The Triumph of Militia Diplomacy: John Adams in the Netherlands, 1780-1782

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THE TRIUMPH OF MILITIA DIPLOMACY

JOHN ADAMS IN THE NETHERLANDS

1780-1782

Sister Mary Briant Foley, SSND

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Born in southeastern Wisconsin, Sister Mary Briant Foley, SSND, is a graduate of St. Mary Grade and High Schools at Burlington, Wisconsin. She taught for two years in a rural school after graduation from the Racine-Kenosha Normal School. After entering the congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sister completed her work for the Bachelor of Arts degree at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, taught for several years on the junior high level in Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and, from 1957 to 1962, served as principal of St. Bernadette School in Rockford, Illinois.

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In any list of Revolutionary War leaders the name of John Adams would command a prominent position. Immediately would come to mind his role in the pre- and early years of the conflict when he struggled manfully in Massachusetts and later in the Continental Congress against the wiles of the English and the timidity of his countrymen. Few would fail to recall his role as co-negotiator with Franklin and Jay at the peace convention in Paris. But strangely enough, his role as American minister plenipotentiary to the United Provinces—the work for which he most wished to be remembered and through which he believed that he had rendered the greatest service to his country—would be recalled but vaguely and fleetingly.

There are partial explanations of this. Adams, himself, was prevented, by the needs of his country and its continued claims upon his time and energy, from fulfilling his desire "to collect together in one view my little negotiations." Both his contemporaries and subsequent historians have been satisfied to acknowledge the immediate benefits of these negotiations without delving too deeply for details on their procurement. That indifference could, among other things, have been related to an awareness that some of the pertinent Adams correspondence was not available. Although the official correspondence and many of the more private letters of his mission to the Netherlands had been published, there remained a reasonable presumption that a detailed account of the work he undertook in Holland would require access to many other letters to friends which had not been published. Very recently this deficiency was remedied by the releasing of the Adams Family Papers.
Investigations show that the securing of recognition for the new republic, the successful floating of a loan, and the signing of a treaty of amity and commerce were tasks to try the hardiest soul. Because of an intricately involved political system and an all-encompassing dependence upon commerce, the Dutch were little inclined to embroil themselves in further difficulties with England. When Adams arrived in Amsterdam, he discovered that the mynheers knew practically nothing of America. He responded by becoming a propaganda agent par excellence and pitted his abilities in that field against an active and well-organized pro-English propaganda group. To complicate his problem the Prince and many of the highest officers of the country were pro-English. The remaking of Dutch opinion was time-consuming and frustrating. Although aided by La Vauguyon, the French ambassador, in developing anti-English sentiment, Adams found that same ambassador determined to prevent him from undertaking any measure to gain recognition for America. In this La Vauguyon was only acting upon orders from the French Foreign Minister who thoroughly distrusted Adams.

From the beginning of his mission Adams was subjected to the machinations of those who should have supported him--Congress, his fellow-minister, Franklin, and the ministers of America's ally, France. Because of the peculiarities of his character and his stubborn advocacy of a militia style of diplomacy which was anathema at Versailles, he alienated both Franklin and the powerful French Foreign Minister, Vergennes. Vergennes, indifferently supported by Franklin, brought strong influence to bear on Congress to have Adams recalled or restricted. Congress, badly torn by internal strife, was in no position to defend Adams and rather tamely submitted to
French insinuations. Only the slowness of transatlantic communications permitted Adams the opportunity to achieve his purpose before he learned that his powers were severely curtailed. In spite of "the fury of enemies, as well as of elements, the subtlety and arrogance of allies, and, what has been worse than all, the jealousy, envy, and little pranks of friends and copatriots," Adams was successful. His accomplishment is still considered quite a feat by the men who have studied it. "A perfect revolution had thus taken place in the inner politics of the United Provinces, the English party having lost ground completely, and the Prince of Orange being compelled to yield to public sentiment, which had grown decidedly anti-English."¹ "He managed to write a brilliant chapter in America's diplomatic history."² His militia system of diplomacy did secure significant advantages for the United States. It is the purpose of this paper to reconstruct those "little negotiations" as they unfolded in the two years Adams spent in the Netherlands.


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"When I go to heaven I shall look down over the battlements with pleasure upon the stars and stripes wantoning in the wind at The Hague." And the fiercely patriotic and oftentimes truculent John Adams could not resist adding, "There is another triumph in the case, sweeter than that over our enemies. . . . It is the triumph of stubborn independence. Independence of friends and foes." In these few words Adams summed up his twenty-six month sojourn as a militia diplomat in the Netherlands. It was largely because of his stubborn independence that he first had gone to the Netherlands and it was largely his stubborn independence that brought success to his struggles to win Dutch friendship, a substantial loan, and a treaty of commerce.

For these tasks Adams thought the traditional style of diplomacy inadequate. Its accepted practice was to dispatch ministers only to those foreign courts at which there was a solid expectation that they would be received. Similarly an application for a loan, other than as part of a treaty of alliance, would be made only through the proper business channels. Adams advocated and, in the Netherlands, practiced the disruption of both rules. When called to task for his unorthodox methods by Robert Livingston, Minister of Foreign Affairs, he baptized his system with his retort that diplomatists might "consider us a sort of militia and hold us . . . in some degree of contempt; but wise men know that militia sometimes
gain victories over regular troops even by departing from the rules.\(^3\) In its simplest terms, militia diplomacy was a system whereby straightforward, unequivocating ministers in quest of recognition and financial aid were sent uninvited to foreign courts. John Adams proudly remained its principal exponent and its chief practitioner. But this penchant for the militia system brought him into conflict with the very men from whom he otherwise should have expected the greatest co-operation. These primarily were the Comte de Vergennes, the French Foreign Secretary, who tried his utmost to have Adams replaced, and Doctor Franklin, the only duly recognized American minister in Europe at the time.

Franklin, with whom Adams was originally expected to work more or less in tandem, viewed this type of diplomacy with a sort of horror. "A virgin state should preserve its virgin character, and not go about suitoring for alliances, but wait with decent dignity for the application of others."\(^4\) On several occasions throughout the period of Adams' activities in the Netherlands some action of the volatile New Englander would spark a verbal exchange on their views between the two. Fortunately for Adams' pride, his system was successful with the Dutch and did secure both recognition and a loan. He very correctly argued that these objects could never have been accomplished by the traditional methods. "If after receiving such advice and exhortations as I did, I had suspended operations to request instructions, I should have been forbidden to do what has been done."\(^5\) Indeed if he had followed the traditional system, he would not have gone to the Netherlands in the first place as that country was not requesting a minister and the commission Adams had received was to participate in a peace negotiation.
Even this commission he held only because Vergennes' diplomatic leverage had been insufficient to outbalance militia advocates and sectional interest groups in Congress in the summer of 1779.

Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, the French Foreign Secretary and presumed co-negotiator with Adams at the awaited peace convention, was, like Franklin, the embodiment of traditional diplomacy. His previous experience with the American commissioners in France, of whom too many had been of the militia persuasion, convinced him that the security of his own diplomatic negotiations, as well as those of his ally, depended on confining the conduct of American diplomacy to Franklin's able hands. Accordingly, in the fall of 1778, when the first possibility of a peace settlement arose, the Comte inquired of Franklin whether he possessed full powers to treat with England in case of a general pacification. After carefully studying Franklin's commission, the two ministers agreed that it did not confer that power on the American plenipotentiary. In December, 1778, Vergennes, therefore, directed his ambassador in Washington to secure the requisite authorization for Franklin. Dutifully, Gerard informed the President of Congress that a negotiation for peace was possible and that the king desired Congress to grant their plenipotentiary full instructions and extensive powers for taking part in the negotiations. At the time, however, Congress was so preoccupied with internecine conflicts that the request went unheeded. Several weeks later Gerard submitted a second brief but urgent request.

Congress then proceeded to draw up instructions but shortly became involved in a dispute over the article on boundaries. Gerard reminded them that France's guarantees under the alliance applied only to independence
per se and not to boundaries. Any decision concerning these could not be made unilaterally but must be decided jointly by the allies. When his first remarks proved ineffectual, Gerard again memorialized Congress and insisted that not only the welfare of the country but the general good of the alliance required an immediate appointment. Gerard's anxiety was based on his fear that a settlement would soon transpire but that, until they had granted Franklin full powers, Congress would neither look kindly upon nor easily accept any negotiation made by the Doctor. Gerard personally agreed with his chief that a proper procedure would be that Franklin negotiate under French auspices and then transmit the results for ratification. He was, however, firmly convinced that the members of Congress would not view it in that light. On the contrary, he wrote, they husbanded power with so much reserve and jealousy that they would very probably consider it a crime if Franklin were to negotiate prior to authorization. Franklin's reputation in Philadelphia did not appear to Gerard strong enough to withstand the charge.

Negotiations plodded on through May and June, 1779. The Congress occupied itself with the details of instructions for the peace negotiator, and Gerard occupied himself with attempts to secure a satisfactory minister unbound by detailed instructions. Franklin was the man in mind. In mid-July, the opportunity arose for Gerard to inject remarks concerning the French court's approbation of the Doctor and the insinuation that, with such a person as minister, the court would have no further occasion to withhold any information which might be of mutual interest. But the struggle to secure Franklin's appointment was a losing battle and Gerard knew it. A few days later he informed Vergennes that neither the anti-Gallicans nor his own
followers had much confidence in the Doctor and a new man would be sent from the states as plenipotentiary for peace. 15

Gerard next concentrated on the instructions being drawn for the future minister. Due to his influence, Congress changed from the demand that sovereignty and independence must be "acknowledged" to the lesser stipulation that they were to be "assured" before the treaty was drawn. 16 He also secured provision for a truce under specified conditions and for greater moderation in the demands on boundaries and fisheries. By August 13, a committee completed drafting the instructions, and some member furnished Gerard with a copy before they were presented to the Congress. The ambassador was not completely satisfied but felt that on the whole they were not unfavorable to France. 17 Congress debated and then unanimously approved of the instructions for negotiating peace. Congress immediately after prepared instructions for a minister to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Great Britain. 18 A summary of these instructions, also, Gerard procured. He forwarded both sets to the French Foreign Secretary. Incorrectly, however, he stated that the plenipotentiary would communicate his instructions to the French ministry and act in concert with it. 19 Such a directive was not included in the set given to Adams and occasioned one of the first clashes between that minister and Vergennes.

Once the instructions were settled, the choice of a minister invited extensive caballing. Gerard and his partisans favored Jay and the anti-Gallicans supported John Adams. On September 24 a proposal was brought to charge Adams and Franklin jointly with the peace commission but too many members opposed and the meeting adjourned. The following day Adams and Jay
were nominated. Franklin was not mentioned by either party. Adams' cause was aided when his partisans produced in the assembly hall a courtesy farewell letter from Vergennes to Adams on the latter's quitting France the previous spring. Because of this letter some members were inclined to form a highly favorable impression of Adams and to believe that he would be acceptable to Vergennes. Nevertheless, the first ballotings ended in a deadlock between Adams and Jay. Then, by secret prearrangement, a resolution was passed to appoint a minister to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with Spain. By this maneuver Congress could elect Jay as minister to Spain and Adams as minister plenipotentiary for peace and for a commercial treaty with England. On October 20, the two commissions and the accompanying instructions were transmitted to Adams. Although he had spent the entire fall in Boston and Braintree and knew very little of the intentions and desires of a goodly number of the members of Congress, he accepted on November 4 and prepared to sail directly from Boston on November 13, in the French frigate Sensible.

The selection of minister was one at which Vergennes could scarcely be overjoyed. His personal knowledge of Adams' passion for candor and complete distaste for diplomatic niceties boded ill for future co-operation between the two men. Although Vergennes, in 1778-1779, had professed no interest in the internal frictions among the American commissioners, he was well aware that Adams had favored Arthur Lee in the unpleasantness between Lee and Franklin. Furthermore, the correspondence of Gerard had given him a distorted picture of the sentiments of Adams. This for two reasons.

Gerard received most of his information from his partisans and so forwarded
biased opinions. Also, he frequently had reference to Sam Adams but used only the family name and the resulting ambiguity further discredited Adams in the Count's eyes.\textsuperscript{25} That Vergennes had been prejudiced by these sources was evidenced in his original instructions to the Chevalier de la Luzerne when dispatching him to replace Gerard in Philadelphia in July, 1779.

We clearly perceive that an opposition party exists in Congress which if not sold to England, nevertheless favors the views of that power, and which seeks to establish and to bring into credit principles diametrically opposed to those which form the basis and spirit of our treaties with the United States.\textsuperscript{26} It is indubitable that, among them, may be counted Mr. John Adams.

Adams possibly had some premonition of Vergennes' attitude. Years later when writing his autobiography, Adams noted that he had realized that Congress had disappointed the French ministry both by its failure to appoint Franklin as minister for peace and by its commission for a commercial treaty with England. He evidently did not realize that Vergennes considered him pro-English and, thereby, he missed the major point of Vergennes' antipathy and a primary cause of that minister's great concern over the Adams' appointment. He quickly "determined to proceed with the utmost caution, deliberation, and prudence; to do nothing which would excite the smallest jealousy in the French court. . . ."\textsuperscript{27} Consequently, upon his arrival in Paris (February 9), he arranged for a formal call upon Vergennes and was courteously received on February 11, 1780. The next day Adams very correctly submitted in writing a summary of the nature of his commissions and promised to "take no steps of consequence" in fulfillment of these commissions "without consulting his Majesty's ministers." At the same time he requested the Count's opinion as to whether he should acquaint the British ministry with his commission for peace, publish it in the gazettes, or whether he should
"remain on the reserve" as he had done thus far. At any time these suggestions would have troubled Vergennes. Coming as they did while England was secretly fishing for separate negotiations with Spain and the French ministry itself was discouraged by the ill-luck of Admiral d'Estaing at Savannah, the propositions worried Vergennes in the extreme. Nor was the Foreign Secretary mollified by Adams' maladroit wording of a request for permission to reside in France. In spite of his good intentions of using "caution, deliberation, and prudence," Adams aggravated by informing the Comte that neither commission, instruction, nor intimation of Congress dictated his residence in any particular place or country.

On his part, Vergennes thoroughly ruffled Adams' temper. In answer to the questions posed by Adams, he insisted that the minister keep his mission secret, above all to the court of London—a point in which Adams tentatively acquiesced but later took issue. More immediately he was irritated by Vergennes' blunt refusal to speak further of official business until Gerard's return as "he is probably the bearer of your instructions and he will certainly have it in his power to give me explanations concerning the nature and extent of your commissions." Incensed at the implication, but determined to appear cool, Adams sent copies of his commissions and that of Francis Dana, secretary to the American peace commission. Nevertheless, the self-righteous New Englander resented being thought ignorant of the usages of diplomacy and determined to prove to Vergennes that he did know what was proper and that he was not going to be cavalierly treated. With the pointed remark that he presumed Vergennes would "not consider it proper that I should communicate them," he declined to give any information regarding his
instructions, other than that they did not militate against the treaties with France. 33 Aside from the insulting nature of Vergennes' remarks, Adams was most anxious that the court of France should not know his instructions as he was dissatisfied with the sections on boundaries and fisheries. He rightly surmised that Vergennes would urge him to settle for the very minimum those instructions would allow. Even more disastrous, he considered Vergennes capable of giving the information to the British negotiators and encouraging them to seek more than Adams intended to relinquish. On his part, Adams was determined to stretch the instructions to their maximum. 34 Thus within a fortnight of his arrival a mutual distrust between French and American ministers developed.

On the occasion of transmitting his commissions, Adams called to Vergennes' attention the fact that all America knew of his mission, and, in all probability, so did England. 35 An effort to conceal the information appeared to him pointless. Unable to assail the justice of the argument, Vergennes promised to publish the peace commission in the official gazette when Adams was presented to the king and royal family. 36 The American minister would then be free to give it greater publicity through the Dutch papers. (Vergennes reserved for himself the right to see the proposed article before Adams transmitted it to the gazettes.) The commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce was explicitly excluded from any permission to publish. Vergennes counselled great precaution that no information relative to that commission should reach England. His closing remark on the matter, "You will no doubt easily feel the motives which induce me to advise you to take this precaution, and it would be needless to explain them," remained in
the back of Adams' mind for three months before erupting in a far more fiery exchange.

For the time being Adams agreed to Vergennes' plans on publication although he failed to see the purpose of concealing the commercial treaty commission. He was of the opinion that the United States had as much right to form a commercial treaty as to negotiate a peace. On March 7, 1780, he was presented to the king, but the promised article in the official Gazette de France failed to materialize. As Adams was honor bound to insert no notice on his own behalf in any paper prior to the official announcement, he searched the columns of every issue until the wait became unbearable. On the twenty-first, he inquired of Vergennes whether the omission were an oversight or due to a change of plans with which he was unacquainted. Ten days later, Vergennes found time to explain that upon inquiry he had learned that placing an article in the Gazette de France was not the custom, and that, to avoid singularity, he had not inserted the account of Adams' presentation. If Adams desired, Vergennes would have a copy of the draft article he now enclosed published in the unofficial Mercure de France and then Adams could have it repeated in the foreign gazettes. Adams would have preferred the bolder plan of communicating his powers immediately to the English but bowed in the name of peace. He immediately forwarded information on the commission to Edmund Jenings at Brussels and suggested to him that he have some paragraphs from Dutch gazettes inserted into the English papers. In fact, he was to keep the commission in the public mind by references to it now and then. Jenings was, of course, to avoid using Adams' name as the originator of these articles.
Dissatisfied with marking time until peace negotiations got underway—
an event of which he saw no immediate indications—Adams began casting about
for other interests. On the whole these were so difficult to find and his
activities so limited that he inquired of Lovell, the most active member
of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, whether Congress intended to keep him
in Europe. He complained, "A situation so idle and inactive is not agreeable
to my genius." He had very little in common with Franklin and never
troubled to communicate his commission or very much of his business to his
older colleague. For a time Arthur Lee and Ralph Izard were in Paris
and Adams enjoyed his discussions and disagreements with them. The pre-
ponderance of his time he devoted to collecting pertinent information for the
benefit of Congress and to publishing anything he could for the benefit of
Europe. To the President of Congress he addressed letters by the score,
sometimes writing three or four in one day. In addition to those things
which he heard, or read, or surmised and passed on to Philadelphia, he
clipped any amount of materials from the assortment of papers and pamphlets
which he procured. Additional information he solicited from whomever he
could. To La Fayette he expressed the view that neither of them could render
Congress a "more useful service" than to collect intelligence "with precision
and transmit it without delay."

A task equally important, to his mind, was the publishing of true
information to confute the false within Europe. Adams deplored England's
ability to give "her fictions the color of probability . . . and to fabricate
and export large quantities of this merchandise," particularly as "she finds
more customers to take them off her hands than she ought, considering how
illicit the traffic is."50 He early applied to Edme Genet, editor of the Mercure de France and intimate of the court, for the "exact truth" to counteract the large quantities of political lies being spread.51 Genet laid the request before Vergennes who directed that Adams be invited to seek his information directly from the Foreign Secretary who would be ready to satisfy his inquiries.52 Vergennes apparently saw greater advantages in supplying Adams with accurate information than in permitting him to siphon off bits from whence he would. Adams in turn sent some pieces to be printed in Genet's Mercure but preferred to secure publication in Dutch and English papers. Entre to Dutch publications could be managed easily by F. W. C. Dumas53 at The Hague as he was personally acquainted with a large number of the editors of the most influential papers in that country. Adams' closest collaborator in all this work was Edmund Jenings at Brussels.54 Not only did Jenings have Adams' commission published but innumerable other pieces which were sent to him for that purpose. Jenings, through a friend in London, could secure the printing of many articles in the English papers. This appealed greatly to Adams who rejoiced at the good effect it had in France and more particularly in America to see such things in English.55 On occasion Adams would send some of his reflections to be inserted "in the name of a Dutchman, Swiss, Frenchman, Spaniard, or American or whom you will" just so the sentiments they contained would "reach the eyes of Englishmen."56 Adams offered apologies for laying burdens on Jenings "without number" but excused the imposition because "I cannot and will not be idle. I think we are saving our country in this way."57 Jenings, in turn, encouraged Adams to have his remarks on various topics translated into French and sent to the
different courts of Europe and to the leading men of Holland where he was sure they would do much good. 58

That the irascible but proudly patriotic and boundlessly energetic Adams could remain in France indefinitely without giving or taking offense was too much to expect of either Adams or Vergennes. Congress' resolution of March 18, 1780 depreciating loan-office certificates at the rate of forty to one occasioned the first outbreak of hostilities. Early in June, M. de Chaumont, friend and landlord of Franklin and respected figure at the court, fearing that the resolution of March 18 would seriously affect French commercial interests, called upon Adams to discuss it. Adams contended that the policy was "wise and just" and that France had no cause for complaint. France, he argued, derived great good from the American Revolution and, actually, was under an obligation to the United States as England would be too powerful for the House of Bourbon alone. These were hardly sentiments calculated to endear him to the persons with whom he was supposed to cooperate. Chaumont was indignant and forwarded a report of the conversation to Vergennes. 59 In the meantime the papers published the news of the projected depreciation and thereby caused a clamor. Adams was invited to the Quai d'Orsay and spent some time in discussion about it with Vergennes and his under-secretary, Joseph-Matthias de Rayneval. 60

After he had returned to his lodgings, Adams enclosed to Vergennes a note on the matter from Richard Cranch, Adams' brother-in-law, and also a newspaper from Massachusetts which reported that the state legislature had adopted the congressional resolution. 61 Vergennes replied that he was not concerned with regulations America made for her own people but that she should
except foreigners from the law or make arrangements for their proper indemni-

fication. The bill as it stood would, he insisted, work havoc with French commercial interests. He had, therefore, directed Luzerne to represent these facts to Congress in the strongest light possible. Adams begged Vergennes to hold up the message until a full explanation of the measure could be prepared. He importuned Franklin to support his request for a delay as he feared Tory sympathizers and other interested parties could capitalize on the situation if Luzerne contested the measure.

