideas. "Since his reason revealed to him true principle, to reject him was to censure the truth."¹⁶ What provided further evidence for his belief in his own ideas was his strict devotion to God and his Puritanical belief that God had blessed the American nation, as well as the American people. Because of this, Adams viewed his own existence and service to the state as being blessed by God. This deeply felt belief in God's unique presence in America further enhanced Adams' belief in the superior nature of the United States and those in its service and government.

Adams inherited a strong tradition of Puritanism which defined the man, perhaps even more definitively than the Enlightenment. Throughout his life, Adams showed tremendous regard for the Puritans and their divine mission in America. The Puritans of the seventeenth century viewed their position in the formation of the New England colonies in nearly the same way in which the founding fathers viewed the creation of the United States. "The Puritan thought his thoughts higher and his moral standards better than those" of their past, present and future.¹⁷ The Puritans, like

the framers of America's constitution, could not help but feel inspired by their presence on the New World.

Their whole meaning and purpose of these events burst upon their imagination. It was God who had elected them by his sovereign grace and to his own glory; it was God who had sent them into the howling wilderness and it was God's glory and Christ's kingship that was being manifested in them.¹⁸

These basic principles of the Plymouth colony were easily transformed within the newly created American nation. Adams himself was fully convinced that God had inspired the United States to serve as a divine example in contrast to the evil practices of European powers and their policies.¹⁹

To a great extent, Adams viewed his own life as carrying on the heroic traditions of the Puritans; their devotion to duty, moral philosophy, and strong value for work and accomplishment. Fully encumbered by his adherence to Calvinist doctrine, he regarded himself as one of chosen, just as his Puritan ancestors of previous generations. He professed in his diary, "the spark from heaven is given to few. It is not to be obtained by entreaty or by toil."²⁰ It is clear that Adams strived throughout his life to demonstrate himself as one of those 'few' chosen by God. His life reflected a constant struggle and undying effort to attain the highest praise, acclaim, and respect among men and Providence.

Though reason appears to have no place in religion and vice versa, Adams viewed the two inseparably. Without God there could be no reason, and without reason there could be

no Enlightenment, therefore, no United States of America. Thus, all was a manifestation of a divine Providence. In serving the state, one could also serve the "divine gift of reason."²¹ The two colliding natures of God and Reason formed the peculiar intellect of John Quincy Adams. Both, old Puritanism and the eighteenth century principles of the Enlightenment, met with fierce intensity in the mind of Adams. As the Rev. Allen voiced upon the Eulogy of Adams' death, "We cannot, . . . separate the religion of the Man from the religion of the state."²² Both shaped the man all moments of his life.

The drive toward the truth and godliness sacrificed the very essence of the man -- his passion, leaving him to become nothing but "a martyr to his belief in God, education and science."²³ In order for Adams to adhere to his life of reason and moral service, he gave up a tremendous part of himself. As early as age ten, he wrote his father, "I make but a poor figure at composition, my head is much too fickle, my thoughts are running after bird's eggs, play and trifles till I get vexed with myself."²⁴

As an adult, Adams continued to suppress even the higher emotions of love. When in lust with a local girl, Adams confessed his anxious thoughts in the pages of his diary,

I have . . . been obliged to exert all my Resolutions to keep myself free from a passion. . . . I have escaped till now . . . and now again I am put on trial. I have still more Reason, than I ever had, to express

my feelings; but I am persuaded that I never was in greater danger.²⁵

Adams overcame the fear of his desire only through his staunch suppression of it. During this time, he often wrote of his ability to rationalize the act of love and relations between people. At an early age, he concluded, "A man courting appears to me at any time of life, much below his natural dignity; but in a youth it is exceedingly absurd and ridiculous."²⁶ While most of the time afraid of women and frequently commenting in his diary of the strange species, he did, once again fall fast in love with a young girl while at law school miles away from the watchful eyes of John and Abigail Adams. After he voiced his desire to marry the girl, his parents wrote a scathing letter in reply reminding him of his inadequate funds and young age. Thus, the son obeyed his parents and broke off relations with his love, Mary Frasier. This instance marked the formal end of any spontaneity in the private life of John Quincy Adams. He resigned himself to a life of professional enterprise and service to the state. He declared these feelings in verse;

Resume the path my earliest choice began
And lose with pride the Lover in the Man.²⁷

As one biographer has stated of this occasion in his life, "He had not only buried his love but had jumped on the grave with both feet."²⁸ Thus, at the very young age of twenty-one, Adams became the public man of reason he believed the duty of an intelligent man. In fact, it was

not until forty years later that he would mention the "deep and distressing troubles of the heart" that he, Adams, confronted in the loss of Mary Frasier.²⁹

Thus, love, anger, remorse, grief, joy and pain were, from then on held in check by the young lawyer and diplomat. His character remained astonishingly stoic even in his most personal moments of reflection. His diary, and later on, his verse, are striking in content because they stand apparently devoid of emotion of any kind. "In every station of his life, he maintained an exact, almost military precision, even to the smallest details of conduct."³⁰ In public, as well, Adams displayed little trace of the man other than his devotion to country, God and duty. Even his son wrote of his father, "He is the only man, I ever saw, whose feelings I could not penetrate almost always."³¹

While teaching a Rhetoric and Oratory course at Harvard in 1808, Adams spent an entire class session upon discussion of the importance of controlling one's emotions while in public. Through his published lectures, one can get a clear sense of his particular ideas upon the issue. Relying on the classical teachings of Aristotle, Adams defined passion as individual qualities including; "anger and its remission; love and hatred; fear and boldness; shame and honor; compassion and revenge; envy and emulation."³² Adams felt that the nature of controlling one's passions could also be learned through the study of the ancient

philosophes. He stated, "Cicero insists also much upon the management of the passions. Not by anatomizing the passions themselves, but by showing how they are to be handled."³³

While drawing evidence from the Roman orator, Adams further supported his theory by pointing out his interpretation of the basic teachings of Christian morality which he stated, "has commanded us, to suppress the anger and turbulent passions in ourselves, and forbids us to stimulate them in others."³⁴

Though these character traits appear to be disadvantageous to the emotional nature of the man, they are refined qualities in the skilled diplomat. Adams prided himself upon the ease with which he carried himself in both the diplomatic circles of Europe and the atmosphere of political factionalism in the American capitol. This devotion to private convictions, though impressive to ministers adhering to the political factions at Court, caused his previous elimination from the Senate in 1808. As the junior Senator from Massachusetts appointed on the Federalist ticket, Adams' determination to adhere to his own beliefs separate from party alliances led to his rejection by his own party. He wrote in 1802, "A politician in this country must be the man of a party. I would fain be the man of my whole country."³⁵ Despite the turbulent result of his "tortuous devotion to principles," he maintained the belief that his was the best and proper course to take.³⁶

In turn, those succumbing to factional opinion were destined to be wrong. He frequently wrote of man's vulnerability to factionalism in politics as comparable to his passions. "Internal factions, like passions, might sometimes be necessary; but like passions they could be a source of misery as well as enjoyment, requiring continual restraint and regulation."³⁷

Despite Adams obvious control over his emotions, he frequently noted in his diary the need for further control of his passions. In nearly all of Adams' yearly assessments of himself, he remarked on his desire to improve. After the end of his year in Russia, Adams wrote of his appointment, "It has changed . . . the nature of my obligations and duties, and required the exertions of other virtues and the suppression of other passions."³⁸ On several other occasions, Adams reiterated these beliefs in an attempt to convince himself of his use of reason in place of emotion. To his son, he wrote from Russia,

Heaven has given to every human being the power of controlling his passions, and if he neglects or uses it, the fault is his own and he must be answerable for it. . . . Unless you have such rules and principle there will be numberless occasions on which you will have no guide for your government but your passions.³⁹

Thus, Adams, concluded that a good government was a rational government free of any passions. As with government, life could be a good life if pursued in caution of one's passions.