These requests dispatched, he penned a lengthy explanation to Vergennes contesting French rights to exchange paper certificates dollar for dollar in gold and silver as Vergennes had desired. In what he later termed "a decent, though, in a few expressions, a gently tingling rejoinder," he maintained that France had little if anything to lose. Most produce shipped by European merchants was paid either in cash or in bills of exchange and there were certainly not more than $10,000 (he did not actually know of $1,000) in certificates held by Frenchmen. Furthermore, the French merchants had made enormous profits in the United States. He sent a copy of this letter to Franklin requesting to be corrected if there were any inaccuracies in detail, but asserting his correctness on the underlying principles. Vergennes was more than a little annoyed—though hardly to the point of falling "into a passion" or writing a "passionate and ungentlemanly reply" as Adams later described it. Adams was curtly informed that the explanation had not changed Vergennes' sentiments but that the Comte felt further discussion between them on the subject would be superfluous. To the last part of the statement at least Adams agreed. To Franklin the Comte ex-
plained that he could not revoke the orders to Luzerne as Adams' arguments were only "abstract reasonings, hypotheses, and calculations" lacking in a firm foundation and "not really applicable to French subjects." 70

Neither man, however, was quite satisfied to let the matter drop. Each apparently felt the necessity of justifying himself to some one. Vergennes naturally chose Franklin. After condemning Adams' point of view, Vergennes suggested to Franklin that the King was persuaded that Franklin held a view different from Adams—at least in the resolution's application to foreigners. He intimated that Congress would also differ from Adams and "know how to prize the friendship of France." 71 Franklin attempted to oil the waters as well as he could. Confessing an inability to understand the financial fine points of it, he promised Vergennes that Congress would give the French merchants full justice, and he assured the Foreign Secretary that Congress' view differed "widely from those that seemed to be expressed by Mr. Adams." 72

A very proud and truculent Adams had been trespassing on Franklin's territory and he knew it, but he considered himself justified. Informing Congress that Vergennes had first solicited his opinion, he sent copies of the correspondence directly to Huntington, the President of Congress. 73 He explained his position and bluntly stated:

I am determined to give my sentiments to his majesty's ministers whenever they shall see cause to ask them, although it is not within my department, until I shall be forbidden by Congress, and to this end I shall go to the court often enough to give them an opportunity to ask them, if they wish to know them. 74

He believed that he had demonstrated the "injustice and impracticability" of paying France in specie. He, therefore, had resented Vergennes' sarcasm
and so returned him "irony for irony, and sarcasm for sarcasm." He fully expected that this mode of reply would effect either Vergennes' abandonment of that style of negotiation with him or his own recall. From the perspective of 1811, he reckoned his recall to have been the motive of Vergennes' action. By the recall of Adams, Franklin would probably receive the commission for peace and Vergennes would have "our fisheries, our limits, and a truce secured to his mind." 75

Congress, having received Adams' letter before it heard from Vergennes, resolved to inform its minister of its approval of his "industrious attention to the interests of the United States abroad." Lovell, in transmitting a copy of the resolution to Adams, assured him that there was no danger of overexpressing the satisfaction of Congress. 76 Adams was pleased with their approval, especially as he was "prepared in his own mind to receive from Congress resolutions of a different nature." 77 Indeed, he strongly expected to receive in the near future some less laudatory comments from Philadelphia—and with good reason. The agreement of June 30 to end their discussion of the redemption of loan-office certificates had signalled only a truce, not a peace settlement, between Adams and Vergennes.

Within a fortnight, Adams, with irrepressible zeal, again unnecessarily challenged Vergennes while that minister was greatly concerned with his own problems of keeping the allies united. 78 Gratuitously Adams penned some four thousand words introducing them as "a few observations upon the present conjuncture of affairs." Remarking that France's own advantage lay in the same direction as America's, he explained the necessity of placing the French fleet in American coastal waters and he outlined a plan for its
deployment. A French fleet cruising the American coast, he suggested, would
counteract that portion of public opinion which inclined toward England and
was critical of the laxity of the French efforts. Vergennes very courteously
gave the plenipotentiary information on de Ternay's and Rochambeau's
destinations and on their general directives. He assured Adams that the
king was most mindful of the American cause even without special solicita-
tion from Congress, and he expressed a hope that America would respond with
suitable sentiments and full co-operation.

Before Vergennes had the opportunity to send that information, the
commerce-conscious New Englander had taken another tack. Referring to
Vergennes' letter of February 24, he recalled to the Foreign Secretary that
gentleman's advice to keep the commission for a commercial treaty secret for
reasons which Adams would readily sense. He now commented that upon the most
mature reflection he remained firmly convinced that these powers should be
made known to the British. He thereupon listed eleven reasons that induced
him to think so. These reasons centered chiefly on his expectations of the
effect the information would have upon both the English people, who he be-
lieved longed for an honorable peace, and upon the government which would
then be forced to explain "their real intentions concerning America." Vergennes
had no intention of permitting Adams to make his commission
known. He, therefore, took time to answer each of Adams' reasons with a
countervailing reason of his own. "To be solicitous about a treaty of com-
merce," he introduced his remarks, "before peace is established is like being
busy about the furnishing of a house before the foundation is laid." An
offer of a treaty of commerce would be tantamount to an alliance—rather
ridiculous "when the war is raging in all its fury." He agreed that England might desire peace and good commercial relations, but pointed out that very few talked of independence, and these few did so more as a matter of opposition than of conviction since not a single motion to grant independence was ever made in Parliament. The only sensible reflection he could find in Adams' brief was the eighth which acknowledged that an immediate announcement in the face of the English victory at Charleston would be inopportune. He dismissed the arguments for publication as ridiculous since England, once independence was recognized, would quickly enough remember to provide for commercial relations. In conclusion Vergennes requested that Adams, if he still, in spite of the very solid reasons given him, remained unconvinced, should communicate his remarks and Vergennes' answers to Congress and await its decision. Vergennes, in the meantime, planned to communicate his position through Luzerne, confident that Congress would hold the official French position worthy of attention. To this Adams conceded that Congress would beyond doubt agree with Vergennes that the communication should only be made in union with France. Although he retained his stated opinions, Adams decided to suspend any thought of a communication previous to a specific authorization from Congress or the French ministry.

In spite of this concession to Vergennes and of the acknowledgment that a communication would hold no advantage commensurate to the inconvenience of acting without French support, the plenipotentiary could not resist contradicting some of the remarks Vergennes had made. The majority of the English people, he reasserted, desired peace; motions, if he recalled accurately, had been made in both Lords and Commons to grant independence;
granting independence and making a treaty of reciprocity would be an honorable and advantageous peace for England. 84

Checkmated in that area for the time, Adams moved into another. The day after he promised to suspend action on his special commission for commerce, he reverted to Vergennes' letter of July 20 and the remark therein that the king "without having been solicited by Congress, has taken effectual measures to support the cause of America."85 Without either prudence or necessity, he directly challenged Vergennes' statement by recalling to the minister's mind previous congressional solicitation for naval assistance from France. Unabashedly, he proceeded to make a further solicitation. On the supposition that the Admiral de Ternay might meet the English fleet under Admiral Graves and the battle be a draw, he suggested that either de Guichen in the West Indies dispatch ships to reinforce de Ternay or that the king dispatch additional ships from Europe. If, immediately on top of their recent exchange, Vergennes could have borne this piece of gratuitous advice, he surely would have decided that the limit had been reached when he read the following statement:

I am so convinced by experience of the absolute necessity of more consultations and communications between his majesty's ministers and the ministers of Congress, that I am determined to omit no opportunity of communicating my sentiments to your excellency upon everything that appears to me of importance to the common cause in which I can do it with propriety; and the communication shall be direct in person or by letter to your excellency, without the intervention of any third person. 86

This was militia diplomacy incarnate. With apparently complete unawareness of the rebuffs he had already received, Adams went on to offer his "poor opinion and advice to his majesty's minister upon anything that relates to the United States or the common cause whenever they shall be asked."87
Vergennes, who normally took a week or ten days to answer a communication from Adams, curtly responded to this message within two days. Not troubling to conceal his irritation, he bluntly informed Mr./Adams that Franklin alone was the accredited minister from the United States and with him alone would Vergennes treat of matters concerning the United States. Thereupon he informed Franklin of the altercation and sent to him copies of the offending correspondence and his replies with the request that they be forwarded to Congress. He frankly added that he did not think—and presumed Congress would not—that Adams had "that conciliatory spirit which is necessary for the important and delicate business with which he is entrusted." Franklin took the side of Vergennes, agreeing with him on this occasion more wholeheartedly than on the former. He assured the Foreign Secretary that clearly it was Adams' "indiscretion alone, and not from any instructions received by him, that he has given such just cause of displeasure." As for himself, he disavowed being a party to the correspondence as he knew only what he read in the newspapers of Adams' business. He bluntly declared, "I live upon terms of civility with him, not of intimacy." 

In compliance with Vergennes' request, Franklin addressed the material to Huntington with a few comments of his own. In the first place, Adams "having nothing else here wherewith to employ himself, he seems to have endeavored supplying what he may suppose my negotiations defective in." Furthermore, the offense Adams had given was one of the expected inconveniences of having more than one minister at any court. It was a matter for Congress to decide as to who was correct since he and Adams differed. He was determined to continue his efforts to please the French court and he presumed
that both Congress and the majority of people in America would approve of his policy. Adams, on the other hand, believed America was too free in expressing her gratitude as France was, in the Adams opinion, more obliged to the United States than the United States to France. Franklin regretted the growing opinion in Paris that the Americans were diverging from the alliance and envisioning a reconciliation with England. He refrained from naming Adams but pointed out that while he himself had been busily fighting this opinion, some Americans had been "indiscreet in their conversations." The day after writing this lengthy epistle, hearing that a boat was about to sail but that it would not be able to take packets, Franklin dashed off a brief note to Congress. In it he merely remarked that the court remained favorable although "some displeasure" had lately been given. The explanation he left to Luzerne. He did not dispatch his first letter until October and then, before sending it, inquired if Adams would care to write something to efface the bad impression the correspondence must give. Adams, having long before sent copies of the entire affair to Congress, rejected the offer.

Vergennes felt that he had too much at stake to permit the matter to quietly fade away. He sent Luzerne copies of the complete correspondence and directed that dignitary to confer confidentially with Huntington and the leaders in Congress in order to effect a re-evaluation of Adams' abilities. For the guidance of Congress, Vergennes sent along his own summation. "This plenipotentiary will do nothing but raise difficulties and cause vexations." After digressing on Adams' character faults, he concluded that the minister was "incapable of handling political questions and especially of treating
with the representatives of great powers, who, assuredly, will not accommodate themselves either to the tone or logic of Mr. Adams."\(^9^4\) Congress, after deliberation upon these representations, directed Huntington to remonstrate with Adams. He did so, but attributing Adams' imprudence to his zeal and assiduity, made his rebuke extremely mild.\(^9^5\)

As far as Adams was concerned, however, the tiff with Vergennes left him little choice but to leave the country or to forswear further participation in Franco-American affairs until a peace negotiation did materialize. He was not of a temperament to ever achieve the latter. On the other hand, he was not the man to forsake a mission and return home without an official recall. Fortunately, circumstances were already in progress which would provide him with a refuge. For some years, he had rather closely followed events in the Netherlands and was very much aware that a group there had long desired a closer communication with America. He had been in Paris as a member of the American commission when Dumas notified that body of a plan which he had received from an Amsterdam official for a treaty between the two republics.\(^9^6\) While Adams was still in Paris on that business and in close contact with Arthur Lee, another member of the commission and a militia enthusiast, Lee declared that Holland would lend America money out of revenge if Britain continued interfering with Dutch trade.\(^9^7\) Upon Adams' return to the United States in the late summer of 1779,\(^9^8\) his official report to Congress dealt with the possibility of closer connections with the Dutch. He noted the similarity of manners, of religion, and, to an extent, of constitution between the two republics.\(^9^9\) In general his remarks corroborated those of leading Dutch patriots. Like Van der Capellen, he thought it
would be well to have a minister in the Netherlands although such a minister very probably would not be openly received for some time. However, a minister-designate, even while he remained incognito, could acquaint himself with the customs of that land and at the same time make America a little better known to the Dutch people. He should also have an opportunity to lay the foundations for a future loan.

Upon his return to France in February, 1780, Adams resumed his interest in the Dutch. Shortly he informed Huntington that English depredations on Dutch shipping were changing the attitude both of people and of government. Repeating his earlier contention that a minister could effect much good in that country, he added that such a person sent directly from Congress might obtain sizable sums if he applied to well-established Dutch commercial houses. As though with a premonition of his own forthcoming activity, he sought from a friend the names of the principal mercantile houses of Amsterdam which were reputed friendly to the United States. Toward the end of March he devoted one of his lengthy reports to Congress exclusively to a discussion of the rapidly deteriorating relations between England and the United Provinces. Interestingly enough, he prefaced the message with the comment that he felt it his duty to keep Congress informed relative to events in the Netherlands until an official minister arrived. In subsequent correspondence he endeavored to fulfill his self-appointed task, and, in addition to his own comments, he transmitted copies of petitions, memorials, and responses in plentiful supply.

It was largely on the instigation of Van der Capellen, probably fortified by Adams' communication, and most certainly by the Adams' party
of militia diplomatists, that Henry Laurens had been commissioned in the fall of 1779 to negotiate both a loan and a treaty of amity and commerce in the Netherlands. Circumstances prevented Laurens from leaving the States for several months after he received his commission. Concerned about his delayed departure, on June 20, 1780, Congress resolved that, until Laurens was enabled to reach the Netherlands, his commission for a loan should be transferred to John Adams. The commission to form a treaty of amity and commerce was to be held in abeyance until Laurens could inform himself on affairs in Holland and advise Congress regarding the terms for the proposed treaty. Laurens finally embarked on the Mercury but was taken with a packet of his private papers on September 3, 1780. He was confined to the Tower of London on a charge of treason and only released in 1782. Adams had been apprised of Laurens' appointment and subsequent delays, and he knew of Congress' interest in negotiations in the Netherlands. When he decided to visit Amsterdam, he knew that Laurens had not yet arrived, but he did not know of his capture nor did he know until September 17, 1780 of his own interim appointment to that country. Consequently, his determination to leave France and spend some time in the Netherlands was entirely his own choice and the outgrowth of his militia instincts and not the result of any intimation from Philadelphia.

On the other hand, his decision to travel there was not a sudden and unpremeditated one. Almost from the time of his arrival in Paris, he had intended to go to Holland at his earliest convenience and see if something could not be transacted there to make America less dependent on France for pecuniary aid and for military supplies. Another motive,
which he carefully did not broadcast but which made the projected trip more enticing, was the realization that for a few weeks at least he could enjoy more independence and be less obliged to consult the Comte de Vergennes and Doctor Franklin on his every move. Consequently, already in March, 1780, he applied to Vergennes for a traveller’s permit to the Netherlands. Vergennes, very concerned about Adams’ declaration that he could reside anywhere and troubled by his own belief that the new minister favored separate negotiations with England, was loathe to see Adams leave Paris. Therefore, requesting that Adams remain nearby where he could be consulted on the matters of his mission, Vergennes offered the inducements of inviting him to attend court on the weekly ambassador’s day and even to dine with the Comte. At intervals Adams repeated his request for a passport but Vergennes insisted that he wait at least until mid-summer. During the quiet period of early July, between the disagreement over the depreciation of paper money and that over the communication of his powers, Adams again proposed a few weeks in Amsterdam. This time he was advised to wait because of possible negotiations as a result of Cumberland’s mission to Spain. When it became known that Cumberland was compelled to await further instructions from the Court of St. James, Vergennes decided that Adams could make the much-postponed journey before negotiations would again be under way.

Quickly availing himself of the opportunity, Adams arranged his travel before Vergennes could retract the permission. When Adams left Paris he was headed for a country perplexed by a precarious political situation and burdened with an unbelievably complicated governmental structure. Within its confines there existed all degrees of partisanship from the strongly
pro-English followers of the Stadholder, William V, to the equally partisan pro-French liberals commonly referred to as the Patriots. There was but one thing on which all could agree—the need for Dutch neutrality in the current war. As neutrals the Netherlanders could enjoy the rich carrier trade furnished by the belligerent powers and by other neutral countries. The moment they joined either side their ships would be fair game to the navy of their opponent. They would, thereby, forfeit the trade of one or the other belligerent, jeopardize the cargoes of neutrals, and endanger their own cargoes.

Unfortunately for them, as soon as France entered the war in 1778, their strategic geographical position and the maritime requirements of the two neighboring belligerents, in union with their own inability to defend themselves either by land or by sea, made the maintenance of neutrality a problem of major proportions. France was in dire need of ship's timbers and other naval supplies, normally obtained from Scandinavia and the Baltic area, in order to build up her navy and decrease England's superiority on the high seas. The Netherlands was the obvious answer to the procurement problem and the French ministry determined to utilize to the full the Dutch merchant fleet. England, on the contrary, could ill afford to have the French navy increased. This would become especially true after Spain entered the conflict as the combined French and Spanish fleets slightly outnumbered her own. Neither could she afford to have the Dutch transporting munitions of war—which they were doing on a grand scale—to French ports or to St. Eustatius for the use of the American army. English officers, therefore, often boarded Dutch vessels and not infrequently haled them into
English ports as prizes when contraband or naval supplies were found in the cargo. The British ministry, in spite of a special treaty of 1674 to the contrary with the Netherlands, determined to confiscate all ship's timbers and naval stores carried by the Dutch if the latter could not in some way be brought to give up the trade in these.

The commencement of French hostilities in June, 1778, rendered Dutch neutrality, as England understood the word, extremely urgent to the British government. To encourage peaceful co-operation from the trade-oriented Dutch, in mid-summer of 1778, Sir Joseph Yorke, the English ambassador at The Hague, tried to strike a bargain with the merchants of Amsterdam. By an ancient treaty, signed in 1678 and never abrogated, a hostile act by any country against Great Britain was to be considered a *casus foederis* and entitled England to call upon the United Provinces for assistance. Yorke offered to barter England's rights to assistance by the treaty of alliance and even to discontinue interference with Dutch shipping to the French West Indies if the Netherlands would add naval stores to the list of contraband. The offer came too late; the Dutch had already begun to enjoy the fruits of a rich trade and Sir Joseph was turned down. British cruisers then began detaining Dutch vessels in the English Channel and neighboring waters. By September, twenty-nine ships had been taken; in October, another forty-two. Resenting this encroachment on their rights as guaranteed by the 1674 treaty, the Dutch presented a protest to Parliament. Great Britain promised to grant the full immunities of the treaty to the Dutch if they would simply add naval stores to the list of contraband. In addition, the English government offered to pay the appraised value of the timbers or
supplies taken as well as compensation for the delay and damages to the carriers occasioned by their detention. Under the influence of Dutch merchants, primarily those of Amsterdam, the Dutch government rejected these English proposals.

In the meantime the French ministry through their ambassador took steps to prevent their supplies being diverted by England. The Duke de la Vauguyon threatened that the French would board Dutch vessels and treat them in the same manner as the English were treating them if the States General did not take adequate steps to maintain neutrality. This could only mean that they must furnish convoys for their trade to France. In an effort to maintain their neutral status, the Dutch on November 19, 1778 provided for convoying most goods including various naval provisions but excluding ship timbers. The compromise was satisfactory to neither belligerent. The British ordered the seizure of all naval stores; the Duke de la Vauguyon warned that the French decree of July, 1778, establishing a six-month trial period on the principle of free ships make free goods would be suspended immediately upon expiration if the States General did not grant unlimited convoy. As the January deadline approached, The Hague made vague provisions for future unlimited convoys to become effective when means permitted. On the strength of this La Vauguyon granted a brief extension until March 1, 1779. Since the Dutch continued to procrastinate, the new French decree proscribing enemy goods on neutral ships and levying a special tax on Dutch ships entering French ports went into effect on March 1. However, the ships of two Dutch cities--Amsterdam and Haarlem--were permitted to enter French ports tax free in return for the efforts of their citizens to procure
unlimited convoy. This exemption not only assured France of continued im-
ports from the Netherlands, but served to pressure the merchants of other
Dutch commercial cities to take measures to secure the same advantage. 126

As the year 1779 progressed, measures and counter-measures were taken
at an ever accelerated pace by both England and France in an effort to con-
trol Dutch shipping policy. Opening French ports to Amsterdam and Haarlem
while charging the customs tax to others secured for France a resolution
from the province of Holland to provide unlimited convoy. Paper resolutions
in Holland meant little to France. Providing for their implementation con-
sumed notoriously long periods of time. Therefore a French decree of May 1,
1779 declared an additional tariff of fifteen per cent on all goods except
naval supplies. 127 The Dutch were caught in the dilemma. If they used un-
limited convoy, England was in a position to pounce upon their ships and
destroy their trade as neutrals, to call for their active assistance under
the treaty of alliance of 1678, or to declare all out war upon them. Their
rich commerce with France would be lost in the event of any one of these
contingencies. If they refused unlimited convoy, France was in a position
either to continue her discriminatory practices and force merchants of all
but favored cities out of business or to extend her tariffs and taxes and
decimate Dutch profits. The outlook was dismal and the country became even
more divided between the Anglomane followers of William V and the Patriots
who favored France.

Spain's declaration of war on England in June, 1779 was accompanied
by France's formal declaration of hostilities. 128 England retorted with a
memorial delivered by Sir Joseph Yorke on July 22 to the States General
warning that the fulfillment of the alliance might be exacted as France was threatening to invade Great Britain. A cumbersome national government failed to make any response to Yorke's memorial even after he renewed his request on November 26, 1779. This disregard—as it was interpreted—alienated Great Britain still further. The arrival of John Paul Jones on October 4, 1779, at the Texel (a large harbor some twenty-five leagues from Amsterdam) flying the American flag, and with the Serapis and Countess of Scarborough as prizes, occasioned still further animosity.

Fair trade winds in Christmas week, 1779, permitted not only Jones but a large merchant fleet destined for French and Spanish ports to sail. The Dutch fleet, under Admiral Bylandt, was forcibly overpowered in the Channel by the English Admiral Fielding. The people of the Netherlands were highly incensed at Fielding's conduct. They were still further aggravated when, in early March, 1780, the English Admiralty Court confiscated the convoyed ships carrying timbers after that cargo had been purchased.

Hardly had this unwelcome news been received when Sir Joseph Yorke presented a third memorial (March 21, 1780) demanding a response to his memorials of the previous July 22 and November 26 respecting Dutch obligations under the alliance of 1678. Weary of Dutch tardiness, he allowed the States General only three weeks in which to prepare their answer under penalty of being declared neutrals and no longer protected by the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1674. A request for more time to enable The Hague to ascertain the position of the various provinces on the question was rejected. Through the spring and summer of 1780 the Dutch were becoming more antagonistic to England and the majority of the provinces voted against
assisting her. Consequently on April 17, 1789 England declared all alliances and treaties between herself and the United Provinces severed. The commanders of English vessels were directed to seize Dutch ships having aboard any goods belonging to the enemies of England or any goods considered contraband by the general law of nations. The results were quickly apparent. The States General, no longer having much to gain by concessions to England and still rankling from the Fielding-Bylandt episode, resolved almost unanimously to grant unlimited convoys. This resolution was followed a few days later by another to outfit fifty-two frigates and ships of the line to reinforce Dutch convoys.

France, never loathe to improve upon a favorable situation, immediately removed all the taxes and tariffs imposed on Dutch shipping the previous spring. Indeed, the king restored to the Dutch all sums collected during the intervening year in virtue of those assessments. The promise of convoy was exactly what France desired. She did not want to lead the Netherlands to join directly in the war effort as this would complicate rather than facilitate the accomplishment of French objectives.

Thus, by the time Adams was permitted to undertake his mission to discover whether some assistance could not be secured in the Netherlands, that country was rapidly drawing away from its ties with England and strengthening its trade relations with France. It had largely been brought to this position by the peculiarities of its governmental structure. For one thing, the processes of deliberation and of enactment of law were cumbersome and unable to handle situations within a reasonable time limit. This had been a major factor in the imposition of the French tariffs on Dutch
shipping in 1779. It had also been a factor in the failure to answer Yorke's memorials of June and November, 1779, and of March, 1780, thereby losing for the Dutch their privileged status with England.

During his two years in the Netherlands, Adams similarly discovered it to be an important factor and a constant problem. The nation was a republic composed of seven provinces held together in a confederation in some respects analogous to the Confederation established in America in 1781. The seven provinces of Holland and West Friesland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelderland, Overyssel, Groningen, and Friesland differed in size, wealth, occupations, and sentiment. Holland was the most populous and by far the wealthiest, comprising within its boundaries most of the great cities, including Amsterdam. This province was literally in a position to control the legislation of the country as she contributed a large portion of the yearly budget. She in turn was controlled by her own main source of supply, Amsterdam.

At the head of the state was the Stadholder or hereditary Prince of Orange. William V enjoyed the disposal of nearly all offices and was captain-general and admiral-general of the army and navy. By his position he was privileged to participate in the sessions of the States General and to initiate legislation. In most of the provinces he served as president of the body of nobles. As he was governor-general of both East and West Indies Companies and appointed their directors, and also admiral-general of the navy which operated the customs house, he enjoyed considerable influence. Although personally inclined to be weak and vacillating, he remained quite steadfast in his support of England. In this he was strongly seconded by Duke Louis of Brunswick, his former tutor, official counselor, and a strong Anglophile.
The final sovereignty of the nation was vested in the States General, a senate of the several sovereign states in which each state, irrespective of size, commanded one vote. All foreign affairs were ultimately directed by the States General, usually through their secretary of griffier—at this period, M. Fagel, a strong Anglophile. Their powers were curtailed considerably as no subject could be voted upon in the States General until it had been submitted to the provincial assemblies or States for their decision. This process was known as taking the matter ad referendum and was an admirable device for indeterminately prolonging the ultimate decision on a piece of business. On the other hand, it was almost impossible not to consume considerable time in the disposition of any business. No precise rule apparently designated which matters required the unanimous approval of the States and which required only a majority in order to be brought again before the States General for final decision.

The provincial assemblies, wherein a more real sovereignty lay, were composed of the nobles of the province and deputies of the cities within the province. They generally could not act without the majority consent of the body of nobles and of the city regencies. Consequently, further delays were inevitable while these local groups took the problem ad referendum.

The cities formed almost independent republics within the nation. Burgomasters served as their executives and also as members of their councils. In describing the position of the burgomaster to Congress, Adams compared them to "little kings." The city councils or regencies were composed of burgomasters, counsellors, and schepins (judges) and enjoyed legislative authority. The regencies appointed the deputies to the provincial
States. In larger cities the deputation consisted of two burgomaster, two schepins or councilmen, and a pensionary. The pensionary was the secretary or minister of the city and generally the official speaker for the city, even in the provincial assembly.\(^{143}\) The secretary or first pensionary of Holland, officially known as the Grand Pensionary—Van Bleiswick during the American Revolution—was the most powerful figure in the nation, since he served for practical purposes as the foreign minister of the nation and as spokesman for the province of Holland which comprised half of the population and over half of the wealth of the country.

Because of the unusual dispersal of sovereignty and because of the need for unanimous consent on so many levels for any measure of major importance, it was very difficult for the Netherlands to take positive action. Needless to say, this very complexity was often used as an excuse for inaction. Whenever a matter arose upon which the Dutch preferred not to put themselves upon the record, their constitution was admirably adapted. But no country can long endure on negatives and events were gradually and inexorably becoming such that the United Provinces would eventually need to take their stand on one side or the other. Adams, whose militia activities in Franklin's bailiwick necessitated a journey elsewhere, was in an excellent position to understand the situation and profit by it. Consequently he bade Paris farewell on July 27, 1780, and with his two sons, John Quincy and Charles, started for Brussels, the first major stop-over on his way to Amsterdam.\(^{144}\)

2Ibid., I, 511. The word "traditional" in reference to diplomacy is used in this paper to signify the form of diplomatic exchange prevalent in the eighteenth century between countries. From the time of the renaissance, international relations gradually assumed a certain methodology which remained operative into the twentieth century. In referring to this standard mode of diplomatic relationship, the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (C. Delisle Burns, "Diplomacy," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, ed. Edwin R. A. Seligman, (1935), V. 147-151) frequently applied the term "traditional." In his recent work, The Evolution of the Diplomatic Method (London: Constable and Co., 1954), Harold Nicolson recognized the dominance of certain norms of diplomacy, but he preferred labelling them "French" (Nicolson, p. 53 and passim).

Early diplomatic practice laid stress on the observance of protocol and ceremonial. More importantly, there had developed the custom of preserving in state archives the frequent correspondence, reports, and newsletters exchanged between a representative and his home government (ibid., pp. 25-26). French diplomacy retained the devotion to protocol and ceremonial, and attached great importance to style. The French also built on the system of correspondence and made an art of forwarding, with the intention that they be carefully implemented, precise instructions to their ministers. Richelieu inaugurated, early in the seventeenth century, a centralized authority for the formation of foreign policy and established a "professional service of experts through which that policy could be carried out" (ibid., p. 92). A century later, the foremost French writer on diplomacy, François de Callières, described the diplomatic service of his day. Amateur diplomats he considered dangerous. A distinctive professional training for men of the highest qualities, a mastery of European history and polity, and a fluency in the major European languages were necessary prerequisites for any diplomat (De la maniere de negocier avec les souverains, (1716). cited by Lennox A. Mills and Charles H. McLaughlin, World Politics in Transition, New York: Henry Holt, 1956, pp. 197-198). France served as the model for all European countries through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (Nicolson, pp. 53, 62, 72).

Militia diplomats, as envisioned by Adams, could not qualify under the specifications for diplomatic service so generally accepted in Europe. They were to deal with foreign courts in an "entirely unceremonious and unsophisticated mode" (Wharton, I, 513). Furthermore, militia diplomats were chosen, not because of training, knowledge of the country to which they were missioned, or experience, but on the basis of patriotism and a majority vote in the Continental Congress. They were lacking in another aspect. Wharton listed among "the settled rules of diplomacy" the rule that an envoy should not be "pressed upon a foreign court by which it is understood he will not be received" (ibid., pp. 289, 291). Nicolson, in agreement, quoted Callières, to the effect that a minister must be well received in the country in which he resides (Nicolson, p. 67). Contrary to these traditionally accepted standards, the "militia" diplomats normally set said for countries in which they were not wanted.
Adams to Robert Livingston, Feb. 11, 1782, ibid., V, 196.

Franklin to Arthur Lee, Mar. 21, 1777, ibid., II, 298.


Wherever direct quotes have been used, spelling and punctuation have been modernized in order to facilitate reading.

A good account of Vergennes’ European diplomacy, especially his sponsorship of a neutral league in the early years of the war, may be found in John J. Meng, *The Comte de Vergennes: European Phases of his American Diplomacy, 1774-1800* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1932). In *The Peacemakers*, Morris has examined Vergennes’ diplomacy through the revolutionary years and the formation of the peace.

Immediately after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Congress appointed a committee, of which John Adams and Benjamin Franklin were both members, to draw up a model treaty of amity and of commerce to be negotiated with European countries. Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee were chosen as the first American commissioners in the fall of 1776 to obtain recognition and to secure loans from foreign governments. After the alliance with France, they remained in Paris as joint ministers. Deane was replaced in 1778 by John Adams who attempted to bring a little order to the commission’s affairs. At his suggestion the additional commissioners were later recalled and Franklin was left as sole minister to France. Adams returned home in the summer of 1779 and Lee was commissioned to Spain as envoy. In the meantime, William Lee was appointed commercial agent and commissioner to Berlin and Vienna. Ralph Izard acted as unacknowledged envoy to the court of Tuscany. They all, as well as several agents seeking to borrow money in the names of the various states, spent a good portion of their time in Paris and environs. All except Franklin were in varying degrees militia diplomats.


Gerard to President of Congress (John Jay), Mar. 17, 1779, Wharton, III, 85. Conrad Alexandre Gerard, the oldest son of a minor French official, early entered diplomatic service. He held various offices beginning with Secretary of the French legation at Mannheim and advanced to first commissioner of the Foreign Office and secretary to the Council of State in 1776. He remained at this post until named minister plenipotentiary to the United States in March, 1778. He was succeeded in his position at the Foreign Office by his younger brother, Joseph Matthias Gerard de Rayneval, commonly referred to as Rayneval to distinguish him from Gerard (Gerard Despatches, pp. 35-47).
At this time Congress was split into two parties which John Durand (ed. and trans.), New Material for the History of the American Revolution (New York: Henry Holt, 1889), pp. 194, 205, referred to as the National Party and the States' Rights Party. The former included Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Robert Morris, Madison, and the two Livningstons. They were more inclined to see national interests, more centralized control and a closer affiliation with France. The States' Rights Party were led by John and Samuel Adams, Richard and Henry Lee, and included men like James Lovell and Henry Laurens. They were strongly anti-French in the sense of not becoming politically dependent on France. They thought in terms of state interests rather than of national interests. Gerard distrusted them as he believed, completely incorrectly, that they desired to treat with England separately.

By March 10, 1778 there was open conflict in Congress over the management of foreign affairs. A committee of thirteen was appointed to investigate the conduct of foreign affairs in general and of the commissioners in France in particular. From then until 1781 and Robert Livingston’s appointment as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, practically nothing was heard of the Committee of Foreign Affairs. George C. Wood, Congressional Control of Foreign Relations during the American Revolution, 1774-1789 (Allentown, Penn.: H. R. Hass and Co., 1919), p. 83, has found "evidence that the American foreign relations were largely carried on by the French minister working through friends and committees in Congress."

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11 Gerard to President of Congress, May 22, 1779, Wharton, III, 175-78.
12 Gerard to President of Congress, May 27, 1779, ibid., pp. 194-95.
13 Gerard to Vergennes, May 14, 1779, Gerard Despatches, p. 643.
15 Gerard to Vergennes, July 18, 1779, Gerard Despatches, p. 794.
17 Gerard Despatches, pp. 847-848.
19 Gerard Despatches, p. 848. These were marked "received Nov. 6, 1779" by Rayneval, a full three months before Adams' arrival in Paris.
20 Gerard to Vergennes, Sept. 25, 1779, ibid., p. 895. The letter in question (Vergennes to Adams, Feb. 21, 1779, Wharton, III, 55) praised Adams for his "wise conduct . . . as well as zeal . . . for the cause of your country and the support of the alliance."

President of Congress to Adams, October 20, 1779, Wharton, III, 387; Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 4, 1779, pp. 399-400; Adams to Franklin, Dec. 9, 1779, p. 417.

Thomas Huntington was the President of Congress from Sept. 28, 1779 until July 10, 1781. He was succeeded by Thomas McKean but Livingston's appointment to the Foreign Office about the same time caused Adams to address his official correspondence to Livingston rather than to the President of Congress once he learned of the appointment.

Arthur Lee quarrelled with his co-commissioners as to whether the goods being procured for America were gifts or purchases. He found some support in Adams when that gentleman replaced Deane in the commission.

Adams thereby became the subject of some unfriendly compositions. A copy of one of these, filed in the French archives, in all probability came to Vergennes' attention. This document, Reflexions politiques d'un citoyen, stated that Arthur Lee was English at heart and undoubtedly receiving pay from England. The author continued, "God forbid that I should think Mr. Adams like him, but I venture to state that Mr. Adams is a very cunning man and no friend of Dr. Franklin, so that it may be presumed the Lees and the Adams are all so many heads under one bonnet." (Durand, p. 28).

Durand, pp. 207-208. The complete correspondence between Vergennes and Gerard is printed in Gerard Despatches. Selections from this may be found in Durand, pp. 198-211. Paul Chrisler Phillips, The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution ("University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences," Vol. II, Nos. 2 and 3; Urbana: University of Illinois, 1913), p. 130, attributed "to the conduct of Gerard is due in large measure the irritation which broke out between the French minister of Foreign Affairs and the envoys of the United States." He based this on Gerard's championing of Spain's claims on boundaries.

Vergennes to Luzerne, July 18, 1779, Durand, p. 215.

John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, Series I of The Adams Papers, edited by Lyman H. Butterfield and others (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1961), IV, 242-43. The editors of this work have established that this section of the autobiography was written nearly thirty years after the events recorded (note, p. 173).

Adams to Vergennes, Feb. 12, 1780, Wharton, III, 492-93.

The agent Hussey was in Spain trying to arrange an accommodation between that power and England. The French ministry knew enough of it to be deeply concerned. For details, refer to Morris, pp. 51-56.
Adams to Vergennes, Feb. 12, 1780, Wharton, III, 492-93. Vergennes interpreted Adams' desire to make his mission known to the English as proof of his desire to settle American independence directly with England and without consulting France. If further proof were needed, Vergennes felt that Adams supplied it by his claim that his powers authorized him as fully to go to London as to go to Paris. Vergennes expressed his irritation over this to Luzerne, June 30, 1780 (Henri Doniol, ed., Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique, correspondance diplomatique, documents (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1886-1892), IV, 414).

Vergennes to Adams, Feb. 15, 1780, Wharton, III, 496. Vergennes had already received the instructions forwarded in August but possibly thought that subsequent additions or alterations may have been made. Gerard's report, false though it was, that Adams would communicate his instructions to Vergennes (Gerard Despatches, p. 848) perhaps influenced Vergennes' bold statement. Vergennes also concluded after his meeting with Adams that the American had not made known the entire nature and object of his commission (Vergennes to Luzerne, Feb., 1780, Doniol, IV, 441). Adams, on the other hand, judged Vergennes so accustomed to obtaining by payment or intrigue the instructions of foreign ambassadors that he had become unmindful of its illegality (John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, IV, 246).

Francis Dana (1743-1811), a native of Charlestown, Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard and studied law under his uncle. It was in his legal practice that he was first associated with John Adams. When Adams was appointed commissioner to negotiate for peace in 1779, Dana, who was then a member of the Continental Congress, was sent with him as secretary to the American legation. When Adams moved to the Netherlands, Dana remained in Paris to care for affairs there and await Adams' return. In December, 1780, he was commissioned to Russia to offer American accession to the Armed Neutrality. While there he was to propose a treaty of amity and commerce with Russia. His mission was unsuccessful and he returned to the United States in 1783 (DAB).

Adams to Vergennes, Feb. 19, 1780, Wharton, III, 503.

John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, IV, 247. Adams was unaware that Vergennes had a copy of the instructions and he even doubted that Gerard had secured a copy to bring home although ready to concede that it was a possibility since Vergennes had money and there were fifty members in Congress, one of whom might be interested (ibid.).

Adams to Vergennes, Feb. 19, 1780, Wharton, III, 504.

Vergennes to Adams, Feb. 24, 1780, ibid., p. 518.

Adams to Vergennes, Feb. 25, 1780, ibid., pp. 519-520.

John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, IV, 252.
Adams to Vergennes, March 21, 1780, Wharton, III, 266-67.


Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 30, 1780, ibid., p. 138.

Adams to Jenings, April 2, 1780 and June 7, 1780, Adams Papers. Edmund Jenings (1731-1819) was born in Maryland but educated in England. He probably never returned to the United States. He lived in London until 1778 when he removed to the continent, chiefly Brussels, for the duration of the war. Jenings corresponded regularly with the Lees to whom he was related. It was probably through Arthur Lee that he met John Adams in 1780 (DAB).

James Lovell (1737-1814), a Bostonian, was elected to the Continental Congress in 1777 and very shortly became a member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Often he acted as sole member of this committee due to Congressional neglect to appoint others. He served with energy and zeal until the appointment of Robert Livingston as Secretary of Foreign Affairs in 1781. Lovell was intensely partisan and a leading member of the group opposed to Franklin and to strong French influence (DAB).

Adams to Lovell, Mar. 16, 1780, Wharton, III, 551.


Ralph Izard (1741/2-1804) was born in South Carolina but educated in England where he spent several years of his adult life. In 1776 his views on the revolution made his life unpleasant in England and he started home. While in Paris en route he was given a commission as minister to Tuscany but, unwelcome in that country, he returned to Paris. Under the impression that as a diplomatic representative of the United States he had a right to take part in the consultations between France and the United States he aroused a bitter antagonism between himself and Franklin. Arthur Lee and, to an extent, John Adams supported him against Franklin. Izard was recalled in 1779 (DAB).

John Adams to Sam Adams, March 4, 1780, Wharton, III, 531. His major point of disagreement, particularly with Izard, was over the method of addressing France. Izard inclined toward using a "high tone" whereas Adams opposed "the style of menace" although advocating both "frankness" and "candor."

Most of these are published in Wharton or in C. F. Adams, Works. The remainder may be found in the Adams Papers. In the early part of August, Adams estimated—and this probably is one of the few times he minimized his activity—that he had already sent about a hundred dispatches.
Adams to La Fayette, Feb. 18, 1780, Wharton, III, 501.

Adams to President of Congress, Feb. 19, 1780, ibid., p. 504.

Adams to Edmé Genêt, Feb. 18, 1780, ibid., p. 500. Genêt, the father of the future French ambassador to America, was first secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs as well as editor of the Mercure and so would have access to much information. He also served as premier commiss of the Bureau of Interpretation and passed on to Vergennes intelligence from England and America (Morris, p. 111).

Genêt to Adams, Feb. 20, 1780, Wharton, III, 504.

Charles William Frederick Dumas was a native of Switzerland but spent the greater portion of his life in the Netherlands as a man of letters. He was learned, spoke several modern languages, was a staunch supporter of liberty and an early defender of the American cause. In 1775 the committee of secret correspondence, chaired by Franklin, appointed Dumas special agent in the United Provinces. He continued in that office until Adams' arrival after which he served as secretary and translator as well as liaison between Adams and the Patriots at The Hague. After Adams' return to Paris, Dumas acting as chargé d'affaires exchanged ratifications on the treaties of amity and commerce between the United Provinces and the United States (Wharton, I, 603).

Adams to Jenings, February 25, 1780, Adams Papers. Adams had complete confidence in his loyalty although that loyalty was suspected by Franklin, Jay and Laurens (Wharton, IV, 285 note; John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, II, 355–56 note).

Adams to Jenings, July 14, 1780, Adams Papers.

Adams to Jenings, June 30, 1780, Adams Papers. Much of the material Adams supplied to both Genêt and Jenings was based on articles, pamphlets, speeches or clippings from England. Thomas Digges who communicated with him under a number of pseudonyms was his major supplier of these pieces. Digges would forward them to a Mr. Francis Bowen, a merchant in Ostend. From there they were forwarded to Adams' quarters at the Hotel Valois or to a mutual friend. Digges' favorite penname was W. S. Church or more simply W.S.C. but he used others, e.g. Alex Brett. When he thought it best, he addressed Adams as "F.R.S." for "Fernando Raymon San," a name chosen because it was the name of Adams' guide on his trip through Spain. Adams seldom used other than the correct name for Digges (C. F. Adams, Works, 167–68 note).