Adams' journey to St. Petersburg and his five year stay on the European continent only served to cement his theories through his countless observations of the violence and irrationalities of men's passions. Examples of this were the invasion of Napoleon into Russia, England's adherence to unjust maritime policies and the support of an impartial majority in the United States Congress for support of the declaration of war. These developments demonstrated to Adams that only man's restraint over his passions was the key to a virtuous life. Knowledge of this led to the further determination to pursue a more stringent set of controls upon himself and upon American foreign policy.

Secluded in St. Petersburg while war advanced over Europe, Adams became more convinced about pursuing an entirely pacifistic existence for America separate from the disruptive passions of Europe. Though pressures within his own country built toward a declaration of war, Adams dismissed the American war fever as the product of a group of "ardent spirits . . . always rushing into the conflict, without looking at the consequences."⁴⁰ Despite the reality of America's involvement in European affairs, Adams continued to hold the American notion of physical and social separation from Europe as a firmly established notion of American existence. In Adams' view, American diplomacy, formed in accordance with the idealized visions of the intellectuals of the American Enlightenment would never

succumb to the violent whims of a few in Congress. However, Adams had been absent from his native land just as the hot-headed Republicans emerged within the Congress. He no longer grasped the feelings of his nation which had begun the slow drift away from the policies of the founding fathers, in favor of a new American image of strength, dominance and progress.

Aspects of this new philosophy emerging in the young American republic grew out of the Romantic Movement in Europe. Romanticism transformed the early nineteenth century toward a new understanding of human thought and spirit. Though originally studied by scholars as purely a literary movement, recent historians have recognized its significance for its historical and political impact. Historical analysis of the Romantic Movement stressed the rejection of rationalism so characteristic of the enlightenment. Thorby referred to this period as a "historically conditioned mentality" and "a phase of the spirit" in which thinking man sought greater meaning beyond mere scientific or logical truths.⁴¹ Literary and philosophical men of the age attempted to gain more than rational knowledge. They sought to grasp the very root of the human spirit. In order to achieve this goal, promoters of the Romantic Period stressed the primacy of feeling over reason. Thus, the essence of the Romantic Movement was in direct contrast with Adams' basic ideals for himself and for

Americans.

By the time Adams embarked on his voyage to St. Petersburg, aspects of European Romanticism were being expressed in a young minority of Jeffersonians in Congress. This new group of young politicians emerged as a result of an erosion of confidence in the new nation facing "overt pressures in foreign affairs."⁴² Led by Henry Clay in Congress, he and his contemporaries urged the ideological shift in American politics from an emphasis on the Enlightenment toward the new perspectives characteristic of the early nineteenth century. In short, "they began to demand a strategy of 'energy' rather than 'enlightenment' to guarantee the republic's survival."⁴³ From 1809 to 1814, the American public and their representatives in Congress slowly embraced this new philosophy of American ideology. Despite the overwhelming opinion of Americans, Adams maintained the American image embodied through the original wishes of the founding fathers. The ideals of the American Enlightenment stayed with his every purpose and action inside or outside of his homeland.

Adams' devotion to duty remained a landmark quality of all aspects of his life. His belief in the blessings of Providence upon America and his staunch desire to maintain the American nation as an example to the world led John Quincy Adams to assume the responsibility of maintaining American principles for the good of mankind. Adams' duties

comprised a long list of areas within both his public and private life. These duties included allegiance to the ideals of Christianity, morality, country, family, perfection, truth and rationality.

As his high level of morality and deep sense of Puritan virtues would indicate, Adams felt the greatest duty to his Creator, which stood above all other duties he placed upon himself. References to God are more frequent in his diary and poetry than mention of any human being or event. Like the Puritans who settled New England in the seventeenth century, Adams believed in the basic and "fundamental principles of Christianity" as exemplified through their example. He sought to attain the same faith "so deeply impressed with the sense of religious obligation," which enabled the Puritans to feel encompassed "in all its energy."⁴⁴ Adams thrived on his firm belief in this ideal. He trusted its basic concepts like no other and followed its teachings to his grave. Christian principles, the foundation of all truths, remained the cornerstone to all future knowledge embedded in the philosophy of Adams.

Just one level below Adams' duty to Christianity lay his profound sense of duty to the family name which had become so associated with the formation of the United States. Since his life began, Adams had been born with "the whole American Revolutionary ardor of political and personal behavior."⁴⁵ Born in 1767, John Quincy Adams, the eldest

son of a revolutionary, was cultivated by his parent's efforts to personify a new generation of American statesmen beholden to proper American beliefs, principles and traditions of independence. From his earliest age of existence, John and Abigail Adams expected tremendous achievement from their child of American liberty. While still a boy, he accompanied his father on diplomatic missions and attended peace conferences as personal secretary to his father. Much was expected and little was left unarranged in the early life of Adams. One could say that his very reason for existence emanated from the constant inner force pulled by his "conscience and his deeply felt obligation to be worthy of his parents, their example and their precept."⁴⁶ In regard to Adams and his distinguished family, the stresses placed upon him to excel in public service and not shame the family name were enormous. John Quincy wrote of this pressure to his father while in St. Petersburg:

. . . I assure you that in the whole course of my life I scarcely ever did a responsible act, of which I was proud or ashamed, without feeling my soul soothed or galled with the reflection how it would affect the sensibility of my parents.⁴⁷

Through his desire to gain parental approval, he continually served the government his father helped create. Driven since childhood by his parent's desire to see him serve in public office, Adams willingly complied. He knew

no other course to take, for he had been serving his country since boyhood. As a man of twenty-seven, he wrote his father of his devotion to duty and to his country;

The attachment which I feel for my native land is not merely a sentiment of the heart, it is also a principle dictated by reason. . . . I hold it to be a duty of the most rigid obligation to make the place of my birth the centre of all my wishes, and the chief object of my pursuits.⁴⁸

This strong devotion to his country remained prevalent throughout his life of constant service to the state.