Adams to Jenings, July 18, 1780, Adams Papers. Jenings was always glad to cooperate, but, aware that some of the articles could cause embarrassment if their authorship became known, suggested using fictitious names.

Jenings to Adams, July 9, 1780, ibid.
Anna-Cesar de la Luzerne was closely related to several of the first families of France and was a nephew of Malsherbes, Minister of State and personal friend of Louis XVI. Luzerne's early career was in the military but he sought entrance to the diplomatic. Probably due to family connections he received an appointment as minister plenipotentiary to Bavaria in 1776. On April 5, 1779 he was appointed to succeed Gerard and with his secretary, Marbois, sailed for the United States aboard the French frigate Sensible. John Adams returned to Boston aboard the same ship which gave the two men several weeks in which to become acquainted. Luzerne formally took office as minister plenipotentiary on September 27, 1779 (William Emmett O'Donnell, The Chevalier de la Luzerne; French Minister to the United States, 1779-1784 [Bruges: Desclee, nd], pp. 37-44).

63 Adams to Vergennes, June 22, 1780, Wharton, III, 808.
64 Adams to Franklin, June 22, 1780, ibid., 807-808.
66 Adams to Vergennes, June 22, 1780, Wharton, III, 808-816.
67 Adams to Franklin, June 29, 1780, ibid., p. 824.
69 Vergennes to Adams, June 30, 1780, Wharton, III, 828; Adams to Vergennes, July 1, 1780, p. 829.
70 Vergennes to Franklin, June 30, 1780, ibid., p. 827.
71 Ibid.
72 Franklin to Vergennes, July 10, 1780, ibid., p. 844.
73 Samuel Huntington (1731-1796), the son of a Connecticut farmer was self-educated. He held various state offices between 1765 and 1775 at which time he was elected to the Continental Congress where he served until 1784. He
was president of that body from September of 1779 until July 1, 1781 when ill health forced him to resign the office (DAB).

74 Adams to the President of Congress, June 26, 1780, Wharton, III, 819.

75 Adams to the Boston Patriot, May 15, 1811, C. F. Adams, Works, I, 655.

He had voiced the same idea two years earlier. [John Adams], Correspondence of the Late President Adams Originally Published in the Boston Patriot, in a Series of Letters (Boston: Everett and Monroe, 1809), pp. 284-85. Henceforth cited: J. Adams, Boston Patriot.


77 Adams to Dana, Feb. 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 252.

78 The English agents, Cumberland and Hussey, were in Spain to negotiate with Floridablanca for peace. At home, Vergennes faced both Necker's peace offensive, made more formidable by a report of a treasury deficit, and a more direct appeasement offer by Maurepas, First Minister to Louis XVI (Morris, pp. 88-111). He was probably also aware that on June 27 a bill for conciliation with America was proposed in Parliament. Although rejected, it evidenced English interest in dealing separately with the colonies (David Hartley to Franklin, July 17, 1780, Wharton, III, 864-865).

79 Adams to Vergennes, July 13, 1780, Wharton, III, 848-855.

80 Vergennes to Adams, July 20, 1780, ibid., pp. 870-71.

81 Adams to Vergennes, July 17, 1780, ibid., pp. 861-63.

82 Vergennes to Adams, July 25, 1780, ibid., pp. 882-83. Adams' paper returned with points of difference, ibid., IV, 3-6.

83 Adams to Vergennes, July 26, 1780, ibid., IV, 7-11.

84 Ibid.

85 Vergennes to Adams, July 20, 1780, ibid., III, 871.

86 Adams to Vergennes, July 27, 1780, ibid., IV, 12-14.

87 Ibid.

88 Vergennes to Adams, July 29, 1780, ibid., pp. 16-17.

89 Vergennes to Franklin, July 31, 1780, ibid., pp. 18-19.
Franklin to Vergennes, August 3, 1780, Durand, p. 231. Franklin apparently had remained uninformed of Adams' instructions until June when he received a copy from Jay. (Franklin to Jay, June 13, 1780, Wharton, III, 784).

Franklin to President of Congress, Aug. 9, 1780, Wharton, IV, 22-23.

Franklin to President of Congress, Aug. 10, 1780, ibid., p. 25.

Franklin to Adams, October 8, 1780, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 314; Adams to Franklin, Nov. 30, 1780, ibid., p. 337. Adams later commented that he had dispatched copies by several conveyances without making any comment as it would require a forty page paper to adequately explain (John Adams, Boston Patriot, pp. 283-85).

Vergennes to Luzerne, Aug. 7, 1780, Durand, pp. 232-33. Vergennes also took the opportunity to inform Luzerne of Adams' intention of disclosing his powers. Vergennes expressed himself much in doubt of Adams' adherence to the alliance and complained of the minister's facility in portraying American ingratitude for the favors of France. He directed Luzerne to suggest that Adams be recalled.

That Vergennes was much angered is demonstrated by his reversion to the affair in another letter of October to Luzerne. At that time he told Luzerne that it was desirable that Adams have no part in the peace negotiation. Congress should rather invest that power in a person whose zeal would be "enlightened, peaceable, and conciliatory"—all qualities he believed that Adams lacked, (Vergennes to Luzerne, October 22, 1780, George Bancroft Transcripts: Archives Françaises États-Unis [New York Public Library]). Henceforth cited: Bancroft Transcripts: Françaises—États-Unis.

Huntington to Adams, Jan. 10, 1781, Wharton, IV, 229.

Dumas to the Commissioners at Paris, Feb. 16, 1779, ibid., III, 21.

A. Lee to Committee of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 11, 1778, ibid., II, 840.

Adams, in Paris since April, 1778 as a member of the peace commission, was left without any specific occupation when Congress on September 15, 1778 appointed Franklin as minister plenipotentiary to France and dissolved the commission. Although this change had been made partially upon his own recommendation (Adams to Sam Adams, May 21, 1778, Wharton, II, 591-93), he was disappointed when the official notice arrived in February, 1779. Immediately he informed Vergennes and requested passage home as he had no further duties in Europe. He set off for Nantes to embark on the first ship available. Various delays prevented embarkation until June 14, 1779. He disembarked at Boston on August 3 and repaired to his home until re-commissioned on September 25, 1779.

Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 4, 1779, Wharton, III, 281.

Biographical information beyond that given in the text is supplied in the footnotes only for those officials who were directly connected with Adams or when such additional information seemed necessary to an understanding of their relation to Adams.

Joan Derck, Baron van der Capellen (1741-84) was, until expelled for his liberal views, a member of the States of his province of Overyssel. He early carried on a correspondence with Governors Trumbull and Livingston advocating an American representative in the Netherlands. Once acquainted with Adams he became a warm friend and trusted adviser. Shortly after Adams was recognized, Van der Capellen was requested to return to his rightful place in the States of Overyssel (John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, II, 454; Helen Lincklaen Fairchild (ed.), Francis Adrian Van der Kemp (1752-1829: An Autobiography together with Extracts from His Correspondence (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903) dealt extensively with Van der Capellen as a very close friend of Van der Kemp.


102 Adams to President of Congress, Feb. 27, 1780, ibid., p. 526.

103 Adams to Alexander Gillon, March 21, 1780, Adams Papers. An undated list of persons and firms which the editors of the Adams Papers judged to have been written by Adams either in Paris or Brussels before he reached the Netherlands is printed in the Diary and Autobiography (II, 144). Whether any of these names were supplied by Gillon or not, they do evidence Adams' interest in being acquainted with commercial houses. In a letter of March 1, 1780 to John Rutledge (Adams Papers) Gillon spoke of meeting with bankers and brokers who assured him that a million guilders could be procured for ten to fifteen years at five per cent by a person with sufficient authorization. Gillon had already at that time discussed general terms with the house of Jacob and Nicholas Staphorst, "a solid Dutch house of good capital and sound integrity." The same letter advocated that a minister be sent to furnish accurate information and to prepare a treaty against the day when he might be received. Although Gillon's prime purpose in the Netherlands was to borrow in the name of South Carolina, he had made Adams' acquaintance earlier in Paris (John Adams, Boston Patriot) and was to prove helpful to the minister upon his arrival in Amsterdam. As this letter is found under date of March 1 in Adams' letterbook, it is possible that Adams had a copy of Gillon to Rutledge before July, 1780 when Adams left for the Netherlands. It would have undoubtedly strengthened his hopes for Laurens' eventual success.

104 See below, pp. 28-32.

105 Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 29, 1780, Wharton, III, 578-580.
Livingston to Van der Capellen, March 15, 1780, Beaufort, *Brieven van der Capellen*, p. 214. Laurens' appointment (U. S. Continental Congress, *Secret Journals*, II, 284-91, Nov. 1, 1779) was described by Wood (Congressional Control of Foreign Relations, p. 53) as "plain example of the workings of the militia system." He added that "the one thing that France and Spain did not want the United States to do was to attempt the negotiations of loans among neutrals."

Henry Laurens (1724-1792), a South Carolina merchant, planter, and Revolutionary statesman, held various offices on local and state levels. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1777 and served as president of the Congress during 1778. He tried to stay above factional strife but tended at times to side with the Adams-Lee group as his attitude toward France was similar to that held by Adams. Elected in 1779 as minister to the Netherlands, he finally sailed on August 13, 1780 but was captured by the English. He was eventually released and joined the peace commission in Paris only two days before the preliminary articles were signed. The following year and a half he spent as a sort of unofficial minister to England until finally he returned to the United States in 1784, (DAB).


Laurens to the Committee of Foreign Relations, Sept. 14, 1780, Wharton, IV, 56; Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 19, 1780, ibid., p. 60.

J. Adams, *Boston Patriot*, pp. 102-103; Franklin to the President of Congress, Aug. 9, 1780, Wharton, IV, 23.


In April, 1780 Richard Cumberland, an English playwright, at his own importuning was permitted to approach Floridablanca with overtures for peace. As these were conditional upon Spain's not insisting upon either Gibraltar or Minorca, his mission was doomed to eventual failure. (For further details see Morris, pp. 56-62.)
Adams later contended that he probably would not have obtained Vergennes' permission even in July "if the controversy which arose had not made him wish to get rid of me" (Adams to the Boston Patriot, May 15, 1811, C. F. Adams, Works, I, 654). Beyond doubt Vergennes would have been delighted to "get rid" of him if it had been an American-bound vessel that was to be the means. It is doubtful if giving Adams the freedom of the Netherlands would have appealed to Vergennes as a good way to rid himself of that restless character. As the dates of the correspondence clearly indicated, Vergennes not only granted permission before the controversy reached the no-further-communication stage, but Adams, who began the journey on July 27, was already en route before that date. The permission was granted some time before July 23 (Adams to President of Congress, July 23, 1780, Wharton, III, 877), but Vergennes replied at length to Adams' eleven reasons for communicating with the English on July 25, and only on July 29 completely cut off communication with Adams (ibid., IV, 3-6, 16-17).

"Patriot" was a title first assumed by the journalists and pamphleter's of the circle of Van der Capell to designate persons holding political views akin to their own. It shortly became a party name encompassing the political opponents of the Stadholder, those citizens who entertained democratic views, and numerous aristocratic members of the city regencies (Petrus Johannes Blok, History of the People of the Netherlands, Part V: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, translated by Oscar A. Bierstadt/ New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912, pp. 204-205. It was primarily with the leaders of this group that Adams associated.


As of 1778 England had 122 warships, France had 62 and Spain 63.

A letter to the British ministry from one of their agents at Amsterdam to the effect that eighteen Dutch vessels sailed from that city alone in the first four months of 1776 laden with gunpowder for American purchase at St. Eustatius, a free port of the Netherlands in the West Indies (Irvine to Suffolk, May 14, 1776, Jared Sparks Transcripts /Harvard University Library/, Vol. LXXII), indicated the magnitude of the trade. To prevent detection by merely cursory inspection, gunpowder was often sent in tea chests or rice barrels, or other appropriate disguise. The profits from this illicit trade could command one hundred to four hundred per cent (Edler, p. 39). For further interesting information on the role of this port in the Revolution see J. Franklin Jameson, "St. Eustatius in the American Revolution," AHR VIII (July, 1903), 683-708.
The treaty of 1674 permitted either country to carry on trade with enemy ports in non-contraband articles. Ships' timbers and the various naval stores were specifically excluded from the list of contraband in this treaty. As opposed as England was to the use of these regulations in 1778, she had willingly profited by them on former occasions when the Netherlands were at war. For a discussion of customary maritime practice and the enactment of special differences in specific treaties see Bemis, pp. 130-36; Edler, pp. 95-99.

Bemis, p. 139.

Suffolk to Welderen, the Dutch ambassador at the Court of St. James, Oct. 19, 1778, Bancroft Transcripts: America, Holland, and England. This letter is summarized in Francis Piggott and G. W. T. Ormond (eds.), Documentary History of the Armed Neutralities, 1780 and 1800 (London: University of London Press, 1919), I, 105. In this collection may also be found summaries or excerpts from a representative number of the French and English negotiations with the United Provinces on neutrality in 1778 and 1779.

Bemis, p. 139.

The Duc de la Vauguyon was appointed to The Hague by Vergennes in 1776. Basically his instructions were to arouse Dutch commercial greed to a point sufficient to assure their neutrality in the approaching Anglo-French troubles. Beyond this general directive he was given a fairly free hand in policy. He admirably acquitted himself of his post (Edler, p. 20). M. de Fllassan, Histoire général et raisonnée de la diplomatie Française (2d ed. rev. Paris: Treuttel et Wiirtz, 1811), VII, 279-96, placed major emphasis on La Vauguyon's efforts to undermine Anglo-Dutch relationships while strengthening Franco-Dutch relations.

Edler, pp. 106, 112-113. France would cease to accord the Dutch the privileges which they had been enjoying in the ports of France. English property would henceforth be seized if found on Dutch ships. This was no empty threat as Dutch ships were also the carriers of much goods between English merchants and the American states (Edler, p. 38).

Duke de la Vauguyon to States General, December 7, 1778, Wharton, II, 854.

Piggott and Ormond, pp. 108-109; Bemis, pp. 142-43.


Until this time neither England nor France had formally declared war on the other. England hesitated to draw the full force of the Family Compact upon herself and France could not afford to risk the implementation of the Anglo-Dutch alliance until the Patriot party in Holland was strong enough to prevent its success.
Spain and France were assembling an armada to invade England in July, 1779 (Morris, pp. 27-42, for detailed explanation).

Edler, pp. 128-129. The Dutch were not entirely neglectful of Yorke's memorial only timorous in approaching the business. They did at times withhold convoys even from vessels over which there was no dispute because they were unwilling that ships loaded with timbers should take advantage of the convoy (Dumas to Franklin, Sept. 14, 1779, Wharton, III, 314).

Neither the French nor the Dutch government was too pleased with Jones' sojourn there and made all possible efforts to speed him on his way. For interesting details of their efforts see the correspondence in Wharton, III, 404-431. Renaut, I, 280-282, credited Jones' visit with long-term effects. He viewed it as more capable of convincing the Dutch of American power then the "announcement of far-off victories" or the "long dithyrambes" published by the gazettes.

Bemis, p. 146; Edler, pp. 129-131. Edler relying on Colenbrander, I, 166 stated that 25 or 30 ships were laden with hemp, iron, tar, pitch, and other materials not excluded from convoy by the States General. In company with them, but not under convoy, travelled 18-20 ships laden with ship timbers. Fielding, whose courteous request for permission to examine cargoes was refused, took in the ensuing encounter several vessels found to carry naval stores. He permitted all others to proceed. Bylandt refused to continue to France and followed the captured ships to Spithead from whence his government called him home.

The return to neutral status would mean that the customary English adherence to the consolato del mare--namely, neutral property except contraband was safe on enemy ships but enemy property was subject to capture on neutral ships--would become effective. This would rob the Dutch of their privileged status under the treaty of 1674 and thereby jeopardize all Dutch shipping with France, Spain, and America (Bemis, p. 131).

Edler, pp. 134-35.

Adams to President of Congress, April 10, 1780, Wharton, III, 605, 613. The declaration was enclosed in Adams to President of Congress, April 28, 1780 (pp. 635-636).

Enclosure in Adams to President of Congress, May 13, 1780, ibid., pp. 675-76.

Edler, p. 136.

Memorial of La Vauguyon and French decree enclosure in Adams to President of Congress, May 2, 1780, Wharton, III, 645-46.
140 Bemis, pp. 147, 169; Meng, The Comte de Vergennes, p. 91; Flasan, VII, 284.

141 Edler, pp. 11-12 note, correctly maintained that an outline of their constitution was essential "in order to make the proceedings there during the revolutionary period comprehensible." Bemis found the same thing to be true (Bemis, pp. 117-18). The account given here is based upon the information found in Edler and Bemis unless otherwise noted.

142 He was the son of Princess Anne, the daughter of George II of England. He portrayed his mother's devotion to her native country (Bemis, p. 119).

143 Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 14, 1782, Wharton, V, 99.

Arriving in Brussels early in the evening of Saturday, July 29, Adams deposited Charles and John Quincy at their lodgings, the Hotel de L'Impératrice, and immediately set out to find Edmund Jenings, with whom he had frequently discussed America and her proper stance vis-à-vis France, England, and the Northern Powers. He failed to find Jenings at home but met another itinerant American, Ralph Izard, on the street and exchanged bits of information with him. Later in the evening Jenings came to their hotel and the two men spent some hours in discussion. The next four days Jenings devoted almost entirely to the entertainment of Adams, while his nephew, Mr. Bordley, took more particular charge of showing the Adams boys the sights of Brussels. William Lee often attended the Jenings-Adams briefing sessions and by Adams' departure time Thursday morning, the three men were convinced that they were kindred spirits in the cause of independence.

The travellers spent a night in Anvers and on Friday, August 4, the Adams group entered the Netherlands and rented rooms at the Hotel du Maréchal de Turenne at Rotterdam for the weekend. While on a quick foray about the city, Adams became acquainted with Mr. Dubbeldemuts, a Dutch financier. He dined with his new acquaintance and several English gentlemen. Later in the day the Dubbeldemuts coach picked up the minister and his two sons to take them to the financier's country estate for the evening. Sunday they toured
the city more extensively. John Quincy Adams noted the great number of English churches in Rotterdam and commented that he had heard that nearly half of the inhabitants were Englishmen but that very few French resided there. In a note to Jenings, Adams corroborated his son's findings. He wrote that he had been to hear a "sensible" English sermon and "a very good prayer excepting a very unnecessary petition for a certain king that he might have health and long life and that his enemies might not prevail against him." Adams could have no part in this prayer, so he substituted "an enunciation which was very sincere that he might be brought to consideration and repentance and to do justice to his enemies and to all the world."3 This preponderance of English in one of the major cities of the Netherlands perhaps was both a cause and a result of the long friendship existing between the Low Countries and England. It also foreshadowed a difficult time for any one who wished to turn Dutch affection in another direction.

A brief boat trip on Monday morning brought the group first to Delft and from there to The Hague, which they reached about one in the afternoon. In this city, Dumas showed them the sights, and introduced Adams to various persons friendly to America. Tuesday afternoon, they returned to Delft, some five miles from The Hague, where Dumas desired to introduce a leading gazetteer to Adams. The next morning Dumas and Adams called on the Duc de la Vauguyon, the French ambassador at The Hague. The afternoon was devoted to a trip to Leyden and contacting friends of Dumas there. Although neither John Quincy nor his father made diary mention of meeting Jean Luzac, the editor of the Leyden Gazette, they very probably did meet him. At least Adams began sending a steady stream of articles almost immediately to Luzac
for publication and within a few weeks, was writing to his friends that Luzac's paper was "my vehicle for conveying the news."  

Early Thursday morning the Adamses boarded a boat for the last stage of their trip to Amsterdam. Within the hour they reached Haarlem, where they spent the greater part of the day, and then around four in the afternoon began the two hour boat trip to Amsterdam. The location of the Amsterdam wharf, nearly two miles from their hotel, necessitated a walk which Adams used to good advantage in meeting several American gentlemen. Among them was a Mr. Bradford who had travelled to America with Adams in 1779 and was then residing at The First Bible Inn with other Americans. The next morning, August 11, the restless minister set himself about the business of contacting any and all who might be friendly to or influential in the cause of America. While he was gone to visit the various Americans residing at The First Bible, a Frenchman named Duneville brought Commodore Gillon to visit. That evening Gillon sent word that he and the burgomaster Hooft had combined efforts to find more suitable lodgings for the minister and the next day Adams and his party moved to Madame Schorn's, a private dwelling near Gillon. This move, Adams later wrote, was made because he wished to be "more removed from the observation of spies," the Hotel de Ville where he first took rooms being the resort of a variety of groups including many Englishmen. De Neufville, a Patriot banker with whom Adams was to have frequent dealings in the months to come, invited the family to his country seat at Haarlem for Sunday. On Monday Adams dined with another renowned banker, Staphorst, who eventually was one of the partners in a successful loan negotiated by Adams.

During the succeeding weeks Adams put in very busy days. When he was
not out visiting other Americans or Dutch merchants, bankers, and publicists, he was entertaining them in his own apartments. John Quincy's diary for the remainder of August, until his father put the two boys in a Dutch boarding school, is filled with his father's comings and goings and the names of Gillon, Neufville, Staphorst, Hooft the burgomaster, Vischer and Van Berckel (pensionaries or councilmen), Guild and LeRoy (Americans living in Amsterdam)—all important connections for a diplomat to cultivate. Gillon accompanied Adams on many of his visits as this young man spoke the Dutch language and could act as interpreter and had special entrées because of his Dutch relationship. Since Gillon was conveniently a next-door neighbor, communication between the two men was not easily supervised by the "spies" of the Hotel de Ville.

While Adams was warily being watched even by his confederates—partially in hopes that he might be doing good but with trepidation that he might "inadvertently do evil as a stranger,"—the roving minister was taking his own measure of the situation. In order to be prepared for whatever opportunities might arrive, Adams visited the booksellers, bought a grammar, dictionary, and history in Dutch and proceeded to learn something of the language and country. He expressed amusement at the political speculations within the country. "Everyone has his prophecy, and every prophecy is a paradox." It seemed "as if they had studied for every impossibility and agreed to foretell it as a probable future event." After a few weeks in Amsterdam he wrote home to assure Abigail that he was spending his time agreeably and was very pleased with Holland, a "singular country . . . like no other." He admired and wished his countrymen would emulate the frugality,
industry, and cleanliness he had observed as he believed that these were a source of the immense wealth and great prosperity there. He found them "very sociable, however, in their peculiar fashion."\(^10\)

The "peculiar" way of thinking portrayed by the Dutch never failed to attract his attention--sometimes to intrigue him; at other times, to exasperate. "The country where I am is the greatest curiosity in the world. This nation is not known anywhere, not even by its neighbors. The Dutch language is spoken by none but themselves. Therefore they converse with nobody, and nobody converses with them." He admired them nevertheless. "I doubt much whether there is any nation in Europe more estimable than the Dutch in proportion. Their industry and economy ought to be examples to the world. They have less ambition, I mean that of conquest and military glory, than their neighbors, but I don't perceive that they have more avarice. And they carry learning and arts I think to greater extent. The collection of curiosities, public and private, are innumerable."\(^11\) Less than three months later, when all his efforts to borrow money seemed in vain, a very different analysis flowed from the Adams quill: "Such a nation of idolaters at the shrine of Mammon never existed I believe before."\(^12\) He returned to his original kindly regard for the Dutch when his work began bearing fruit.

Adams arrived in the Low Countries at a time of political indecision. The government was divided between those who favored a return to the old friendship with England and the comparative safety of the treaty of 1674 and those who favored the growing rapport with France and the lucrative trade awaiting them there. The English partisans were busily trying "to perplex, delay, and cross everything." They were accused--and probably were guilty--
of efforts to "intrigue more here than in all Europe besides." By August, 1780, when Adams arrived on the scene, the Armed Neutrality—approved by France, hated by England—was serving to crystallize opinion in the various groups. Many, but by no means a majority as yet, viewed adhesion to the Neutral League as a possible means of retaining both neutrality and trade. Others, recognizing their proximity to Great Britain and the vulnerability of their far-flung colonies, feared retaliation and hesitated to join the Armed Neutrality without a special guaranty of their colonial possessions. Still others were completely averse to any measure known to displease the English and thereby risk war. Thulemeyer, the Prussian ambassador, probably oversimplified the dividing lines but he had the general idea when he informed Frederick II that Amsterdamer was wanted to accede to the Neutral League without the guarantees if necessary; the Anglomanes were for temporizing with England, and the Patriots acknowledged the advantages of acceding but desired the guaranty and a treaty of alliance as their conditions for adherence.

Regardless of what view each individual group or regency entertained toward the Armed Neutrality, all had but one ambition, the development of their commerce and their own consequent enrichment. Their interest centered on European affairs, not on the struggle for independence in a republic across the ocean. The pro-American journalistic endeavors of the few, e.g., Jean Luzac and Baron Van der Capellen, found the Dutch populace unresponsive. Even among the most republican, including those who had feted John Paul Jones, there were few who saw a risk of war with England as corollary to sympathy with the United States.

Nor was there any very exciting news from America with which the newly-
arrived John Adams could hope to break through the national fixation. English victories by Clinton, Cornwallis, and Tarleton in the southern states were being "trumpeted throughout Europe." The news of Charleston particularly cast a pall upon the Patriots and animated the Anglophiles to talk of demanding unconditional surrender. The London journals had a heyday reporting the American loss, consequent discouragement, and growing intent to return to England. That these reports went beyond the truth made little difference in their effect, and all of the Adams ingenuity was required to contradict the impressions fostered by the British press. A complete knowledge or recital of the facts would hardly have been of much assistance. Actually the loss of Charleston discouraged many stalwart patriots in America itself of ever winning the South. If Adams had only known it, more bad news was then in the making. General Horatio Gates, appointed by Congress without Washington's approval, led a weary, sick, and bedraggled army against Cornwallis near Camden, South Carolina, on August 16, 1780. The ensuing battle was a rout. Gates' mad rush for safety provided poor propaganda material for Adams. For the next two months, Cornwallis harried the South Carolina countryside until the British defeat at King's Mountain forced him to retire for a time. Hopes arose briefly when Rochambeau with six thousand men safely disembarked at Newport, Rhode Island, on July 10, 1780, but shortly fell when it became all too apparent that Admiral de Ternay with his ten French war vessels was bottled up in Narragansett Bay and that Rochambeau would not move out from the protection of the fleet.

Congress was as usual beset with internal problems. The bickering between the pro- and anti-Gallican forces continued. Maryland had not yet
acceded to the Articles of Confederation; many states, including the home
state of delegate Sam Adams, were not complying with the Continental Congress' rule of no more than three consecutive terms for any delegate; foreign affairs were conducted by committee and frequently controlled by the French ambassador, and the sessions of Congress were filled with cabals and schemes to discredit both Franklin and Washington. One member of Congress rather succinctly described Congressional muddling. "I once read of a people who were at times led by a cloud; and I have known a people whose Grand Multiform'd Sanhedrin were often times in the midst of a fog." There was little in all this with which to enlist a vibrant Dutch interest in America's behalf. Nevertheless, that was the motive behind the Adams visit.

The minister had forewarned Franklin that he planned to see what possibilities could be discovered in the Low Countries and he was not the man to postpone any objective once he had judged it as good. Consequently he surveyed the entire situation with a practiced eye and began a three-pronged assault on Congress, the Dutch bankers, and the Dutch people almost immediately. His minimum objective was a loan for the United States. Dutch recognition of American independence would be a most acceptable bonus. His political intuition plus the information garnered from dozens of interviews with leading figures during the early weeks of his sojourn in the Netherlands convinced him that if America desired changed United States-Netherlands relations, she would have to assume the initiative. His correspondence consequently reflected his eagerness for the arrival of Henry Laurens, commissioned minister plenipotentiary to the Netherlands. One of his first letters from Amsterdam was to Samuel Huntington, the President of Congress, stressing the
disappointment Laurens' delay caused and the great need for "some prudent person authorized by Congress." He candidly admitted that the "prudent person" selected for The Hague probably would not be received for some time, but he believed the attempt would be amply compensated by the fine position afforded for collecting intelligence and dispersing information. He was in full accord with William Lee who complained that Congress had not paid the Dutch the attention that they merited or that American interests required. He recounted Lee's complaint almost verbatim to Congress, adding that a minister in Holland would influence public opinion in several nations. Failure to have a minister there, according to Lee, was a regrettable error since a recognition of independence could probably be obtained from the Dutch if they were properly managed. Since Laurens obviously had not arrived, who would be more able to manage "properly" than Adams?

Adams, having decided to substitute in Laurens' absence, notified Dana (with the injunction to keep the information confidential) that he would probably remain at Amsterdam at least until the beginning of November. Adams then proceeded to carry out the duties which he presumed would constitute a minister's obligations; namely, to keep Congress informed of the latest European developments, to influence public opinion in favor of his country, and to secure the needed funds to successfully carry on the war. Among the foremost of these was the business of keeping Congress informed. Under his commission as peace negotiator, he had been sending Congress information on the foundation and scope of the Armed Neutrality and anything else that seemed of general interest. In his newly-assumed role he dispatched a plethora of information. No event, incident, expression, or paper that might
have political overtones was too insignificant for transmission. Every conveyance was utilized and letters, sometimes three or four in a day, were penned for the enlightenment and guidance of Congress. In his new center of activity, he was aided by Dumas' access to several important men in government. At the same time his own sources of information were expanded. He was enabled to coach Congress on such diverse matters as the capture of a large number of the British West India Fleet and Cumberland's peace mission to Spain. Regarding the first of these he related that fifty-five ships with a large number of soldiers and sailors had been taken and rejoiced that this opened the "right vein." He added the gratuitous advice that American privateers should do their share in promoting this "short, easy and infallible method of humbling the English."33 Cumberland's "errand" he looked upon as a "mere finesse of the British Ministry" to promote their own stocks, loans, and re-election and to lull the belligerents while actually preparing for future campaigns.34

Another duty that Adams felt a loyal and zealous minister should undertake was to influence public opinion in favor of his country. Adams had already assumed this responsibility. Within a fortnight of his arrival he had begun showering the editor of the Leyden Gazette and various other gazetteers with all manner of articles for publication. Indeed, at times he literally jammed the presses. The commission which he soon received to borrow money merely increased his persistence and his impatience. There seemed to be a great deal of darkness to be dispelled before he could hope to turn Dutch interest toward the United States. On first entering the country, he had concluded that the American cause "never suffered from anything more than
from the failure of giving and receiving information." The longer his sojourn among the Amsterdamer, who were "the most attentive to our affairs and the best inclined toward us," the greater his surprise at their lack of knowledge of the most fundamental facts concerning America. He bemoaned the fact that there were very few "who do not consider the American resistance as the desultory rage of a few enthusiasts, without order, discipline, law or government. There are scarcely any who have an adequate idea of the numbers, the increasing population, or the growing commerce of America." To overcome this deficiency he went to unlimited efforts himself. He also besought Congress to have printed and made available throughout Europe a complete edition of all state constitutions and the Articles of Confederation. Publication of such a book he believed would do more to prove the inevitability of American independence than any other act short of a complete military victory. He envisioned a volume of this nature being so well accepted that in a short time it would be translated into every European language; that even persons who did not know the English language would learn it purely for the sake of reading this work.

Adams was greatly concerned that the sovereigns of Europe would take measures inconsistent with American needs for no other reason than for "want of light." In the Netherlands in particular, the British ambassador, Sir Joseph Yorke, was busily engaged in directing the propagation of false reports. Only the presence of a minister, amply supplied by Congress with frequent and correct information, could succeed in negating the effects of Yorke's activities or in dispelling the fears of the Dutch sufficiently that a loan could be successfully floated. To counter British propaganda that
the "rebellious colonies" were suffering great distress and were on the verge of submission, Adams dispatched numerous articles for publication in important journals. One of the foremost of these journals was the *Gazette de Leyde* edited by Jean Luzac. As soon as he was settled in Amsterdam, Adams sent Luzac several items including a copy of an act of the Massachusetts legislature establishing an Academy of Arts and Sciences. He also inclosed a copy of the *Proceedings* of the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia and suggested that learned societies in Europe might like to exchange notes with the American groups. Such articles Adams assured Luzac should convince the Dutch that the people of major American cities, far from being discouraged to the point of submission, felt sufficiently secure to indulge in the pursuits of peace. 40 Luzac immediately supplied an introduction to this effect and published these articles so well calculated to strike a resonant chord in the culturally-minded Dutch. Drawing Adams' attention to the good use he had made of them, Luzac requested the minister to send more. 41

As soon as Adams received an official copy of the Massachusetts constitution as accepted by the convention, Adams forwarded it to Luzac. He appended the explanation that this would be the first European publication of it as only the report of the committee had been previously printed in either European or English papers. 42 He was particularly desirous that Luzac reproduce it as "many gentlemen here are inquisitive concerning the American forms of government." The publication of this document, at least a portion at a time, could serve the double purpose of gratifying curiosity and of promoting the American cause. By way of personal note, he pointed out to Luzac that he himself had had a not inconsiderable part in the drafting of this
constitution and that he was particularly "ambitious" to see it translated by
the editor of the Leyden Gazette, which he esteemed "the best in Europe, both
in point of style and method." Luzac, pleased to receive the original
edition, promised to have it translated and inserted as soon as place became
available: "The abundance of material ... has forced me to delay it in
spite of myself." Adams was partially responsible for this shortage of
space since Luzac had translated and published a number of extracts from
the American papers Adams forwarded to him. Adams also transmitted a copy
of the constitution to Edmund Jenings in Brussels. Jenings immediately for-
warded it to a friend in England for publication there. This became a
familiar pattern in Adams' propaganda activities--release articles through
one or more local papers and send them simultaneously to Jenings to be for-
warded for publication in England.

Following close upon the release of the Massachusetts Constitution, he
introduced, through the European press, an English publication which appeared
to give support to the Americans. This was his abridgment of a pamphlet
written by Thomas Pownall, a former governor of Massachusetts who had returned
to England. In this Pownall pamphlet, Adams found "so many quaint words
and dark expressions intermixed with so many good thoughts and so much knowl-
edge of America" that he deemed it worth translating--with modifications.
Consequently, he rewrote the pamphlet, had his version translated into French
by M. Adenet, and sent it to Luzac. After assuring Adams that the brochure
certainly merited publication and that it would inspire many sentiments fa-
vorable to American interests, Luzac suggested that perhaps the author had
too vigorously depicted the changes which the American Revolution could make
in the European commercial system. He feared the conclusions that might be
drawn from the pamphlet; American independence would despoil Russia of her
commerce in ships' timbers and various naval supplies, cause Sweden to lose
her market for iron, and Holland to suffer in her carrying trade. Luzac
granted that the author—he had been told only that it was an abridgement of
a real pamphlet and did not know that Adams had done the revising—had pointed
out extensive advantages but he felt that the general reaction would be one
of fear. He therefore requested permission to add a preface which would
soften the impression these commercial implications might create. 49

Adams willingly granted the request to add a preface, which he later
commented was worth more than the pamphlet, 50 but he took exception to the
idea that the commercial system of Europe would be significantly affected by
American independence. This argument was not new to him and he had his an-
swers prepared. America was, and for centuries to come would remain, basic-
ally an agricultural country. He emphasized that America's commerce could
never increase except in proportion to its agricultural growth and that
centuries would be required to populate the county's vast agricultural area. 51
This was hardly an accurate prophecy on Adams' part, nor was his next point
of much greater validity. He reasoned that America would import far greater
quantities of hemp, sailcloth, cordage, and linens than could be offset by
any interference on her part in the tar, iron, or timber market—the Atlantic
was too broad and its passage too difficult to enable Americans to carry
great quantities of these to Europe. On the contrary, he claimed that trade
would improve since America would be importing European goods directly from
the continent rather than from England. 52 Adams' most frequent theme was the
tremendous advantage that trade with an independent America would be to Europe in general and the Netherlands in particular.

Luzac, satisfied with Adams' reasoning and with the permission to add a preface according to his own taste, proceeded to get the pamphlet into print. This French translation subsequently became known in the Netherlands as the Pensées. The process of publication was altogether too slow for Adams who expressed impatience in the same breath as he ordered a dozen or two copies. Luzac excused the delay on the plea of family affairs and promised copies within a few days. The promise was not strictly fulfilled as the printers were extremely slow and the bookdealer Luzac had first contacted to handle the work refused. It was, however, ready for distribution by mid-November and Luzac dispatched a dozen copies to Adams. The minister quickly disposed of them and ordered a "couple dozen more" as that was "the critical moment to do good."

Circumstances shortly presented Adams with a further opportunity to propagandize. While dining one evening with a group of merchants, bankers, ministers, and lawyers, briefly a group of the Patriot party, Adams was asked a number of questions on various American affairs by the eminent jurist, Henrick Calkoen. The conversation proved of great interest but rather slow and tedious as one spoke no English and the other no Dutch. Someone proposed that Calkoen write out his questions and Adams write answers to them. Mr. LeRoy, a mutual friend, volunteered to translate for Adams. Accordingly, within a few days Adams received a list of twenty-six questions and immediately set himself to the business of answering them through a series of letters. Some of these were very lengthy but, as he wrote one or more each
day, he produced the complete series between October 4 and October 27, 1780. In these letters he emphasized the points most pertinent to the development of the opinions and impressions he firmly believed should be prevalent among the commercial class in particular. America's determination to win and to maintain independent status, her promising financial future once the current difficulties were surmounted, and the advantage that an immediate loan to the United States would work to the lender as well as to the borrower were the ideas expounded in his most colorful and convincing style. Mr. Calkoen was so satisfied with the answers that from the information given he drew up a comparison of the revolt of the Low Countries from Spain and that of the colonies from England. He concluded that whereas it required a kind of miracle for the former to be successful, it would require a greater miracle to prevent the success of the latter. Calkoen's composition stressing the inevitability of American independence and financial greatness was read to a society of approximately forty men of letters who regularly met at Amsterdam. The American minister ever regarded it as an important contribution. "By that means, just sentiments of American affairs began to spread, and prevail over the continual misrepresentations of English and Stadholderian gazettes, pamphlets, and newspapers."  

Shorter items were normally in good supply. On September 20, Adams transmitted to Luzac several letters he had recently received from America with the stipulation that the names of the correspondents be withheld. In well-regulated doses Luzac dispensed the information that they contained. Excerpts on the popular acceptance of the Massachusetts Constitution (S. Adams), the revived spirit of 1765 and 1766 with women demonstrating great
enthusiasm (Rush), and the friendly relations between the American people and the French soldiers in America (Cooper) were excellent as counter-propaganda. Franklin in Paris was similarly aware of the need for counteracting British propaganda and of the good effect of a favorable press. Indicating that he thought extracts should be published, Franklin sent Dumas and Adams letters from two French officers in Rochambeau's army. These letters lauded the American troops and spoke well of the good understanding which existed between American and French troops. Adams quickly took the suggestion, requested more extracts, and assured Doctor Franklin that such intelligence was essential to dispel "the universal and profound ignorance of America" that he had encountered in the United Provinces.

In the task of spreading the knowledge of America, Adams was delighted to enlist the aid of several new-found friends. As he searched the bookstalls for authentic information on the constitution and the history of the United Provinces, a series of volumes by A. M. Cerisier was recommended to him. The work was so satisfactory for his purpose that he inquired further about the author and, learning that Cerisier resided in Utrecht, he travelled there to meet him. Shortly the two men were on the most intimate terms. Cerisier introduced Adams to Mr. Wild, the Swiss bookseller with whom he boarded, and thus gave Adams a critical supplier of pertinent books and papers. Cerisier was also a regular contributor to various papers and could thus be of assistance to Adams. As he was conversant with English, French, and Dutch, as well as other languages, he frequently served as the translator of English publications which Adams desired to make available to the French and Dutch reading public. Cerisier also turned French and Dutch publications into English that
Adams might the better utilize them to enlighten himself, to forward to Congress, or to have republished in the Netherlands and in England.

By means of the outlets at Cerisier's disposal, Adams aired his views on the many aspects of America's relations with England and with Europe. In a comparison of the American debt with that of England, Adams depicted America as being the more solvent. He averred that the United States could undergo another hundred years of war without her debt being proportionally greater in 1880 than Britain's currently was. In regard to finance (one of the subjects of greatest interest to the Dutch) he pointed out that at the prevailing exchange rate of forty to one, a one and one-fourth million dollar loan would annihilate all the paper bills in circulation. These speculations were sent to Cerisier with a gentle suggestion. "Your observations on American credit I shall expect with impatience as they will undoubtedly throw much light upon our affairs." His impatience was well founded. The Dutch were extremely wary of America's ability to pay her bills. When Cerisier's enthusiasm for America led him to propose publishing a separate periodical to serve her cause, Adams was quick to encourage him.

Among the first to seek out an acquaintanceship with Adams was the Baron Van der Capellen. He initiated a correspondence with the minister and recommended to him several worthy friends, among them--Adrian Valck of Rotterdam, the financier, Tegelaar, and Francis Adrian Van der Kemp. Both Van der Capellen and Van der Kemp wielded extremely influential pens and some of the most famous Patriot propaganda pieces during the revolution were the result of their endeavors. It was largely through these men that Adams could feel the pulse of the intellectual groups and key his arguments and his rebuttals.
accordingly. Bad news from America inevitably produced among the intellectuals a feeling of despondency and the prediction of ultimate failure. This reaction, however, was invariably turned to good use by Adams' ready explanation of each misfortune as being of minor importance, or of temporary duration, or as being vastly exaggerated and misrepresented. Time consumed explaining his viewpoint Adams considered well spent since his correspondents were in strategic positions to influence the various groups from whom America would have to receive support if she ever hoped to borrow money in the United Provinces.

Because Dutch opinion fluctuated with every foreign news item, and since many items in the fall of 1780 tended to support the Anglophiles, Adams used every avenue he could commandeer to counteract the effects of these news bulletins. Stories of Cornwallis' victory at Camden, South Carolina, caused consternation in the Netherlands. He brushed the victory off as greatly exaggerated and of no lasting consequence. Arnold's defection only proved that Americans were as firm against bribes as against arms since Arnold had led no soldier, sailor, "nor even his own valet" to the English camp. When the English gained a temporary advantage in the South, he stressed the Southern militia's lack of experience in war—a defect time would remedy as it had in the North where the English could do "nothing but show their ill-will." When the English took St. Martin, Adams again dashed off articles which Cerisier was free to use as he wished provided he did not mention their authorship. The unrest caused by the widely publicized English versions of each of these misfortunes in conjunction with the shattering disclosure of a privately projected Dutch-American treaty imperatively urged Adams to
some literary counteroffensive. He discovered an effective weapon in narratives written by Generals Howe and Burgoyne to explain their failures in America. In November he sent Cerisier a copy of Howe's Narrative to translate. Although Howe had carefully avoided giving any information either on the weakness of England or the strength of America beyond that which was necessary for the vindication of his own conduct, Adams seized upon the account. He declared that it contained enough "to convince any impartial reader that there was neither light nor integrity in the British ministry; that the intent of England was evil." It seemed to him that the Howe translation made a great impression because it presented a convincing argument on the impracticability of either subduing or regaining America. Pleased with the result of that pamphlet, Adams asked Digges to send a copy of Burgoyne's apologia. This, too, Cerisier translated and published to substantiate further the impression made by Howe's Narrative.