In serving the state, Adams continued to search for the truth through reason. Once he established certain truths he implemented them into the forefront of his principles, they became immoveable. Like a soldier fighting for one grand cause, the cause of Adams was the defense of principle. Since he lived and breathed his principles, "he found nothing remarkable in the assertion that in both public and private affairs he pursued an unalterable determination to conform to the personal principles that had always guided him."⁴⁹

Many have judged Adams' staunch adherence to duty as his political courage. Never a man of political parties, his true party was that of his own principles. Because of this inability to accept any political party, he became known for making "enemies on all sides in obedience to his conscience."⁵⁰ Though this practice never made him a popular politician, he was respected for the obvious qualities of his rigorous allegiance to duties of all kinds.

At the time of his death, many continued to respect the man so molded by his principles. Defence of his principles grew to become the duty of his life. George A. Lipsky correctly assessed the man when he stated, "His whole life was a tale of backbreaking travail in the service of principle."⁵¹

Taking on such a never ending task as searching for the truth, maintaining Christian principles, remaining the dutiful son to his famous parents, controlling his various passions and adhering to a strong sense of duty caused Adams much inner turmoil frequently leading to physical infirmities. "Indeed he was born with everything to make for a happy and successful life except for those qualities that bring peace of mind."⁵² This was a direct consequence of Adams' conscious choice to lead that particular life he set out for himself. With so many expectations and restrictions placed upon him, it is no wonder he felt the constant presence of pessimism, inadequacy and failure at all he accomplished. Despite the tremendous time spent in various phases of government, he still criticized himself as not doing enough. Numerous examples of this run through his writings. At age twenty-five, he wrote;

I am not satisfied with the manner in which I employ my time. It is calculated to keep me forever fixed in that state of useless and disgraceful insignificance, which has long been my lot for some years past.⁵³

This same pattern of self-chastisement was recorded by his

wife early on in their marriage. Louisa Catherine, much younger and sociable than her husband noticed immediately "how her mate allowed the vain projects of this world to imprison him" and observed how he "had changed into a creature increasingly intolerant even of those with whom he was intimate."⁵⁴

In St. Petersburg, Louisa Catherine noted that Adams frequently lost sleep "from worrying that he would disgrace the United States by failing to keep pace with life in the Tsar's court."⁵⁵ Indeed, his years in St. Petersburg brought very little peace of mind. After a full year of gaining the Tsar's favor and ultimately Russia's withdraw from the Continental System, Adams continued to feel more inadequate than ever.

I have pursued no object steadily, and the year has left no advantageous trace of itself in the annals of my life . . . I begin already to be sensible of the approaches of age. I cannot hope for any intellectual improvement upon my faculties from the present time. I pray for the power and the will to make a better improvement of them; . . .⁵⁶

His constant ideal for perfection frequently led him to despair over himself and his situation.

Regardless of his station or success, inside the mind of Adams, there lay nothing but failure, regret and the constant struggle to become better. On the occasion of his forty-fifth birthday in 1812, Adams wrote;

Two-thirds of a long life are past, and I have done nothing to distinguish it by usefulness to my country or to mankind. . . . But passions, indolence, weakness and infirmity have sometimes made me swerve from my

better knowledge of right and almost constantly paralyzed my efforts of good. . . . It is time to cease forming fruitless resolutions.⁵⁷

Such frustration could only come from a man haunted by the drive toward perfection. Though, the previous passages were written while in the isolated post of St. Petersburg, this gloomy outlook comprised his entire years in public service. At the age of seventy, after having served his nation as diplomat, Senator, Secretary of State, President, and Congressman; he continued to lament his poor abilities and wasted life declaring his "whole life has been a succession of disappointments. I can scarcely recollect a single instance of success in anything that I ever undertook."⁵⁸ Perhaps, Rev. Joseph Henry Allen explained the sad inner nature of Adams best when he commented at the Eulogy; "He has taken the world on its blackest and roughest side, and for him there is no sentiment, no enthusiasm, almost no hope; but stern, grand, moral censorship."⁵⁹ The deep, dark world of Adams' mind defined his character and reason for living. Adams' philosophy comprised all the past, present and future. He felt that it was up to him and him alone to preserve the American ideal; the ideal of grace, youth and innocence separate and superior to Europe and the rest of the world.

The next Chapter will show how Adams' diplomatic mission in St. Petersburg further defined the man on the course set out by the founding fathers and their vision for

America. Through Adams' observations, actions and opinions as diplomat, he expressed the ideal attitude for the American nation on its course away from European influences and, according to Adams, her evils. Chapter Two will also assess the diplomatic mission as a success in the immediate realm of Adams' presence in Russia, but as a failure in his efforts to keep the United States out of the violent wars of Europe and isolated from the growth of the new ideals emerging out of the early nineteenth century.

Chapter Two

"John Quincy Adams as Minister Plenipotentiary to St. Petersburg, 1809-1814: The Ideals and Realities Confronting His Diplomatic Mission"

My motives for accepting this commission are various. That of serving my country, in the station which its regular organs have chosen to assign me, stands foremost of them all; and though it neither suits my own inclination nor my own private judgement, I deem it a duty to sacrifice them both to the public sense, expressed by the constitutional authority.⁶⁰

When John Quincy Adams and his wife and young son stepped onto the ship Horace 5 August 1809, all felt a deep sense of uncertainty concerning the life awaiting them at the end of their journey. While Louisa Catherine lamented the indefinite separation from her two oldest sons, young Charles Francis marveled at the world aboard ship and John Quincy Adams thought of where he had come from and where he was going.

Just one year prior to this, Adams had been employed as a United States Senator while teaching Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University. However, this ideal occupation came to an abrupt halt after six years in Congress when his own party, the Federalists, rejected him as a candidate for another term. This came as a direct result of Adams'

rejection of the Federalist stance and his vehement support of Jefferson's embargo, the Louisiana Purchase and the Republican party. As Adams noted at the time in his diary, ". . . on most of the great national questions now under discussion, my sense of duty leads me to support the Administration, and I find myself of course in opposition to the federalists in general."⁶¹

Adams' position in support of Thomas Jefferson's embargo directly reflected his philosophical stance concerning American neutrality in European affairs. He viewed the measure as one "that would preserve American neutrality, give the republic time to gather strength, and allow for a negotiated settlement of commercial disputes."⁶² Throughout his career in the Senate, Adams solidified his understanding of the American philosophy of government. This experience "became a private proving ground for commitment to self-control and the legacy of the Founding Fathers."⁶³ By resigning his post, Adams verified to the world his commitment to virtuous politics.

Following his forced resignation from office on 8 June 1808, Adams went back to Boston to settle into a leisurely life of law and the furtherance of his education. However, his Republican supporters in Washington never forgot his determination to uphold his own principles against his party's policies. This resulted in the attempt by the Republicans to bring Adams back into active service to the

government. Both Presidents Jefferson and Madison advocated the return of Adams to the realm of national politics and struggled with their Federalist opponents in Congress to bring this about.

After a year in Boston, the newly elected President, James Madison, submitted a recommendation to Congress in March of 1809 requesting Congress to accept the appointment of John Quincy Adams to become the new Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Alexander I in St. Petersburg. Adams, in Washington at the time, wrote his wife of the possible appointment, "I believe you will not be much disappointed at the failure of the proposition to go to Russia. . . . I had as little desire as expectation of that or any other appointment."⁶⁴ Despite this lack of interest in the post, when the Senate confirmed the appointment in June, Adams accepted willingly, expressing his profound sense of loyalty to the President. While his family vehemently disapproved of his decision, Adams began the preparations for a potentially long and extended stay at the diplomatic post in St. Petersburg.

Adams perceived and accepted the reality of his situation entirely. Though called to serve his beloved nation, the post at St. Petersburg was far removed from Washington which led both supporters and adversaries to question the appointment. As he commented years later to his father,

When I came to Russia my motive doubtless in the opinion of many was ambition. But there were not many wanting persons who thought I was sent here for the purpose of putting me out of the way . . . it was certainly not a voyage which I considered calculated to promote ambitious views. . . . My real motive was perfectly simple. The constitutional organ of my country had assigned this to me as my proper post.⁶⁵

The majority of his family opposed Adams' decision. Not only would the ministry take him to the far off and isolated capital of Russia, but potentially remove him from active politics for years to come. In addition, his family felt that Adams strengthened the "worst suspicions about his dealings with the Republicans by accepting the appointment."⁶⁶ Even a friend of his, Ezekiel Bacon, commented to the departing Adams, "your friends would certainly have preferred that the theater of your employments should have been on American ground. A mission to the Court of St. Petersburg is, to a man of active talents, somewhat like an honorable exile."⁶⁷ Despite the depressing outlook of friends and enemies alike, Adams' position was not as bleak as they imagined.

Very few men of the early nineteenth century within the United States were as prepared as was John Quincy Adams to assume the role awaiting him at the Court of St. Petersburg. In 1809, Adams, though only in his forty-second year, had already served the American government in diplomatic positions in Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, London, and even in St. Petersburg as a young secretary to the American minister. Such were the overwhelming credentials of the

young statesman who literally "had grown up in the profession."⁶⁸ Due to the early education of Adams and his wife in French schools, their fluency in the language aided their smooth transition into the French speaking Russian Court of Tsar Alexander I. However, John Quincy Adams' command of the French language was not the only advantageous characteristic of his position in St. Petersburg.

Being the son of a patriot and president, Adams had quickly learned the duties and qualities of government office. His early teen years were spent in Europe with his father. While John Adams occupied his time negotiating the Peace of Paris in the early 1780s, young John Quincy studied in French schools and observed the diplomacy of his father and various other negotiators including, William Pitt, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. As one biographer has pointed out, Adams "learned as if by second nature the amenities, formalities, and protocol of their official and unofficial life."⁶⁹ While serving in the diplomatic corps under President Washington, he continued to pursue in adulthood the lessons of his boyhood. By 1797, he had attained such prominence as a diplomat in Prussia that George Washington commented, "Mr. Adams is the most valuable public character we have abroad, and . . . there remains no doubt in my mind that he will prove himself to be the ablest, of all our diplomatic corps."⁷⁰

In addition to both his experience and proven abilities, Adams possessed a distinct and devoted allegiance to his duty to the young American nation. He had planned his entire life around and for the continuance of the American experience. He lived it, breathed it, and for the majority of his life felt a willing slave to it. His diplomacy, more than any other area of his life would be shaped around the American philosophy of government. The duty of anyone in service to the government of the United States was to preserve, protect and defend the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Adams took these teachings of childhood very seriously throughout both his public and private life. Thus, his journey to St. Petersburg as minister recalled many such voyages undertaken throughout the course of his active public life and many more to follow in the service of his country.

The situation in Europe within the first decade of the nineteenth century was highlighted by the commercial practices of France and England. However, Adams assessed the European situation in the following way to his brother;

In France and the rest of Europe king-making and king-breaking, orders of chivalry and dissolutions of marriage, blanchisseusses, princes and Jacobin grubs bursting into butterfly princes, dukes and counts, conscriptions and contributions, famine grinding the people into soldiers, soldiers sprouting into sultans, fifty or sixty upstarts wallowing in more than Asiatic luxury, and an iron harrow tearing up the bowels of the nations. This is the present history of the times.⁷¹

Adams had arrived upon the intensely divided and contested

nations within Europe in which both France and England had declared economic warfare over the waterways of the European continent. Napoleon's Continental System outlined in both the Milan and Berlin Decrees enacted an ambitious system of French dominance of the high seas. In direct conflict with the policies of France, George III of England introduced a similar policy through the British Orders in Council which were backed up through the continental impressment of American ships and sailors.

While economic warfare raged in Europe, the United States continued to adhere to a firm rejection of European policies by expressing her neutrality and open refusal to submit to European commercial laws. Though clearly favoring the French nation over its steadfast British enemy, the United States remained frustrated by the unwillingness of amicable nations such as France and the Netherlands to recognize its neutrality. At this period in time, Russia, in conflict with England, had remained an ally of France. Thus, the United States and Russia had one distinct similarity in 1809; animosity toward England and friendliness toward France. However, these policies would encounter sudden shifts of allegiance as Napoleon became increasingly more aggressive with both friend and foe on the continent of Europe.

Diplomatic correspondence between the United States and Russia began during the Administration of Thomas Jefferson

in 1806 in an attempt to gain a European ally against the threatening British dominance of the high seas. Predicting the alliance of France and Russia, Jefferson wished to gain Russian support in the coming European peace settlement. It was Jefferson's wish that together with Russia, the United States could persuade Great Britain to accept the policy of the "freedom of the seas." While Jefferson counted on Russian support against England, Russia too, looked to the United States as a counterbalance against English maritime dominance.⁷²

Jefferson's desire for diplomatic interchange became a reality when Russia and England entered into war in 1808. Despite Jefferson's growing concern, the Senate refused to support an American ministry in Russia. This would not transpire until the commencement of Madison's term when Russia formally recognized the American nation in 1809. This, along with the escalation of the Napoleonic Wars, brought about the necessity for a ministry in Europe. As a result of his appointment, the diplomatic envoy of Adams to St. Petersburg remained the only full ministry accredited in Europe during "one of the most critical moments in the world's history."⁷³

The instructions left for Adams by the previous minister were ten years old and stated simply,

It will be your duty therefore to cultivate the good dispositions of the Emperor on every point interesting the United States by assuming him of their sensibility to all the marks of his friendship, and of the value

they place on it.⁷⁴

Given the vague instructions accompanying his mission, Adams quickly assumed the responsibility of acting directly for the United States before waiting for instructions from Washington. This autonomous position was further enhanced by the fact that post dispatches from the United States took at least two and a half months in summer and were completely severed during the seven months of winter. Although this inconvenience led to many frustrating occasions, it gave Adams the chance to cultivate his own diplomacy and speak directly for his nation.