Adams was too much of an activist, however, to spend all his time banishing ignorance by submitting propaganda pieces to the gazettes or reports to Congress. Congress would undoubtedly benefit by a steady flow of information but it was desperately in need of money. Adams was as aware of this as anyone. Further, he believed that complete dependence on France to provide financial support made America too subservient to her ally. This was a major reason, to his way of thinking, why ministers should be sent to a number of the foreign courts with the necessary commission to initiate loans. Shortly after his arrival in the Netherlands Adams had imparted some of these impressions to Franklin. In response, Franklin used the occasion to express his opinion of "militia diplomacy." "I have long been humiliated with the
idea of our running about from court to court begging for money and friendship, which are the more withheld the more eagerly they are solicited, and would perhaps have been offered, if they had not been asked.81 This challenge could not go unanswered. Adams agreed that he, as well as Franklin, felt the mortification of soliciting funds but only "because the solicitations have not succeeded." He could see no reason to be ashamed of the need to borrow money after six years of successful warfare against a powerful nation which had been borrowing regularly from all the countries of Europe. He then delivered a clear defense of his theory of "militia diplomacy" as a justification of his own activity.

To send ministers to every great court in Europe, especially the maritime courts, to propose an acknowledgment of the independence of America and treaties of amity and commerce, is no more than becomes us, and in my opinion is our duty to do. It is perfectly consistent with the genuine system of American policy, and a piece of respect due from new nations to old ones. . . . It is necessary for America to have agents in different parts of Europe to give some information concerning our affairs, and to refute the falsehoods that the hired emissaries of Great Britain circulate in every corner of Europe, by which they keep up their own credit and ruin ours. I have been more convinced of this since my peregrinations in this country than ever. The universal and profound ignorance of America here has astonished me.

Practically no letter from Adams to Congress failed to reiterate the need for a properly commissioned minister in the Netherlands where, he thought, money for investment was plentiful. Designedly, the majority of those he met on his trip from Brussels to Amsterdam were bankers or publicists. Upon arrival at Amsterdam he lost no time in securing dinner engagements with bankers of renown such as Neufville and Staphorst. Conversation with these men led Adams to adopt a rosy view of the possibilities for a loan in the Provinces. He concluded that several of the more substantial banking houses
would willingly stand security on loans in return for American produce. If Philadelphia would contract to supply the produce, convoys could safely deliver it either to the Netherlands or to St. Eustatius in the Dutch West Indies. Such a system would not only aid in securing a sorely-needed loan but it would automatically extend the commerce between the two republics and thus help change the political attachments of the Dutch.

Consequently, Adams rejoiced when he received an interim commission, valid until the arrival of Laurens or some other properly appointed person in his stead, to negotiate a loan with the Low Countries. This finally afforded him the opportunity to apply the theories he had been expounding and to do so without the immediate surveillance of Franklin or the French court. After sending for Thaxter, his private secretary who had remained in Paris, he informed Abigail that he had determined to remain in the Netherlands until further orders. He hastened to assure the Committee for Foreign Affairs that he would use his utmost abilities, but, for the first time, he added the warning note that he could promise nothing. At the same time he indirectly assured them that they had made a very prudent choice of negotiator, particularly as his four or five weeks sojourn in the country had furnished him the opportunity of becoming acquainted. He received the commission on September 17 and proceeded directly to ask friends and acquaintances for aid and advice. Since he had no real political authority, he and his advisors agreed that it would probably be better not to make his mission known to the States General but rather to handle the loan as a matter of private credit. He soon discovered this to be a very slow method since it forced him to conduct the business with great secrecy and caution. The problem of communication com-
pounded the difficulty. Most of those to whom Adams wished to apply spoke no English and their French was as sketchy as his own. 88

One of the first to whom Adams appealed for advice was Henrick Bicker, a wealthy merchant, member of one of the most respectable families, and a loyal Patriot. Bicker immediately recommended the House of Vollenhoven as it was "wholly Dutch, biased neither by France nor England." This company, however, refused to take the risk on the grounds that its trade was fixed in the Baltic and could not well be extended to North America. Vollenhoven had suggested Van Blomberg as broker, and this worthy gentleman set up another appointment between the minister and Vollenhoven in hopes of changing the banker's first decision. To no avail! The company continued to refuse. 90

When informed of this refusal, Bicker expressed his regrets but took the opportunity to advise Adams not to apply to them a third time. He remarked that he was not surprised to find that the general credence in the solidity of the United States was somewhat less than Adams liked to believe. To this he significantly added that real confidence could be developed only with great patience and "after the appearance of some person properly accredited." Bicker would have liked to be more helpful but hesitated to recommend others whom the minister might contact as too many refusals could constitute a serious drawback to an otherwise excellent project. 91

Adams needed neither Vollenhoven's refusal, Bicker's advice, nor the advice of other friends to demonstrate to him that a minister plenipotentiary was needed before any large sum could be procured. He had scarcely received the commission to inaugurate a loan when he addressed Congress on the necessity of having at The Hague a minister empowered to conclude political and
commercial treaties. Under his tutelage, Francis Dana, the Secretary to the Peace Commission, sent a similar message to Congress. Adams had been told quite frankly that neither was money as plentiful nor American credit as strong as he had thought. It appeared somewhat "mysterious" to the good mynheers that the person delegated to secure a loan was not simultaneously empowered to negotiate treaties of alliance and commerce. In subsequent letters the same message—a commission to treat politically was essential to negotiations for a loan—was placed regularly before Congress. These letters eventually bore fruit in securing the coveted commission but some months elapsed before the letters arrived in Philadelphia, were acted upon, and the new commission reached Amsterdam.

In the meantime he continued to struggle against difficult odds. When he had first appeared in the Netherlands, he had entertained high hopes of easy negotiations once he had a commission to borrow. He hardly had the commission when the first fears of not being immediately successful entered his mind. Two weeks later he reported that he was still busy inquiring as to the best house and the best terms but that he would postpone a final decision until Laurens' arrival. Shortly, the conflict between England and the Netherlands caused Dutch interest to turn another direction and forced Adams to soft-pedal his efforts to obtain a loan. When he could again take up the matter in earnest, intervening events had further diminished his prospects of success.

In mid-October, news reached him, via Thomas Digges, that Laurens was in the Tower of London and not apt to visit the Netherlands for some time. The British had captured a number of papers in Laurens' custody. Among these
was a draft treaty drawn up in 1778 by John de Neufville, at the behest of Van Berckel and several of the Patriot burgomasters of Amsterdam, and by William Lee of Virginia. The treaty was primarily commercial in character, and it was not intended to become effective until pacific relations were re-established between England and America. Furthermore, it had been conceived by agents acting on their own or, at most, as representatives of only a small segment of the sovereignty of their respective countries. Nevertheless, it was seized upon by England and used as a weapon against the adherence of the Dutch to the Armed Neutrality.

Since the previous spring Russia had been forming a league of the Northern maritime powers in an effort to protect neutral shipping on the principle of free ships make free goods. Denmark and Sweden soon joined Russia but the United Provinces remained uncommitted. Unwilling to sacrifice their trade in ships' timbers and naval supplies, the Dutch merchants had drawn upon themselves the anger of the English government. Some of the Netherlanders saw the Armed Neutrality as a providential answer but others feared English retaliation in the Dutch Indies. All were paralyzed at the thought of war.

Through the summer and early fall of 1780 a desultory correspondence was carried on between The Hague and St. Petersburg. The Hague wanted the League to guarantee her colonial possessions; St. Petersburg refused. Before the Netherlands could be admitted to the League, Russia insisted that The Hague officially notify the belligerents of its determination to accede; the States General hesitated. This seemed too much like unnecessary defiance toward England. France was content to let nature take its course, but England
could not permit the Netherlands enlisting against her the support of the entire Neutral League in a free-ships, free-goods policy. Lord Stormont, English minister of Foreign Affairs, determined that there was but one alternative, regardless of the inconveniences it would involve. If the United Provinces joined the Armed Neutrality, war would be inevitable. The Dutch were hard pressed to find a way out of their dilemma. "All parties are divided over what Holland will do in the Northern Confederation. Neither the Stadholderians nor Republicans, nor Anglomanes, nor Francomanes are agreed." Finally, William V and the Nobles of Holland, fearful that their leadership was failing, desperately inscribed their opinion in the resolution book of the States General in an effort to prevent accession to the League. The proposed confederacy, they declared, gave insufficient security to justify exposing Holland to the wrath of England. They urged that the more unjust the English conduct, the more careful must be that of the republic since she was unable to defend herself. In spite of this formal opinion and the sound reasoning which prompted it, on October 10, the States of Holland and West Friesland, the weathervane of the States General, resolved to accept the confederation on Russian terms.

At this crucial moment, England received a boon in the form of the papers taken from Henry Laurens. Yorke presented these papers, especially the Lee-Neufville draft treaty, to the Prince and the powerful Anglophile Secretary of the States General, M. Fagel, as also to the prince's mentor, the Duke of Brunswick. After consultation with the other two, the prince presented the draft treaty to the States of Holland where it caused considerable astonishment. The States required Amsterdam to report on this matter on
Yorke had been certain that the affair would "thoroughly cool the ardor for the Northern League," but his assurance received a shock when Amsterdam and Van Berckel rather calmly admitted their part in the treaty. The burgomasters then issued a pamphlet to justify their conduct and published a French translation of it in the Amsterdam Gazette. Their explanation was the obvious one—one which has never been contradicted—that the treaty was contingent on the colonies working out an accommodation with Great Britain and that it would be presented for ratification only when that condition was fulfilled. Or as Adams succinctly put it, "The English might as well have alleged a treaty between the rooks on the trees and the storks on the houses as a cause of war."

Yorke and Stormont, however, had determined to persist until either the Netherlands bent to the English will or until war with them could be declared and thus the Dutch forced to stop shipping naval stores to the allies. Both men were convinced that the Hollanders had been treated with too much moderation; the burgomasters' attitude did little to dispel this conviction. Yorke assured his superior that an immediate declaration would have a great influence on the Northern League. Stormont followed the lead and sent a strong memorial to be presented to the States General unless the Provinces showed clear signs of refusing to accede to the Armed Neutrality. Not only did Yorke judge it unlikely that the Provinces would refuse but he knew that votes sufficient to guarantee accession had already been submitted to the Secret Committee. Yorke then rushed his memorial to the States General on November 10 in the hope that some positive votes might be changed before it was too late. His memorial demanded a formal disavowal of the
conduct of the Amsterdam regency, prompt satisfaction proportionate to the offense, and an exemplary punishment of Van Berckel and his accomplices. If the Dutch refused the impossible terms presented, England could declare war and thus put the Netherlands into the position of belligerents and beyond the pale of the Neutral League. When the States General hesitated to print the memorial, Yorke had both Dutch and French translations inserted in The Hague Gazette so that all Europe should understand the distinction England was drawing between this quarrel with the Netherlands and the Neutral League.

The Yorke memorial caused a violent fermentation especially at Amsterdam. For the succeeding weeks fear permeated the Dutch; all interest seemed centered on this memorial which the States General had taken ad referendum. La Vauguyon informed his court of the general indignation and called the memorial an "act of arrogance." However, France was not anxious to have the Netherlands join the belligerents and his home office directed La Vauguyon to advise Holland to disavow the entire proceeding of Amsterdam. Yorke agreed that there was great alarm, especially on the Exchange, but believed that the greater part were unwilling to break with England. He still hoped it would produce a reconciliation on British terms. Adams sent a copy of the memorial to Congress with an explanation of the impossibility of censuring the burgomasters since the Amsterdam regency formed an integral part of the sovereignty of the nation and also paid a fourth of all the taxes. He remarked strong symptoms of resentment throughout the country and noted that insurance rates had gone to twenty or twenty-five per cent, but he was not quite ready to predict that war would result. The memorial he described as "a masterpiece ... a curiosity." Because of the tone of it, he thought
simple non-accession would not satisfy the British who had practically de-
clared war against Van Berckel and the burgomasters, charging them with fac-
tion, cabal, and a host of similar crimes. But he judged that if the republic
did not join the Armed Neutrality, it would be "wholly owing to this memo-
rial." Finally, on November 20, 1780, the States General voted for acce-
ssion and signed the formal agreement with Russia in St. Petersburg on January
3, 1781.

During the period of confusion, Adams had kept Congress informed of
developments. At first he viewed the disclosure of the documents taken from
Laurens with moderate placidity and determined to make the best possible use
of them. In the belief that they were in general quite harmless, he assured
Huntington that "on the whole [it] seems to be rather a fortunate event that
these papers have been publicly produced." He hoped to turn sentiment
against the English for their treatment of Laurens and so collected informa-
tion on Laurens' confinement and forwarded it to Dumas for publication.
Dumas inserted it in the Leyden Gazette after deleting two or three lines be-
cause he feared the reference to "white eyes" would be too apt to compromise
the writer. Adams sanctioned this touch of prudence and submitted that the
title might be "misleading as Nerone neronior is nearer the truth." It
was not long before he had ample cause to reverse his first judgment of the
wisdom of producing the papers. The events of the succeeding months turned
United States-Netherlands relations from poor to much worse. Looking back at
the situation years later he wrote, "The discovery of the Lee-Neufville draft
spread universal consternation throughout the seven Provinces. I do not re-
member to have found one person who pretended to see the wisdom of it."
Other developments also, Adams faithfully reported. In one letter he drew a parallel between Boston and Amsterdam, between Otis, Hancock, or Adams and Van Berckel. In another, he saw England pursuing the same pattern as she had in America—separate the people from their regency and the other cities of Holland from Amsterdam. His surmise was reasonably correct as the Yorke-Stromont correspondence showed that these two ministers contemplated declaring hostilities only on Amsterdam and actually did lay battle plans which would wreak the greatest vengeance on that city. After the republic voted accession to the Armed Neutrality on November 20, Adams informed Congress that, in the opinion of many, the republic would not have taken this step but for the discovery of Laurens' papers. For his part, he did not expect England to honor the Netherlands' decision. He was certain the Court of St. James would prefer risking a war with all the maritime powers to accepting the principle of free ships, free goods. The Netherlands appeared to him to be in an "embarrassing situation." The pro-English prince commanded the army and navy, and was in general supported by the nobility and the clergy. Counterbalancing this advantage, Yorke had apparently erred in giving Laurens' papers to the prince rather than presenting them directly to the States since this made William appear as Yorke's tool, hardly a factor recommending him to the Dutch nation. The intemperateness of the memorial also antagonized many. After expatiating on the pros and cons, Adams opined that "all these things . . . far from aiding our affairs . . . have put an entire stop to them for the present. The nation is trembling for their commerce, their money in the British funds, their East and West India possessions, and no man dares engage in a measure that may in some degree increase the alarm."
On November 23, three days after acceding to the Neutral League, the Province of Holland determined to disavow the action of its burgomasters in the offending treaty and put the entire matter before a Grand Committee acting as a court. England refused to accept these measures as ample satisfaction and presented another memorial with a solemn warning that silence regarding it would be interpreted as a refusal to comply with England's demands. As the situation continued to deteriorate, Adams fired off impressions more rapidly. The general purport of all this correspondence was that the Netherlands would have peace at any price. Adams explained the determination of the Dutch to remain neutral as partially due to their long-standing detestation of the French. Many of the Dutch people hoped they might escape English wrath by joining the Armed Neutrality. England, they presumed, would hesitate to offend such a powerful league. Fears and tumults, however, were on the increase. Franklin was concerned that if the States General complied with Yorke's memorials, Adams would be in jeopardy. Adams was probably too occupied to worry excessively about his own safety at the time, but at a later date, he reminisced that "the apprehension, at this time, was very general, that Mr. Van Berckel and one or two of the burgomasters, Hooft at least, were to be immolated like the De Witts; and not a few expected that the American ambassador would not escape." After Yorke presented a second and even stronger memorial in December, Adams noted that, to a Dutchman, war was the "greatest of evils," and that Yorke was playing on this by a series of memorials "to keep up the panic." For his own part he found this panic a nuisance as well as dangerous. While it continued, his work was almost at a standstill since "no man dares engage
for me; very few dare see me." If the prince's denunciation had "excited an alarm" and Yorke's first memorial "a terror," the second memorial "corroborated and augmented it." A few persons, however, were beginning to feel "the indignity as well as the terror." To Jenings he predicted that Yorke would "kick and cuff and pinch this people until he forces them into a little spunk." He confided that he found men more willing to "cry shame" on the last memorial but credited Yorke with the astuteness to push intimidation only far enough to prevent the Dutch from being of help to America or lending Adams money, not far enough to declare war.

Until the capture of Laurens, Adams had kept his commission to negotiate a loan secret from all but a very few. But, once convinced that the business was entirely in his hands, at least for the foreseeable future, he proceeded to contact prospective brokers and bankers in earnest. After Vollenhoven's refusal to undertake the loan, Bicker recommended Bowens and Sons, relatives of his own. This company displayed some interest for a few days but was soon intimidated by the furor caused by the prince's denunciation of Van Berckel and the magistrates. Importuned to reconsider by Adams, they made some inquiries which convinced them that there was no hope of success and so, on the day of Yorke's first memorial, they again declined the trust. In the meantime, the broker, Blomberg, had taken seriously ill and could not properly attend to his business. This situation presented Adams with a major problem since brokers who spoke French or English as well as Dutch were rare. Bowens suggested Christian Tenkate and William Van Vlooten but Bicker was not enthusiastic about either of these. He agreed that they were capable but feared that they might be influenced by their own interests.
In addition, Van Vlooten resided in Utrecht and, although he might well control the money for investment there, that area possessed insufficient capital for the project Adams contemplated. Thus, after all his efforts, Adams found himself without a broker or a banker. To compound the difficulty, Congress not only remained blissfully unheeding of the financial straits of her minister abroad, but even complicated his situation. By simple resolution they determined that Adams should pay the bills drawn on Laurens. No simple resolution, however, was able to make money available with which to do so. This task required hard work and involved multiple disappointments.

On two occasions only had Adams received some little encouragement in his efforts. Van der Capellen wrote of a relative who was inclined to invest twenty thousand florins. Adams conditionally accepted the offer dependent on a time when a house would be chosen and terms fixed. Both of these conditions were destined to be months in the future. A second hope was offered by Franklin who notified Adams that the king of Spain had offered his guaranty for payment of interest and principal for a $150,000 loan to the United States to be taken up either in France or Holland. Because of loans being floated by the French government, Franklin felt the offer could not be used to full advantage there and passed the information on to Adams. This gentleman responded that he received it "as cold water to a thirsty soul." Unfortunately, it proved a mirage and nothing further came of it. In the meantime, bills were being presented. Adams was forced to refer these to Franklin for payment and to add the information that he had been told that other bills totaling some twenty thousand pounds were on the way.

After months of discouragements, Adams confessed that there were no
prospects of borrowing any money at all. The events of the past year had extinguished any credit that might have been available. "Even the Burgoyning of Cornwallis" would be insufficient to convince the Dutch that they ought to lend to America. To Huntington, Adams described the reasons for the unavailability of money. In the first place, the Dutch traditionally admired the English and hated the French and time would be required to eradicate these prejudices. In the meantime, British arms being consistently successful, the Dutch were little encouraged to invest in a losing cause. Another reason for hesitancy was the long-undetermined question of the Netherlands' accession to the Armed Neutrality and the impropriety of upsetting delicate negotiations. Finally, the publication of Laurens' papers and the angry memorials of Sir Joseph Yorke had upset the entire country. These reasons combined "have thrown this nation into a state of astonishment, confusion, and uncertainty to such a degree that no house I have yet thought it prudent to apply to dares undertake the trust. The times are now critical indeed." When Gillon asked Adams for assistance in procuring a loan for South Carolina, Adams pointed out the United States' money could not be at his disposal to give and, furthermore, there were representatives also from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts in Europe soliciting. To aid one of them would give the others similar rights to seek his assistance. Aside from these reasons, he was simply unable to assist. "I have left no measure unattempted that prudence could justify, but have neither procured any money, nor obtained the least hope of obtaining any. . . . Hopes are all at an end." J. L. Austin, unsuccessfully seeking to borrow on behalf of Massachusetts, was advised to find consolation in the fact that he had had "as good luck as anyone else."
With Adams the expression of discouragement was never synonymous with submission to it. He continued to make extensive inquiries and even various proposals, only to have them politely declined. He, on his part, was loathe to apply to small houses until he had exhausted every possibility of engaging a large concern since the political considerations involved seemed as vital to him as the economic situation. Oddly enough, Adams viewed John Neufville, the only representative of a major house who held out any hope for success, as deceiving himself. Others advised Adams that any effort he would make while the country was so distraught would be injurious. He agreed that little credit would be available while there seemed any danger of England regaining sovereignty in America.

Through November and early December the Anglo-Dutch sparring had elicited from Adams a fresh round of pleas for Congress to commission a minister plenipotentiary. He pointed out the advantages. A commission would secure external respect for its bearer; it would give him the right to claim the privileges and prerogatives of his position; it would assist in getting a loan, and it would designate the person commissioned as the center of American affairs in the country. Since he was already on the scene and ready to act in that capacity, he began inquiries as to the possible extent of his powers. A message to his agent in London requested any information Digges could glean as to whether or not Laurens had a commission as minister plenipotentiary or only the commission to negotiate a loan. James Searle, recently arrived in the Netherlands, assured Adams that Laurens had the desired commission, but Adams was not completely convinced. The American was not alone in his concern about a commission as plenipotentiary. The
English ministry was also interested but with different intent. Stormont directed Yorke to undertake a careful investigation as he had information regarding a proposed connection between the United States and the United Provinces. "It will be essential to watch Adams as narrowly as possible. He certainly has some of the powers that were given to Mr. Laurens, but whether or not his commission is so extensive as that of Laurens I cannot as yet say." Yorke assured the Foreign Minister that the news of one American-Netherlands treaty had been too badly received to fear further activity in that area for a time. Less consoling, however, was the news that Adams had declared that he had full powers to treat with any European country. Actually Yorke was either misinformed or he misinterpreted Adams' powers since that gentleman was commissioned to treat only for a general peace, for a commercial treaty with Britain, and for a Dutch loan.