Upon arriving in St. Petersburg in the fall of 1809, Adams' entered into the dynamic Russian court of Tsar Alexander I. Alexander's youthful age, education in the philosophy of the French Enlightenment and his genuine attempts to formulate a strong Russian nation, appealed to Adams, nearly ten years his senior. The Russian nation itself appealed to Adams, who regarded Russia and America as akin to one another in their efforts to counter the dominance and aggression of England and France. However, other factors cemented the comradery between the two emerging nations. Alexis de Tocqueville voiced this sentiment upon the subject;

There are at the present-time, two great nations in the world which seem to tend towards the same end, although they started from different points: I allude to the Russians and the Americans. . . .
All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and only to be charged with the

maintenance of their power; but these are still in the act of growth; all the others are stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these are proceeding with ease and celerity along a path to which the human eye can assign no term.⁷⁵

Adams readily agreed with de Tocqueville's comments and incorporated these feelings into an amiable relationship with Alexander.

Under the idealized and idealistic Tsar, Russia established an effective foreign ministry "which set the standard of diplomatic success that later formulators of Russian foreign policy . . . attempted unsuccessfully to emulate."⁷⁶ Under Alexander, all final decisions in the formulation of foreign policy were under his immediate jurisdiction. Although foreign minister, Count Romanzoff could only counsel the Tsar on matters of foreign affairs. Alexander alone, maintained the supreme authority over all matters of importance relating to foreign policy.

After establishing initial friendly contact with Tsar Alexander and his foreign minister, Count Romanzoff, Adams brought up the issues of concern to the American nation, specifically that Napoleon's Continental System required Russia, an ally of France, to seize neutral ships. As a result of this, many American vessels were detained in Russia's ports and the ports of her allies. Adams' first effort as minister was to argue the American case of neutrality to the Emperor and attain the release of American ships. In addition, Adams offered his own opinion on the

disadvantages of Napoleon's Continental System for Russia itself. Adams wrote of this encounter in his diary;

I told him that setting aside all official character and responsibility, and speaking merely as an individual speculating upon public affairs, the advice I should give to his Excellency was, as soon as possible to convince the French government that the Continental System as they called it, and as they managed it, was promoting to the utmost extent the views of England; . . .⁷⁷

Though Adams' advice to the Emperor contained nothing Alexander had not already considered, Adams' insights into the European situation confirmed Alexander's resolve to break away from the alliance with France.

As a result of his persistence and the waning alliance between France and Russia, Adams was able to gain Russia's assistance in urging Denmark to release the American ships seized and detained in the Danish port of Holstein. This initial victory led to the further friendship between Russia and the United States and open commerce between the two nations. More important to the success of Adams' mission was the fact that this action was contrary to Napoleon's Continental System.

Throughout 1810, Tsar Alexander showed clear indications of pulling out of the French alliance. For its part, France continued to withhold valuable information from the Russian Court. This disintegrating relationship contributed to the success of Adams' mission. Despite these decisive events taking place on the European continent from 1809 to 1815, the actual diplomatic instructions to Adams

appeared simplistic and inessential to his present situation. The actual purpose of his mission to Russia was contained in the diplomatic instructions of previous ministries, Their basic nature being the insurance of "neutral commerce" for the United States within Russia's ports. However, in an era of tremendous commercial tension throughout Europe, Adams' task did not seem entirely simple.

While alliances throughout Europe remained tenuous, Alexander I reflected these divisions in matters of foreign policy. His foreign minister, Count Romanzoff, expounded the complex situation of European alliances when he communicated that the only apparent obstacle to a treaty of commerce between Russia and the United States was the "convulsed state of opinion at that period throughout the commercial world, which was such that 'it hardly seemed possible to agree to anything which had common sense in it.'"⁷⁸ While Romanzoff shaped Russia's policy in her alliance with France, Alexander increasingly showed hostility toward Napoleon's Continental System and gradually came to favor Great Britain. Thus, the only hope for the success of an American ministry in St. Petersburg rested on the favorable inclinations of the Tsar himself and the rejection of the Continental System. As Adams viewed the state of affairs, "a century may not give us another" chance at forming a treaty of commerce.⁷⁹

Possessing the elemental instructions of establishing

friendship between the two nations, Adams assumed a broad understanding of his duties toward his position. Despite the fact that he represented "a third-rate nation, radical in its politics and the ideological antithesis of Tsardom," the initial reception of Adams into the Court of the Tsar was both open and friendly.⁸⁰

Alexander and Adams shared an admiration and respect for each other and met frequently during daily promenades to share their knowledge and love of science. Adams' benevolence for Alexander was, no doubt, influenced by the Emperor's "decided pro-American policy, coupled with a resistance to British influence."⁸¹ Adams wrote of the young Tsar that he was, "highly distinguished, young, hansom, elegant, . . . [and possessed a] spirit of benevolence and humanity."⁸² After several years of service at the Russian court, Adams reiterated his earlier assessment, "I place great reliance upon the moderation, equity, and humanity of the Emperor Alexander, and I freely confess I have confidence in nothing else."⁸³

The mutual respect between Adams and Alexander led to the further cementing of the two nations. Alexander possessed a great deal of regard for Adams and the United States due to their courageous opposition to Great Britain and their implementation of Enlightenment philosophy in the formation of government. Lord Castlereagh, British foreign minister, summed up Alexander's attitude toward the United

States when he quipped, "I fear the Emperor of Russia is half an American."⁸⁴

Castlereagh had much to fear at this point since a successful commercial relationship continued to thrive between the United States and Russia. In the years between 1808 and 1812, American ships appeared more frequently than any other vessels in the ports of Russia. This trade accounted for ten percent of all American exports.⁸⁵ However, this direct violation of the Continental System helped lead to the dissolution of relations between France and Russia. As the Franco-Russian alliance declined, the relationship between the United States and Russia expanded. This was, no doubt, aided by the personal relationship of Adams and Alexander. Their mutual respect for each other and their respective countries led to a trusting friendship which aided in diplomatic discussions.

Though the pro-French position of Count Romanzoff prolonged the French alliance, Tsar Alexander's drive to dissolve the alliance in favor of free trade became official by the end of 1810. Adams' grandson, Henry Adams, referred to the dissolution of the Franco-Russian alliance as a "Napoleonic victory [for Adams] in its magnitude and completeness."⁸⁶ However, the move was the direct decision of the Tsar whose increasing animosity toward the French grew with bitter resolve. Without implementation of any significant diplomacy, Alexander's action was to the

benefit of the United States and her open trade with Russia. However, to the credit of Adams, he remained gracious and impartial to all parties concerned with the dissolution of the alliance, though privately declaring Russia's rejection of Napoleon a United States victory.