Adams' own awareness of the limitations of his powers and of the uselessness of all three commissions in the existing circumstances probably contributed to the strong note of discouragement in his December mail. By the early part of the month the Stadholderian party had become sufficiently powerful to engineer the disavowal of the Lee-Neufville treaty in all but two of the cities of Holland. American credit was "totally annihilated." Any who would dare undertake anything would likely be charged with aiding and abetting rebellion. His every effort frustrated, Adams bitterly reflected, "Friendship for us in this country goes little farther than an inclination for our commerce." Conditions were such that every channel he had been pursuing was suddenly being closed to him. Men who had formerly talked encouragingly of loans now refused to hold out the slightest hope. During the
tumult of November, he had rejoiced at the publication of the *Pensées* and Howe's *Narrative* and had eagerly awaited that of the Burgoyne papers. Then there had been so much to be published, but by December a few articles to Digges apparently comprised the entire propaganda effort.

Adams informed Congress that his work was at a standstill and that, far from helping him, few wanted to be seen speaking to him. Even the weather was becoming unpleasant and he grumbled to Jenings. "I shall cover me with flannels and furs like a Dutchman. A man's feelings soon remove all the ridicule of it." It was nearly a year since his arrival in Europe "and the dullest year it has been that I ever saw. Such another, I hope I shall never see." American credit was "not worth a guinea." "As to the olive branch, the seed is not yet sown that is to produce the tree that will bear it." Upon learning that Franklin was again suffering from the gout, he grumbled that he "could wish for the gout, too, or anything else to make the scene agreeable to me, who in this capital of the reign of mammon cannot find the air of Passy or the amusements of Paris." Even the good Puritan virtues of industry, simplicity, and economy were perverted into "only private virtues that begin and end in self." He longed to be at home where he might do something worthy of history, "if I could get there without going after Mr. Laurens." He advised his countrymen to abandon their dependence on Europe. "I wish we were wise enough to depend upon ourselves for everything and upon them for nothing. Ours is the richest and most independent country under heaven and we are continually looking up to Europe for help!" Even attendance at Sunday services proved an irritation to him. In Rotterdam and Utrecht, he chose the Presbyterian service as least likely to be biased
in favor of England; in Amsterdam he visited Episcopalian and Presbyterian chapels. He was annoyed to hear each parson preach and pray for England, the royal family, and their triumph over their enemies—definitely a "work of supererogation in these reverend zealots." It irked him further to recognize these services as a fair gauge of popular opinion since, in addition to the numerous English people, many English-speaking Dutch attended these churches and seemed not to be offended. 156

The year, then, appeared to be ending most dismally from Adams' point of view when the English took a further drastic step. Having received no answer to their latest memorial (December 12), the English ministry directed Yorke to depart from The Hague without taking leave and to repair to Antwerp to await further orders. 157 They also drew up a manifesto in which they traced the development of Anglo-Dutch friendship, listed the aggravations presently suffered from Amsterdam, and declared their intention of securing satisfaction. 158 These actions brought the relations between England and the Netherlands to a new crisis. The news of Yorke's departure on December 25 rekindled the ferment but with one difference—which Adams was quick to note and slow to trust—the English ministry was being rather warmly cursed where formerly it was only feared. His friends believed that things appeared to be improving, but he remained unconvinced for a time. 159 He would concede, however, that the stalemate might well soon be over and either peace or war would result. Peace would be highly preferable to the inhabitants, but, in case of war, the Netherlands could demand the aid of the Armed Neutrality and thereby add four more opponents to England's enemies. These possibilities were something for Adams to watch closely and to be ready to take advantage
of if an opportunity presented itself. In the meantime, there seemed nothing to do but await future developments.
1 It was a small group consisting of the minister and his two sons, Charles and John Quincy. Both Thaxter and Dana had remained in Paris to care for business there.

2 J. Q. Adams Diary, July 26 to Aug. 14, 1780, Adams Papers. The diary gave the most comprehensive account of the trip. This has furnished the sources of the information on these pages unless otherwise noted.

3 Adams to Jenings, August 6, 1780, Adams Papers.

4 Adams to Dana, Sept. 12, 1780, ibid.

5 John Quincy Adams called it the Hotel des Armes d'Amsterdam; Adams himself referred to it as the Hotel de Ville or City Tavern (John Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 345, quoting his letter to Dana of Jan. 18, 1781).


7 John Paul Jones to Dumas, Sept. 8, 1780, ibid. p. 49.

8 J. Q. Adams Diary, August 19, 1780, Adams Papers; Wharton, IV, 49.

9 Adams to Franklin, Aug. 17, 1780, Wharton, IV, 33-34.

10 Adams to Abigail Adams, September 3, 1780, Adams Papers.


12 Adams to James Warren, Dec. 9, 1780, Adams Papers.

13 Dumas to President of Congress, July 15, 1780, Wharton, III, 861.

14 Russia, in initiating the Armed Neutrality in February, 1780, had invited the adherence of neutral maritime powers for mutual protection of their ships and cargoes on a "free ships, free goods" basis from the depredations of the various belligerent powers. Denmark was the first to accede and a Russo-Danish convention was signed on July 9, 1780. This was shortly followed by the Russo-Swedish convention on August 1, 1780. France and Spain, although belligerents and unable to join, quickly gave it their approval and agreed to abide by its regulations. This was only to be expected since they would be major beneficiaries of the system. England, on the other hand, stood to lose rather than to benefit by it and determined not to permit France and Spain to acquire their naval needs under the powerful sanctions of a neutral league. For extended discussion, see Fauchille, La diplomatie française, pp. 65-143. A collection of the documents of the Armed Neutrality is to be found in Piggott and Ormond (pp. 198-252). Bemis devoted Chapter XI
(pp. 149-163) to the European aspects of this league and the following chapter to America and the league. Although officially known as the Armed Neutrality both contemporaries and later authors have used the titles "Neutral League" or "League of Neutrals" interchangeably with the official title.

15 Starremburg and Brantrenberg, the two Dutch envoys to St. Petersburg, were directed to negotiate a convention with Catherine only if Dutch colonial possessions were guaranteed (Adams to President of Congress, July 14, 1780, Wharton, III, 857; see also Bemis, p. 155 and Morris, p. 167).

16 Stormont to Yorke, July 25, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV; Edler, pp. 144-45.

17 Thulemeyer to Frederick II, August 11, 1780, Benjamin Franklin Stevens, Catalogue Index to Manuscripts in the Archives of England, France, Holland and Spain Relating to America, 1763-1783 MSS (Library of Congress), LXX. Henceforth cited: Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS.


19 Bemis, pp. 116-17.

20 Renaut, I, 391-92.

21 Adams to President of Congress, July 14, 1780, Wharton, III, 857.

22 Charleston fell to the British on May 20, 1780, but Europe learned of it only in mid-July.

23 Dumas to President of Congress, July 15, 1780, Wharton, III, 861.


25 Edmund Cody Burnett, The Continental Congress (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941) deals at some length with the problems faced by Congress. See also Wood, particularly chap. VI, pp. 79-83, for the struggles between the pro- and anti-Gallican forces.

26 Wood, pp. 52-55, 87-90.

Franklin to President of Congress, Aug. 9, 1780, Wharton, IV, 23.

Laurens was commissioned Nov. 1, 1779 to secure a treaty of amity and commerce with the Dutch and to negotiate a loan in the Netherlands (U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, II, 285-86).


William Lee to Adams, August 27, 1780; Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 20, 1780, Adams Papers.

Adams to Dana, Sept 12, 1780, ibid.

Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 16, 1780, Wharton, IV, 68. The British West Indies fleet of some fifty-two sail was attacked by the combined French and Spanish fleets about sixty leagues from St. Vincent on August 9, 1780.

Adams to President of Congress, ibid. p. 41. In The Peacemakers, Morris concluded that no one ever produced a better explanation (p. 62). In due time several other peace missions were brought to Congress' attention by Adams.


Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 25, 1780, Wharton, IV, 67.

Ibid., p. 68. The United States did authorize such a publication on his recommendation (Hunt and Ford, Journals of the Continental Congress, XVIII, Dec. 29, 1780).

Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 16, 1780, Wharton, IV, 57.

Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 25, 1780, ibid. p. 69.


Luzac to Adams, Aug. 31, 1780, Adams Papers.

Luzac had been very anxious to be the first to print the Massachusetts Constitution but had feared others were being preferred as the Courier of the Lower Rhine had printed an introduction to it three months previously. Luzac had also read sections from the Constitution in the French Gazette of Amsterdam and the Utrecht paper (Luzac to Adams, Aug. 31, 1780, Adams Papers).

Adams to Luzac, Sept. 1, 1780, ibid.
Pownall entitled his pamphlet *A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe on the Present State of Affairs between the Old and the New World*. It was published in England early in 1780.

On the Present state of Affairs between the Old and the New World. It was published in England early in 1780.

44 Luzac to Adams, Sept. 7, 1780, ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Jenings to Adams, Sept. 14, 1780, ibid.

47 Pownall entitled his pamphlet *A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe on the Present State of Affairs between the Old and the New World*. It was published in England early in 1780.

48 [Sept. 5, 1780], Adams Papers, a complete copy of his revision in five parts with his comments to Jenings added. He requested Luzac to examine it carefully and then candidly state whether and in what manner it could be published so as to serve the cause best. Solicitously he desired Luzac to return the copy if he were not able to use it "because there is not in the whole world another copy." Luzac immediately acknowledged receipt of the brochure and commented that he had not had time to study it carefully but, as far as he had read it, it seemed to be written with sang-froid and upon principles which all mankind should accept (Luzac to Adams, Sept. 7, 1780, Adams Papers). Time and a more careful perusal brought some doubts to his mind.


50 Adams to Luzac, Nov. 20, 1780, ibid. p. 332.

51 Adams to Luzac, Sept. 15, 1780, ibid. p. 255.

52 Ibid., p. 256. He suggested that a more appropriate question would be whether Europe could prevent American independence. To Adams' mind prevention was impossible; therefore, Europe would do much better to acknowledge American independence before that country, to sustain itself, was forced to become "warlike, enterprising, and ambitious."


54 Luzac to Adams, Oct. 19, 1780, ibid.


Surprisingly, Adams did not have the letters published in whole or in part at the time, but, several years later in London, he had them privately printed. In 1789, James Fenno of New York published them as Twenty-Six Letters upon Interesting Subjects Respecting the Revolution of America. Adams sent a copy of the collection to the Boston Patriot which published it in 1809 as a part of Adams' correspondence. A complete copy was likewise included in C. F. Adams' Works, VII, 266-312.

These included letters from Samuel Adams, Dr. Richard Rush, Wm. Churchill Houston (member of Congress and fellow advocate of militia diplomacy), and Doctor Cooper (J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 174).

Franklin to Dumas, Oct. 9, 1780, Wharton, IV, 87; Oct. 2, 1780, p. 73; Franklin to Adams, Oct. 2, 1780, pp. 73-74.

Adams to Franklin, Oct. 14, 1780, ibid., p. 97.

Adams identified this series which so impressed him as the Tableau de l'histoire générale des Provinces Unies (Adams to Livingston, May 16, 1782, ibid., V, 422).

Cerisier edited the French Gazette of Amsterdam and had made a French translation of William Barron, History of the Colonization of the Free States of Antiquity Applied to the Present Contest between Great Britain and Her American Colonies. To this he had added a comparison of the Articles of the Union of Utrecht and the Articles of Confederation. His original compositions included a pamphlet on Dutch interests in the current state of affairs in France and England. For a time Cerisier edited Le Politique Hollandais to which Adams contributed a generous number of ideas and articles. In speaking of him to Congress, Adams declared that Cerisier had "done more decided and essential service to the American cause and reputation within these last eighteen months than any other man in Europe" (Adams to Livingston, May 16, 1782, Wharton, V, 422).

Wild to Adams, Oct. 20, 1780; Adams to Wild, October 23, 1780, Adams Papers.

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, citing his letter to Cerisier, Oct. 23, 1780.

In January (1781) Cerisier moved to Amsterdam and, with the Feb. 12, 1781 issue, began the weekly publication of Le Politique Hollandais. Into
this journal Cerisier inserted everything that he thought would assist America or enhance her reputation. Contributions were welcomed whether they were written in French, Latin, English, Dutch, German, Italian, and the journal was soon well-known throughout the Low Countries. Adams himself made frequent contributions, many of which have been identified. Cerisier's help was esteemed so highly by Adams that he paid him the following tribute: "His pen has erected a monument to the American cause more glorious and more durable than brass or marble. His writings have been read like oracles, and his sentiments weekly echoed and reechoed in gazettes and pamphlets, both in French and Dutch" (Adams to Livingston, May 16, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 590).

69. Van der Capellen to Adams, Oct. 16, 1780, ibid., pp. 317-18. Van der Kemp he described as a man who possessed "learning, integrity, and a fearlessness one would not expect in a Mennonite preacher."

70. Within the year the Stadholderian party offered a 1400 guilder reward for information on the authorship of a pamphlet later established to be Van der Capellen's. Van der Kemp was already involved in a court proceeding over the publication of an Ode with too liberal a theme (Fairchild, pp. 48-53).


74. Adams to Van der Capellen, Jan. 21, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 357.


76. Ibid., p. 274, citing letter of Oct. 18, 1780.

77. Ibid.

78. Adams citing his letter to Jenings, Dec. 6, 1780, ibid., p. 293.

79. Adams citing his letter to Cerisier, Nov. 18, 1780, ibid., p. 275.

80. Adams strongly advocated sending ministers to St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin and Vienna, as well as to The Hague (Adams to Dana, Aug. 30, 1780; Adams to William Lee, Sept. 2, 1780; Wharton, IV, 57, Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 16, 1780, Adams Papers).


Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 23, 1780, *ibid.*, p. 42. The idea of security in produce was never seriously considered in Philadelphia, but Adams urged it on several occasions in the ensuing months. He insisted that "the sight of a few such vessels and cargoes would do more than many long reasonings and negotiations" (Oct. 14, 1780, *ibid.*, p. 98; Oct. 24, 1780, p. 104).

Commission given June 20, 1780 (U. S. Continental Congress, *Secret Journals*, II, 314-16). He had a second cause for rejoicing. He had just dispatched a letter informing Congress that his commission would in all likelihood, be of no use for some time, and requesting knowledge of Congress' intentions concerning himself (Wharton, IV, 57-58, Sept. 19, 1780). This new commission, therefore, served as a reprieve from again being called home for lack of occupation and from a worse fate—enforced idleness.

Adams to Thaxter, Sept. 23, 1780; to Abigail Adams, Sept. 25, 1780, Adams Papers.

Adams to W. C. Houston, Sept. 17, 1780, *ibid*.

Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 21, 1780, Wharton, IV, 66.

Commodore Gillon, who was himself trying to raise a loan on behalf of South Carolina, proved of great assistance by acting as interpreter (*ibid.*).


Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 19, 1780, Wharton, IV, 60.

Dana to President of Congress, Sept. 20, 1780, *ibid.*, p. 62.

Adams to President of Congress, Sept. 19, 1780, *ibid.*, p. 60.


A complete copy of all Laurens' papers secured by the British were to be found in the *Annual Register*, 1780, pp. 356-365. Bemis (p. 158) referred to Lee and Neufville as "dilettante diplomats."

Stormont to Yorke, July 25, 1780, and Sept. 19, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

Adams to Franklin, Sept. 29, 1780, Adams Papers.

States General, Oct. 15, 1780, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXII.

Oct. 19, 1780, ibid.

Yorke to Stormont, Oct. 24, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

October 27, 1780, ibid.


Yorke to Stormont, Oct. 24, 1780 and Oct. 31, 1780; Stormont to Yorke, Nov. 4, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

Yorke to Stormont, Oct. 31, 1780; Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXII.

Stormont to Yorke, Nov. 9, 1780, ibid., LXXXIII. Interestingly, Stormont directed Sir James Harris, the English minister in Russia, to be explicit in representing the very serious relations with Holland as in no way related to the Neutral League (Stormont to Harris, Nov. 14, 1780, ibid.).

Yorke to Stormont, Nov. 10, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV; Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 16, 1780, Wharton, IV, 153.


Yorke to Stormont, Nov. 14, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

La Vaugyon to Vergennes, Nov. 14, 1780; Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Nov. 31, 1780, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXII.

Yorke to Stormont, Nov. 14, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 16, 1780, Wharton, IV, 154.

Adams to Van der Capellen, Nov. 20, 1780; to Luzac, Nov. 20, 1780, Wharton, IV, 157; Adams to Cerisier, Nov. 18; to Timothy Ross, Dec. 17; to Wm. Lee, Nov. 19, 1780, Adams Papers.

Dumas to Adams, Nov. 7, 1780, ibid., p. 324. The name "white eyes" found frequently in the letters written in Holland at this time was supposed to refer to George III (ibid., p. 327 note).

Adams to Dumas, Nov. 9, 1780, ibid., p. 327.

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 263.

Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 16, 1780, Nov. 17, 1780, Wharton, IV, pp. 154, 156.

Dec. 5, Dec. 8, and Dec. 11, 1780, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXIV.

Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 25, 1780, Wharton, IV, 161-62.

Resolution of the States of Holland and West Friesland, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

Yorke to Stormont, Nov. 28 and Dec. 12, 1780, ibid.

Adams to Franklin, Nov. 30; to Jenings, Dec. 1; to Warren, Dec. 9, 1780, Adams Papers. The French writer, Renaut, a century and a half later, after using the Dutch archives extensively, came to the same conclusion. He wrote that Dutch opinion was for strict neutrality in November, 1780, since both ship owners and commercial houses had enjoyed their greatest year. There was no guarantee of greater business in the event of war. Also, most bankers believed English loans were fully as secure as French or American loans (Renaut, I, 391).

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 299, citing his letter to Dr. Cooper, Dec. 9, 1780; Adams to Luzac, Nov. 30, 1780, Adams Papers.


J. Adams, Boston Patriot, pp. 321, 331. He was not exaggerating very much. Yorke informed Stormont's secretary that there was talk of "De Witting" van Berckel (Yorke to Fraser, Nov. 14, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV).

Jan de Witt was the leading Dutch republican and the grand pensionary during the Dutch wars in the second half of the seventeenth century. Popular opinion forsook him when he was unable to secure a satisfactory peace in 1672. He and his brother, Cornelius, were killed by a mob who had turned their favor toward the Stadholder.
128 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 12, 1780, Wharton, IV, 197; Dec. 18, 1780, John Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 306.


130 Ibid.

131 Bowens to Adams, Nov. 10, 1780, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 326.


135 Franklin to Adams, Oct. 20, 1780, Wharton, IV, 102.

136 Adams to Franklin, Oct. 24, 1780, ibid., p. 103.

137 Nov. 4, 1780, ibid., 111-112. During November alone bills for approximately 2550 were presented (Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 30, 1780; ibid., p. 176).

138 Adams to J. L. Austin, Nov. 13, 1780, Adams Papers.

139 Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 17, 1780, Wharton, IV, 155-56.


141 Adams to J. L. Austin, Nov. 13, 1780, Adams Papers.

142 Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 25, 1780, Wharton, IV, 161.

143 Adams to Franklin, Nov. 24; to President of Congress, Nov. 25; ibid., p. 160; Adams to Franklin, Nov. 30, 1780, Adams Papers.

144 Adams to President of Congress, Nov. 17, 1780, Wharton, IV, 156.

145 F. R. S. to W. S. C. Adams to Digges, Nov. 19, 1780, Adams Papers.

146 Adams to Dumas, Feb. 6, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 366. James Searle (1733-1797) was born in New York but after his marriage moved to Philadelphia where he engaged in commerce. He took a keen interest in military preparations and for a time served as a lieutenant-colonel in the Pennsylvania militia. In November of 1778 he was elected to the Continental Congress where he allied himself to the Adams-Lee faction. Pennsylvania sent
him to Europe in July, 1780 to borrow $200,000 for military purchases. He
carried with him the interim commission to John Adams to substitute for Henry
Laurens in obtaining a loan from the United Provinces (DAB).