In St. Petersburg, Adams confronted the European world and Romanticism in all its extremes. Adams noted with daily disdain and superiority the diplomats at court. Adams' disgust over the opulence of his contemporaries at court resulted from his refusal to accept immoral actions and disregard for proper government service in himself and others. The notion of superiority stemmed from Adams' sense of Puritanical mission and his belief in the pre-eminent position of the American nation over the entire world.

Adams' experience of Napoleonic Europe solidified his resolve against what he considered to be the evils of Europe and enhanced his deep desire to prevent America from being adversely influenced by its European cousins. He continually cautioned Americans "to avoid the atmosphere of Europe, because it was infectious to morals; inciting to dissipation, intemperance, sensuality, and idleness; and destructive of the will of self control and self denial."⁸⁷

These elements of Romanticism ran against Adams' entire ideological framework of both man's supreme knowledge and the proper attitude of nations. Seeing European leaders such as Napoleon, hardened Adams' resolve against the forces

of Romanticism. While the western world succumbed to the Romantic Movement, Adams strived for the maintenance of the right. The right according to his life-long efforts was the ideology of natural law and the American experience.

Adams truly believed that since the American nation occupied the position of being the first and only true nation established from natural law, America and Adams were superior to the nations of Europe and their citizens. Adams wrote of a French General Pardo at court; he "is often misinformed, and, as to the history and constitutional organization of the country, quite ignorant. So are all the foreigners whom I meet here. They seldom think it worth their while to make enquiries."⁸⁸ Though this elitist attitude failed to establish any close friendships in St. Petersburg, Adams wished nothing more than to maintain his principles, rather than embrace the prospect of popularity at court. However, this superiority over European diplomats made him ever more attractive to the Russian Tsar who appreciated Adams assurance about his country and confidence in his own principles.

As a diplomat, Adams' every move could find cause in his nation, principles, providence and duty. In dealings over any issue, Adams' constant belief in the America vision for the future "dogged him day and night" and filled his diplomacy with a sense of mission.⁸⁹ "With considerable success Adams attempted to give the world confidence in the

validity of an American political system."⁹⁰ His every action and command over himself in his life and principles reflected his strong sense of his country. Like a Christian leading a moral life of devotion as an example to all heathens, Adams lived the life of the ideal American of reason while stationed at St. Petersburg.

Diplomacy, as practiced by Adams, was an effort to embody universal truths and natural rights of individuals. While confronting the political and economic issues of the European nations during the Napoleonic Era, Adams' methods were "guided by a vision of the moral dignity of [American] national interest" and its universal significance.⁹¹ In decisions of any significance, Adams sought the use of his reason and the principles of his nation to discover the right course to pursue. His diplomatic struggles were filled with the implementation of morality and human truths which he believed were "applicable to all human beings" at any point in time, and "that there exists a moral order in the universe which God directs."⁹² However noble his attempts were to establish diplomacy based upon the ideals of the Enlightenment, Adams could not escape the internal factions and passions among his contemporaries. He detested these passions within himself and hoped others would see the irrationality of basing one's decisions on the basis of one's passions. His years in St. Petersburg hardened his resolve against such motives to action which he considered

the primary cause of all the evils confronting the world.

While tensions continued to mount between Russia and France, American ships continued to flock to Russia's ports. With the main purpose of Adams' mission attained, he now turned to other important issues between the two countries. Though the issues surrounding the "freedom of the seas" continued to occupy much of his diplomacy while in St. Petersburg, Adams suggested to Madison the implementation of an official commercial treaty between the two nations, a proposal which the President supported. On 11 June 1811, Adams wrote to the Secretary of State, Monroe, ". . . the idea and desire had occurred to me of cementing still further [Russian] amity by a treaty of commerce."⁹³ This official treaty was encouraged by Count Romanzoff who declared his acceptance of such a treaty, "which he had so many years entertained" as a means to form a balance against the overbearing power of Great Britain.⁹⁴

In addition to this, Adams, acting independently of instructions from Washington, pressed for a delineation of a northwest boundary for the United States territory in Alaska. No precise boundary had been set by either nation between their holdings in the Alaskan territory. Though both Russia and the United States wished to negotiate on these issues, complete resolution would not occur until the 1820s due to the uncertainty of peace between France and Russia and between the United States and Great Britain.

Once the issues of free trade were made known to the Emperor, Adams requested of President Madison that he be permitted to return to the United States. Though this was granted in the form of an appointment to a position on the Supreme Court, in light of the dramatic events of 1812 his sense of duty prevented Adams' from leaving Europe.

As tensions between France and Russia mounted in the Spring of 1812, the Tsar confessed to Adams that though he had gone to great lengths "to avoid the conflict it must come" and "that he would not commence the war, but that he expected to be attacked and that every indication was of war."⁹⁵ In this conflict, Adams clearly favored the nation of his ministry and considered Russia, like the United States, to be outside of evil European ambitions. In a letter to a friend, Adams spoke of this continental tradition, "The spirit of ambition, of glory and of conquest burns in Europe with an intenseness beyond all former example. France and England are equally inflamed with it and consuming under it."⁹⁶ As Adams witnessed these events, he grew to believe in the importance of the American and Russian efforts to defend themselves in the wake of European aggression. He viewed Russia as "the only nation not affected by the new ferment" of Romanticism which acted in a "temperament in complete accord with the conservative interests of his Empire."⁹⁷ Adams felt akin to Russia despite their different philosophies of government.

During the invasion of Russia, Adams stood in awe of the young tsar who took to the field defending his nation in Washingtonian style. In Adams' view, Tsar Alexander reached heroic proportions. He referred to the Emperor as, "the only true moderating influence in Europe, 'The Titus of the Age, the Delight of Human Kind.'"⁹⁸ Both Russia and the United States had been unjustly violated by their respective enemies and each would defend itself and survive. Though separated from the conflict between his own country and Great Britain, Adams found parallels in the Russian experience. He believed Russia and the United States represented the "peaceful and humane ranged against revolution and despotism." And Alexander, despite his autocratic position, represented the defense of the Enlightenment "much to the relief of our species . . . from the threat of future revolution."⁹⁹

As the French troops advanced towards Russia in the Spring of 1812, the United States Congress debated a declaration of war with Great Britain. Frustration over the constant threat of impressment and outrage over the British Orders in Council caused the majority in Congress to view war as the only answer. When war was approved on 18 June 1812, Adams felt more than ever the potential dangers of men's "passions, prejudices, and partialities" in America, as well as, those of the evil European powers infringing upon the perseverance of the United States.¹⁰⁰ Henry

Adams reiterated his grandfather's words when he described the War Hawk minority in Congress as men who "by force of will and intellect . . . held their own, and dragged Congress forward in spite of itself."¹⁰¹

Before knowing of the American declaration, Adams professed strong confidence in his nation's neutrality and wrote President Madison concerning the strong benefits of non-intervention. Adams felt American involvement in the moral corruption of European affairs at that moment in her early history would prove her undoing. He wanted America to develop as an independent, enlightened nation firmly placed in the world of nations. He sought American economic, political and, most importantly to Adams, social separation from Europe so that the United States could grow further and substantiate her own philosophy separate from that of Europe. Despite the obvious struggle with Great Britain, Adams continued to work toward development of his ideal America.

Initially, Adams felt a supreme sense of outrage and tragedy over the war and its possible cataclysmic outcomes. The worst of his fears, for himself and for his country would be the victory of Great Britain, thus ending the American nation. Adams also expressed his profound sadness on learning of the outbreak of the war since the reasons for its onset were no longer present. On 10 August 1812, Adams wrote his mother of this irony;

I . . . flattered myself that the revocation of the British Orders in Council, of which I had just been informed, would be known in the United States in season to prevent the war which I knew would otherwise be unavoidable. In this hope I have been disappointed.¹⁰²

The sharp irony of the British revocation of the Orders in Council continued to frustrate Adams as the year of empty negotiating lingered on. With both America and Russia involved in what he considered unjust war, Adams felt more than ever the ties binding America and Russia.

The War of 1812 signified a shift in the ideology of America's founding fathers. In this conflict, the 'neutral' American nation became an aggressive power fully engrossed in the toils of European conflicts. Though this proved to be an obvious breach of American principles as Adams saw them, he refused to accept the blatant facts surrounding the issue. Instead, Adams turned blame upon the War Hawk minority within Congress incapable of controlling their passions and the thoughtless Romantic spirit which caused the nations of Europe to act without reason. Leading this Romantic shift within the American congress was the young statesman from Kentucky, Henry Clay. Adams viewed his aggressive nature as a dangerous element of the times. He wrote, "Clay is an eloquent man, . . . He is, like almost all the eminent men of this country, only half educated. . . His morals, public and private, are loose, . . ." ¹⁰³

Clay and his lack of substantive reason, in Adams' perspective, was yet another example of the growing movement

of the early nineteenth century. "As early as 1814 [Adams] asserted that the catastrophe brought . . . upon Europe was a product of the spirit of the times to the inexorable drift of history, rather than of the rational wills of men."¹⁰⁴

Though Adams questioned the decisions of Henry Clay and the War Hawk members in Congress, their new objectives for the young American nation stimulated the majority. This new generation of Americans "radiated . . . a self-reliant, forward-looking energy" of their own separate from the enlightened principles which inspired the previous generation.¹⁰⁵ Early nineteenth century Americans came to advance the desire for the more tangible principles outlined in the ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The new focus rested in "the consolidation of a market economy and society, a liberal political structure and ideology, and a bourgeois culture of self-controlled individualism."¹⁰⁶ This turn toward material wealth was the direct antithesis of the ideals of the founding fathers and signified America's acceptance of the Romantic movement.

Though Adams expressed profound sadness at America's declaration of war, as an American his duty forced him to accept the policies of his nation, whether he believed them to be right or wrong. To accept the American declaration of war as a product of "rational wills" would have struck the very foundation of Adams' philosophy. Instead, Adams

rationalized the blame for America's conflict upon the British and her unjust Orders in Council which jeopardized American prosperity. Employing the argument of British moral injustice, Adams wrote his brother of the American cause, "If ever there was a just cause for war in the sight of Almighty God, this cause is on our side just. The essence of this cause is on the British side oppression, on our side personal liberty."¹⁰⁷

America's presence in a war with Great Britain, though initially distressing to Adams, raised his emotions in support of victory. Being the son of a patriot and the heir of revolutionary traditions, Adams grew to view the conflict in 1812 as a way for second generation Americans "of equalizing, and possibly even surpassing, the achievements of the Fathers."¹⁰⁸ A United States victory would enable young Americans to emerge out of the shadows of their fathers and forge their own unique identity as "heroes of the Republic."¹⁰⁹

As minister during his nation's involvement in the War of 1812, Adams confronted the delicate task of maintaining friendly relations with both France and Russia while being unaware of the United States' immediate actions. While America entered into war with England, Russia remained allied to her. A situation which could have appeared bleak became beneficial in light of the gracious actions of the Tsar. In addition, the United States government declined an

alliance with France, also at war with Great Britain, much to the relief of Adams whose position prior to knowledge of this could possibly have led to the dissolution of commercial relations with Russia, thus rendering his mission a complete failure.

The bond between the United States and Russia became increasingly friendly due to the immediate offer of the Tsar to serve as a mediator between America and Great Britain in their peace negotiations. This action offered at the start of hostilities, was promptly accepted by President Madison who quickly sent Albert Gallatin and James A. Bayard to St. Petersburg to be ready for negotiations. Secretary of State, Monroe's letter informing Adams of the President's acceptance read:

The President has been induced . . . without waiting for the decision of the British government, from a sincere desire to avail himself of every fair opportunity to conclude peace on just and reasonable conditions; to manifest his respect for the Emperor personally, and to avoid any delay which might otherwise result from our distance from the theater of the proposed negotiations.¹¹⁰

However, the British, preoccupied with accomplishing a peaceful settlement of the Napoleonic Wars against France, delayed in their acceptance of such a mediation from Russia. These negotiations upset Adams due to his concern that, "if England can make her own terms of peace in Europe, she will not be willing to take terms of peace from America."¹¹¹

As the year 1813 came to a close Adams and the newly arrived negotiators Gallatin and Bayard awaited approval

from Great Britain of the Tsar's mediation. Over a year passed before the British government "finally and positively refused to treat with the United States under the mediation of the Emperor of Russia."¹¹² By the next month, the British government expressed a willingness for a direct negotiation with the United States in a neutral location.

In March of 1814, Adams was appointed to lead the peace delegation at Ghent, thus closing his official duties at St. Petersburg. Upon taking leave of the city that had been his home for nearly five years, he wrote in his diary of the same apprehension which he had five years earlier when beginning his journey to Russia; ". . . the universal gloom of the prospect before me, would depress a mind of more sanguine complexion than mine."¹¹³ Adams had much to fear, for the peace negotiations would determine the future of the United States. Adams sought, more than anything, to keep the American nation and her ideals intact and apart from the powers of Europe. If successful, the second generation could surpass the work of their fathers by claiming once and for all, the independence of America from outside forces. Personally, Adams viewed his position in the peace negotiations as monumental to his career and to the sustenance of the United States.

Adams' diplomatic mission in St. Petersburg was equally a success and a failure for a variety of reasons. His

success as a diplomat rested in his strong friendship and perseverance with Alexander and his understanding of and respect for the Russian nation. In matters pertaining directly to relations between the two countries, his mission was a success. He opened trade between the two nations, assisted in the release of American ships and cargo from Russian ports, established a successful commercial treaty, and helped bring about the discussion of boundary disputes.

The failure of the mission rested with Adams' inability to prevent American involvement in the war against Great Britain. Representing the only full ministry within Europe at the time, Adams was unable to influence the British to remove the Orders in Council, so dangerous to the stability of United States commerce. Adams also failed to consider the new forces at work within Europe and America. He failed to understand the European powers because of his closed focus upon the United States' ideal without regard for the emerging tide of change that was the Romantic Period.

Conclusion

The early nineteenth century, particularly the period surrounding the War of 1812, caused Adams to defend, more than ever before, the American cause for the benefit of all mankind. His supreme confidence in the principles of the foundation of the American government stemmed from the very core of his eighteenth century views and ideals. While struggling to turn the ideals into realities, as diplomat to the Court of Alexander I, Adams confronted the rising wave of a counter movement which eventually overtook the Enlightenment. This movement was Romanticism, which elevated exactly what John Quincy Adams attempted all his life to suppress; passionate instincts, intimate feeling, and inner reality. His years in St. Petersburg, played out against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Era, only led him further toward a rigid resolve against such irrational behaviors in favor of reason and order. While the nations of Europe and America succumbed to this new wave of understanding, Adams stood proudly, if fruitlessly, against the temperaments of a new age.

Adams' experience in Russia helped fortify his resolve against the counter current of Romantic ideals. As Alexander struggled to maintain Russian traditions in the face of Napoleonic Europe, Adams sought to uphold the ideal

of American superiority and isolationist traditions of the eighteenth century. Witnessing Alexander's heroic attempts to avert the forces of change and invasion inspired Adams in his own personal quest to maintain American principles.

This task of preserving eighteenth century principles in a nineteenth century world proved highly difficult to Adams. Maintaining revolutionary ideals, inalienable rights, and struggling to keep the true American philosophy intact became a task next to impossible in light of the forces which had already transformed the United States. The tides of change and progress in early Nineteenth century America, proved a constant threat to Adams' ideals regarding the proper American role in the entire scheme of world events.

Realities of national survival clouded the image of the pristine society laid out by the founding fathers of American government. Though Adams attempted to uphold the ideal, the raw truths of the American nation could not be avoided. America had fought against Great Britain for her independence and had relied heavily upon the aid and efforts of France and the Netherlands in order to succeed. Though Adams refused to admit it, America existed through and because of Europe. Adams' ideal of a neutral, independent, haven of human liberties could never exist in the true affairs of world politics and commerce. Since its origins as a colony, America had turned continually to Europe for

her economic survival. For the United States to have become completely isolated from the realities of world affairs as Adams wished, would have prevented the national growth and prosperity so characteristic of America in the early nineteenth century and a part of one Romantic ideal of dynamism of power.

Though Adams' dream of a free and neutral nation serving the world through its sheer example remained just that, his ideals prevail because they represent the original purpose for America as a direct product of the Enlightenment. It is highly fitting for the son of the well-known patriot to try and uphold the golden age of his father's generation. This generation, so engrossed in the Age of Reason, felt itself under obligation to mankind to uphold the grand cause of liberty. Adams considered this one great American cause as his personal duty and as the duty of every intellectual educated in the teachings of the Age of Reason. The essence of patriotic and Puritan ideals produced the very meaning to his life and purpose. He embodied the ideal visions of thousands of intellectuals throughout time within the context of one national ideal sanctioned and protected by God. In short,

Adams was under obligation not only to Locke and his whole associated tradition of the eighteenth century, but through Locke he was also obliged to the 'long tradition of medieval political thought, back to St. Thomas, in which the reality of moral restraints on power, the responsibility of rulers to the communities which they ruled, and the subordination of government to law were axiomatic.¹¹⁴

Thus, his shoulders weighed heavily with many lesser duties all comprising one great duty: the duty to preserve the United States as the supreme example to the world of the ideal society for all mankind to adopt, defend and preserve.

Though Adams continued to believe in the American ideal long after the War of 1812, his years in Russia proved to be years of loss to America's sense of world mission. With the declaration of war, America had forfeited its neutrality and commitment to the original purpose of its creation. Though Adams continued to strive for the American ideal as he perceived it, the march of time proceeded to point out other truths foreign to Adams' eighteenth century mind, but key to the development of the United States.

Though the formation of government highlighted the principles of reason, the reality of America rested in her passionate quest for prosperity. This became an accepted fact in the early nineteenth century, even though Adams maintained the belief in the ideals America professed for the betterment of mankind.

America's victory in the War of 1812 succeeded in shifting the American nation away from the ideals of the foundation of government. It brought an end to the Anglo-American conflict and virtually kept the United States out of European affairs for one hundred years. The Peace of Ghent became one of Adams' greatest personal triumphs. With the help of his fellow negotiators, he had kept America; her

philosophy and her borders intact and separate, from European entanglements. He enabled the transmission of open trade with Russia and had avoided any alliances with the nations of Europe. He had established American neutrality for the benefit of America's future.

However, Adams could not divert the spirit of the Western world. While Europe encountered the forces of aggression, America was transformed through her own national ideological conflict which severed the old ideals of the eighteenth century from the emerging tides of nineteenth century Romanticism. While Adams vehemently defended the principles of the founding fathers, America had already begun to adapt to the economic, political and social realities of statehood in accord with the nations of Europe.

Though Adams upheld the ideals of the Enlightenment after the War of 1812, the majority of his fellow Americans could no longer support the ideal. Realities of war, economic survival and the true human spirit did not destroy the American nation, but it did point out basic American truths. America, or any other country based upon philosophy and logic was not better than other nations. America, while professing inalienable rights and natural laws, continued to harbor slaves. And the mere fact that her existence resulted through the violence and passions of revolutionaries represented a direct conflict with Adams' principles in regard to American independence.

Maintaining the missionary zeal so characteristic of Adams' Puritan and patriotic background ultimately failed, as the founding fathers and the movement they represented ceased to dominate the intellectual world. Though men like Adams spent their entire lifetimes trying to keep the spirit of the American Revolution and the Age of Reason alive, the passage of time and the realities of growing movements of the mind limited their success.

The efforts of Adams at St. Petersburg coincide with the slow disappearance of eighteenth century intellectuals as a dominant force within Europe and America. Though Adams' pristine service to his nation fully embodied the American ideal of public service, America's vision of prosperity no longer focused on a world of foreign republics, but rather, a world of foreign trade. Adams himself contributed to this emerging philosophy by opening up a successful trading relationship with Russia. However, Adams' reason for doing this rested in the belief of the Jeffersonians that the spread of successful American commerce abroad would inspire the nations of the world toward the republican form of government. The early nineteenth century with its Romantic ideals and the ravages of war and aggression, transformed the American nation toward the tangible motives of profit.

This new philosophy of America, inspired by the War of 1812, left Adams with the firm resolve to gain back the

America of the founding fathers. His future years of service were transformed by his last diplomatic experience abroad. As Secretary of State to President Monroe in the 1820s, Adams stringent policies rejecting the influences of Europe were well documented through the formation of the Monroe Doctrine. This policy of European non-intervention in the North American continent stood as the synthesis of Adams' firm rejection of the evils of Europe and a direct reaction against the Romantic Movement.

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