147 Stormont to Yorke, Nov. 21, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.
148 Yorke to Stormont, Nov. 28, 1780, ibid.
149 Adams to Wm. Lee, Dec. 6, 1780, Adams Papers. In a letter to the
President of Congress (Dec. 14, 1780, Wharton, IV, 192), Adams spoke of
Dutch professions of friendship as "adulations to procure a share in our
trade." He had even lost confidence in the efficacy of a commission as
plenipotentiary and argued that the only thing valued would be a few cargoes
of produce.
150 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 18, 1780, Wharton, IV, 197.
151 Adams to Jenings, Dec. 6, 1780, Adams Papers.
152 Adams to Arthur Lee, Dec. 6; to James Lovell, Dec. 7, 1780, ibid.
154 Adams to Dr. Cooper, Dec. 9, 1780, ibid.
155 Adams to Dr. Tufts /2/, Dec. 9, 1780, ibid.
156 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 21, 1780, Wharton, IV, 204.
157 Stormont to Yorke, Dec. 16, 1780, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.
158 It was published in England on December 21, 1780 but, due to adverse
winds, was received in the Netherlands only on January 1, 1781. The course of
action had been decided upon and the manifesto prepared ahead of time but de-
layed as "publishing it before the possibility of receiving an answer to the
last memorial might appear too precipitate, and might lead to a discovery of
the reason which it is meant to conceal" (Stormont to George III, Dec. 18,
1780, John William Fortescue (ed.) The Correspondence of King George the
159 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 26, 1780, Wharton, IV, 211.
160 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 28, 1780, ibid., p. 213.
A MEMORIAL PRESENTED, JANUARY-MAY, 1781

The final days of 1780 and the beginning of the new year, 1781, brought a new dimension to the political scene in the United Provinces. As the news, and gradually the purport, of Yorke's withdrawal began to permeate the country, a revitalization of the public spirit slowly appeared. From the doldrums of fear and apathy, so irritating to Adams, a spirit of self-vindication and national pride began to evolve. The streets of Amsterdam swarmed with all manner of party propaganda, each party seeking to out-print the others. Thousands of extravagant and incredible reports were circulated. Adams viewed the scene with both pleasure and consternation. He rejoiced to find masterly defenses of the burgomasters being circulated and told with relish of a popular song designed especially to inspire sailors with resentment toward the English. A woman singing this song in the streets sold six hundred copies within an hour. ¹ He had been warmly, although inaccurately, assured that more than four-fifths of the Dutch loved the Americans and desired their success. ² He observed the republican party become more outspoken and openly compare the friendship between England and their own country to that between Cain and Abel. ³ On the other hand, he recognized the strength of the national prejudice in favor of the British and the potency of the stadholder's influence. ⁴ Official circles were far from yielding to popular sway. In the government every move was "studiously delayed." A counter-manifesto, retaliatory letters
of marque and reprisal to balance those issued by the Court of St. James, and even the decision of the Court of Holland on Van Berckel were so retarded and their promulgation so clouded that none knew whether war had been declared. The prince, the investors in British funds, and the merchant groups each had much to lose and little to gain from war and their influence was powerful in the States. Consequently, the American minister staunchly refused to predict the outcome as he could "never depend upon anything here until it is past." He did, nevertheless, take a keen interest in events as he conceived the whole system of Europe being settled within a few weeks by the decision of the Dutch.

Although his activities were temporarily restricted to very quiet, private contacts, he made the greatest possible use of his forced role of spectator. He admitted, "I am not able to do much towards midwifing the great events with which the times are pregnant, yet I don't think the less nor the less anxiously about them for that." Once again interpreting popular opinion from the Sunday service, Adams was pleased to note that when, on the Sunday preceding Christmas, the parson of the Presbyterian church began his customary prayer for the king of England, he was stopped by a murmur. On Christmas Day the prayer was interrupted by "still greater confusion," and the following Sunday the "offensive clause" was completely omitted. The theater proved another excellent place for taking the pulse of popular sentiment. He attended a production of the national tragedy, after which the actors, according to their custom, addressed the audience. On this occasion their address was interlarded with phrases betraying the republican spirit, a quote from a popular street song, and a solemn injunction not to be slaves.
All these were received with strong applause. When a new stage play, "De Ruiter," appeared, there was applause "a tout rompre" for every line in which the English were roughly treated.

Other encouraging signs appeared. The presses continued to turn out innumerable pamphlets, handbills, songs, and poems, but more and more the preponderance of these were against the English, and, not infrequently, they contained favorable hints concerning the Americans. Private family groups and small social meetings also displayed strong anti-English sentiment. On a trip through the major cities of the Province of Holland, Adams detected a growing spirit of resentment toward England. In spite of all these good omens, he was wise enough not to become too sanguine. He recognized that the populace reflected the first strong feelings of resentment but that this sentiment had not yet proven capable of accepting the shock of heavy commercial losses.

Time would demonstrate that Adams was more justified in his premonition than even he realized. Between the English manifesto of December 20 and Yorke's departure from The Hague on December 25, an estimated two hundred Dutch ships with cargoes valued at fifteen million florins were seized. The wealthy St. Eustatius in the West Indies was struck on February 3, 1781, and the value of its capture was thought to be more than three million pounds sterling. Fortunately for Adams' future negotiations the news of these losses did not reach the Netherlands until popular spirit had, to a degree, solidified. Even so, there was great distress at the news, especially at Amsterdam where the losses were the heaviest. This city, the acknowledged leader of the republican and anti-English forces, resolved to send deputies
to England to work out an accommodation. The other cities of Holland, declaring that they would not "debase themselves by courting the robbers," refused to support Amsterdam in her resolution and no delegation was sent. Dumas was quick to note that their manly statements would have been more noble if their losses had been on a par with Amsterdam's. On the other hand, the English population in some of these cities, for example, Rotterdam, was quite considerable; so the unwillingness to compromise with England was all the more remarkable. The anti-English climate of opinion, which had by that time waxed strong enough to prevail over Amsterdam's anguish, was not primarily due to the efforts of John Adams but some part of the credit must in justice be given to him.

As soon as the first hint of favorable signs appeared, Dana advised the minister to use the opportunity presented by the English. The manifesto of December seemed to have "thrown open the door wide, and let us enter without hesitation." If, however, Adams should find the door not quite open, Dana, as one good militia diplomat to another, suggested entering anyway. He counselled that at times it was not only "necessary to step over a prescribed line," but also that when one did so to promote the interests of his country, he was "entitled to much merit." Adams took encouragement from such advice and in January (1781) resumed his activities to enlighten the Dutch concerning America, to borrow money, and to seek recognition.

As a first step, he again began to flood the presses with articles. Those sent to Digges usually appeared in the Courant, the choice of most Londoners for early American news. This channel of communication was shortly blocked by the British who inaugurated a much sterner policy of surveil-
lance and concentrated on the stoppage of all traffic in illegitimate correspondence. Digges warned Adams that "the times are too much against us yet to open the contraband commerce which we formerly dealt in successfully." Correspondence between them gradually dwindled to the point of extinction. Communication with Luzac, on the other hand, had been facilitated. Adams' private secretary, Thaxter, living in Leyden with the minister's sons, could personally deliver articles and he apparently made many trips to the editor of the Leyden Gazette. Probably the major piece of work translated and printed by Luzac was the pamphlet, The Crisis, but he frequently printed news items and articles favorable to the American cause. Dumas regularly channeled to Luzac publishable material sent to him first by Adams. Official news and items of unusual importance the minister generally sent to Dumas at The Hague to enable him to impart these items to various key figures before their appearance in print. Such, for example, was the procedure with the congressional resolution praising Adams for his stand of the preceding April on paper money. A series of revolts—in Washington's army, among the Vermon ters, and of the Pennsylvania Line—provided stories which the English press dramatized. Dumas begged for information and also for Adams' impressions in order to "tranquilibize the weak and diminish the joy of the ill-intentioned." Adams, in turn, collected his information from a number of correspondents—Dana, Franklin and his nephew W. T. Franklin, Williams, Mazzei, the Lees, and others throughout Europe as well as a large number of friends and relatives in America. Thus he was able to contradict the false reports which were designed chiefly to give the impression that the spirit of rebellion was decreasing and that shortly the Americans would sue for peace.
He, on the contrary, stressed the motive of independence which fostered these revolts. The revolt of the Vermonter was purely to maintain their independence from New York; the revolt in Pennsylvania was for redress of minor grievances. The actions were far from being a return-to-England movement. The only two men of the Pennsylvania group who suggested joining the English were promptly hanged by their fellow revolutionaries without further ado.

Prominent among all the publicists, Jenings continued to prove of inestimable worth to Adams. In 1781, Jenings became acquainted with the editor of Lettres Hollandaises who lived in Brussels. This editor was favorable to the American cause and glad to print articles to further it. Indeed, he requested material for a brief account of the situation in America as a special article to introduce his seventh volume. One of the first pieces Adams sent to Jenings to be forwarded was a pamphlet written by Calkoen in defense of the Amsterdam burgomasters. For the most part, the logic of this pamphlet seemed irrefutable to Jenings, but he warned Adams that there was one theme of it which would cause trouble. The fear was that the United States would develop in extent and in power and thus become a dangerous commercial rival. The old fear, earlier expressed by Dumas and then by Van der Capellen, would be resurrected if the passage in question were printed. Jenings was not himself apprehensive of American rivalry but had heard the arguments from others and so had prepared a set of answers to assuage the fears of the doubtful. Adams signified his approbation of Jenings’ proposed answers, and Jenings proceeded to draw up an article for publication. The chief premises of this article were: 1) There was no cause for any commercial jealousy between Europe and the United States. Rather, mutual advantages
would accrue, with the Dutch profiting most from the increased trade. 2) The United States had neither need nor desire to supplant the Dutch carriers but these would benefit more if American independence were acknowledged and a commercial treaty signed. 3) In the event that England were to regain her colonies, she would prevent a free commercial system. Therefore, the article concluded, Holland's own welfare depended on a treaty of alliance and commerce.31

A week before Jenings submitted these proposals, Adams had requested him to collaborate with the editor of the Lettres Hollandoises on the subject of an alliance between the United Provinces and the United States. To that request, since he already had it in mind to attempt a treaty of amity and commerce, Adams appended the hint that there was good reason for introducing Jenings' speculations at that time. Jenings was quick to pick up the hint and to apply himself assiduously to promoting the objective. Consequently three subsequent issues of the Lettres pointed out the advantages in increased wealth, power, and commerce to the Netherlands from such an alliance. Jenings, fearful that the message might not be understood, took great pains to emphasize the need of an alliance since "the more strokes given ... will make the nail go better."32

Fortunate to have someone willing and able to apply those strokes, Adams could devote time to other problems. At almost no time during his sojourn in the Netherlands was he free from bills drawn by Congress. Invariably these had to be referred to Franklin for payment as his own efforts to effect a loan were long unsuccessful. He had very quietly applied to several houses as soon as he received the commission to negotiate a loan, but all refused.
Political conditions during late November and December, 1780, rendered any further effort unavailing for the time being. No event, however, could keep the busy mind of John Adams from observing, plotting, and preparing. John de Neufville had been suggested by Van der Capellen as an old and zealous friend of America. He was also the head of a large and thriving banking business.

From the time of his arrival in Amsterdam, Adams had been acquainted with Neufville and had found him to be the only banker who, once Yorke had presented his fatal memorial, believed any loan could possibly be realized. Some time in January of 1781 the two men agreed to draw up terms and experiment with a loan. Neufville presented a rough draft of terms which served as a basis for discussions between Adams and the banker during February. Later, Adams attributed his willingness to experiment at that particular time to the insistence of Neufville. It might have been more accurate to say that the co-operation offered by Neufville encouraged Adams to open the loan earlier than prudence or common sense would have dictated. Adams had personally made "all the solicitations that decency would countenance" but had failed. His friends and advisors, with the single exception of Neufville, warned him that he would ruin the entire business if he tried to negotiate without first approaching the States General and William V. The problem was that, before he could approach these, he would need a commission to treat with them. The minister conceded that his advisors were in all probability correct, but that he must follow the directives of Congress as given to him and try the experiment.

The directives of Congress, whether correctly or incorrectly interpreted by Adams, were certainly one of the reasons for initiating the loan,
but there were also other reasons. In the first instance, bills were regularly being presented for payment. He had not a "single ducat" and there was no certainty that Franklin could continue to meet the obligations. Both he and Franklin had repeatedly besought Congress to stop drawing on accounts that were non-existent, but its plight was such that Congress turned a deaf ear. Adams solemnly warned that, if Franklin were to fail him, he would simply protest the bills. That seemed preferable to engaging for them and then, being unable to pay, being sent to prison or declared bankrupt. Naturally, he was loath to protest any bill drawn in the name of Congress as this action would be ruinous to American credit. In addition to the very material pressure of outstanding bills, a more subtle pressure could be applied by Neufville through other Americans living in the Provinces. Neufville confidently predicted a considerable sum and importuned the minister constantly. Since the banker was a good host and extremely popular with the Americans in Amsterdam, he might easily convince them that the only obstacle to a loan was the lack of authorization from Adams. Not desiring to be charged with negligence or obstinacy by his confederates and reasoning that no harm could be done as America had no credit to lose, Adams capitulated. Mutually agreeable terms for the loan were worked out with Neufville. 38

The loan was launched at the beginning of March, 1781, but it fared very badly. Neufville attributed the poor returns to having opened it too soon, but Adams disagreed. He was of the opinion that it was "better too soon than too late" since an opportunity once missed was a complete loss. Further, it was only by trying the experiment that he would "know whether we have credit and friends or not."39 However, he was not entirely satisfied
with Neufville's management. When he had asked Bicker about Neufville the previous fall, Bicker had refrained from answering the query. Others, he discovered, had a "public and a secret manner of speaking." Consequently, in a formal letter, they would describe Neufville's as a very solid concern with sound credit; at the same time, they would, if asked in confidence, caution the inquirer to be careful. Adams found Neufville honest and well-meaning but not a clear-headed businessman. Consequently, when the loan was slow to materialize, Adams requested the banker to send some of the countersigned obligations to him as he intended to function as his own broker, banker, and undertaker. Even while devoting his very best efforts, Adams was careful to counsel Congress to expect nothing for several months at least and assured them that the initiation of a loan at the time was regarded as a dangerous measure "which nobody but an American would have risked." His luck at borrowing was no greater than Neufville's, and any hopes either had entertained were scuttled by the news of the loss of St. Eustatius--news which reached the Netherlands about the twentieth of March. However, when Neufville expressed relief at the minister's "indifference" to the slow progress of the loan, Adams was properly indignant. By return post, he retorted that he was far from indifferent. He could agree with the banker only that, although his reputation among some people might be affected by success or failure, it meant little to him in a personal way. The important point was that he had his instructions from Congress, and he considered it his "indispensable duty" to follow these directives and make the attempt. His reply concluded on a more conciliatory note by appealing to Neufville's pride and business instincts to make a success of the affair. In spite of Neufville's efforts,
no more than five thousand florins were ever borrowed under this loan. Of these, three thousand were lent by Luzac who had promised that amount before the loan was ever opened. There were a number of reasons for the ill-luck. Many of the Dutch felt a dread of embroiling themselves further with England. Especially was this the case in March and April when there was a strong expectation that peace would be restored to the Netherlands through the pending Russian mediation. Others feared to invest their funds in a losing cause. Many merchants had lost heavily at St. Eustatius and no longer had the wherewithal to lend to America. This last cause, however, should not be overestimated. Failure was not primarily due to shortage of money for investment; a Russian loan, also opened about the first of March, netted 2,200,000 florins within approximately three weeks.

Whatever activity Adams undertook was to some degree related to the projected treaty with the Netherlands—a subject that weighed heavily on his mind. Propaganda was undertaken to inform the people of the similarity in ideals and desires between the two republics. In that similarity, he believed, lay the foundation for a treaty as well as a loan. Regularly he discussed with friends and acquaintances and then transmitted to Congress the views they expressed of the absolute impossibility, even the danger, of attempting a loan without first possessing powers to negotiate politically. The longer he applied himself to the work of enlightening popular opinion and of initiating a loan, the more convinced he became that some political connection was necessary between the American minister and the Netherlands government. He had undertaken his propaganda and loan activities even when advised against doing so. In the same manner he had been advised against
Nevertheless, he determined to attempt some contact with the Dutch government.

Late in January, 1781, he sought Dumas' opinion of the propriety and the prudence of attempting to be "introduced to one or more persons in power, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, or any members of the States General, in order to have some conversation upon American affairs." To Adams the entire matter seemed very obvious. Since it was to the mutual advantage of both countries to form a connection, it should be to their mutual advantage to discuss their relationships and through these discussions to obviate any difficulties which lay in the path of such a connection. Dumas hastened to agree that a treaty was one of the two major objectives to be attained—the loan being the other—but disagreed that the present was an auspicious time to undertake it. In January and February the country was still waiting for an answer from Russia as to what help the Armed Neutrality would give them in their trouble with England. Everything depended on her answer to their appeal. If Russia acceded to the Dutch request for aid, it would be necessary for America to appeal for recognition first to Russia as the leader of the Northern confederation. Once America was recognized by Russia, her problem of attaining recognition from the other maritime powers would be considerably simplified. If Russia should not succour the Netherlands and if the Dutch wished to remain neutral, it would be impossible for them to compromise their position by forming any connection with an American minister.

The minister and Dumas viewed the role of the Netherlands from different angles. Adams' attention was focused primarily on the Netherlands. The Neutral League played only a subsidiary role in his thinking. Dumas viewed
Russia and the Neutral League as of first importance. Much of his correspondence with the minister in the spring of 1781 counselled caution until the decision of Russia on Anglo-Dutch affairs became known. Absolutely nothing could be undertaken politically without Russian concurrence. Congress was informed that it would be sufficient time to take any steps toward seeking recognition of American independence when the expected rupture between Russia and England took place. Until that time, any negotiation would be useless. Under no condition should any previous application be made to the Netherlands, Dumas insisted, since that country could not act without the concurrence of the Northern alliance. Adams informed Congress quite to the contrary. A minister to the Netherlands was essential. "If a minister is not sent, this nation . . . will be disgusted. It is certainly ill policy to neglect a nation which is more likely than any other to be affectionately attached to us, as they are the center of the commerce of the world; as they are lovers of liberty, . . . and as they are of the Protestant religion." He offered various combinations of political alliance for Congress' choice; a minister, who also had a commission to represent the United States in the other maritime countries, could be sent to the Netherlands; a minister could be sent to Russia to treat with all the neutral powers, and a second person sent to reside in the Netherlands and handle special interests there; finally, a minister might be sent to each of the maritime powers. By each of these alternatives, Adams specifically provided a minister to be stationed in the Netherlands. It was inconceivable to him that Congress should choose to authorize no one to negotiate with these countries.

Since Dumas, the obvious person to arrange private introductions, re-
fused to do so, Adams was forced to hunt for another avenue of ingress to governmental circles. Article X of the Treaty of Alliance with France occurred to him. By this article France had agreed to join America in inviting other powers which had received injuries from England to make common cause with them. He opined that if Congress or someone authorized by Congress proposed this to France that country could not and would not refuse to fulfill the treaty. He repeated his reasoning on this to Dumas and to Searle asking each for his reaction. Searle being in Paris Adams requested him to confer with Dr. Franklin on whether Franklin believed himself still possessed of the proper authority to make and to implement such a suggestion. This was an important question since the former commission composed of Franklin, Arthur Lee, and Adams had, until dissolved in 1779, power to treat and to make a treaty of commerce with any nation in Europe. If the dissolution of the commission did not annul this authorization, Franklin would have succeeded to it. The next question would be whether or not he still possessed it. Communication across the ocean was both slow and uncertain. Searle assured Adams that Laurens had been made minister plenipotentiary to treat with the Netherlands. If Searle were correct, Laurens' authorization would supersede that of Franklin. Searle also informed Adams that Congress had given to Adams Laurens' commission as minister plenipotentiary. Adams, never having received such a commission, concluded that either Searle was mistaken or that Congress had forgotten to transmit it. He possessed only the authorization to secure a loan in the Netherlands and for the time had no intention of claiming any other. He was convinced, however, that Congress should be contacted and authorization secured before the Northern powers settled their own affairs.
with England, and America lost her opportunity to gain their assistance. Dumas agreed with Adams that it was high time Congress proposed that France join in extending an invitation to the neutral powers. For the purpose of issuing such an invitation, Dumas presumed that either Adams or Franklin possessed sufficient authorization. Adams willingly conceded that the point of authorization, once the feat was accomplished, would not be of great moment in an event of so much importance to America. He was certain that Congress would gladly ratify any accession of the neutral powers to the Franco-American Alliance whether initiated by Adams, Franklin, or even by Louis XVI without consulting either of the Americans. He did, however, believe that a prior commission would be of material importance in initiating an adherence of the Netherlands or of the neutral powers.

A letter from Adams to Congress reminded that body of Article X of the alliance and warned that, if the expected hostilities between the neutral powers and England were to materialize, the "first moments of warmth and enthusiasm occasioned by this rupture, will be the most favorable" to invite them to join the alliance. To this he appended an explanation of the quandary as to who was authorized to issue the invitation. He strongly urged Congress to remove all doubts by granting a formal commission to someone to treat with the Northern powers and with Russia. In another letter addressed to Congress, but never sent, he expressed his sentiments a little more fully. An interim commission should be given to someone since Laurens, who reportedly was authorized, would not be able to fulfill his duties for some time. If there were people who might feel it derogatory to accept an interim commission, there were others who willingly would do so in order to serve their
country. At any rate neither prudence nor good sense could sanction congres-
sional neglect of the Dutch. He went on to add that he was not particularly
anxious to be the one commissioned but that he would accept the task if ap-
pointed. He would consider it his duty to render this service since he looked
upon himself as an "expensive article" to the United States, his present com-
mission being "extremely honorable to me, but totally useless to the pub-
lic."61

Following his general attitude that every opportunity to render service
to his country must be grasped, Adams next sought the opinion of Dumas on pro-
posing to the States General a pact regarding war vessels. In the name of
both wisdom and humanity the Dutch could permit their war vessels, privates,
and merchantmen to take their prizes to American ports and even to trade there.
In return they could give a similar permission to the American captains to
use the Dutch facilities. Dumas assured him that the proposal was valid and
no real objection could be levelled against it. He was, nevertheless, strongly
against any such step for the time being as it would only serve to embar-
rass Their High Mightinesses and could accomplish nothing.62 Again Adams
conceded--partially. He accepted the idea that it was too early to present
any proposal to the States General as a body but he maintained that "hints
and ideas" might be made to individuals as a means of "familiarizing them with
such speculations." He then grasped the opportunity to tutor Dumas on the
proper role of a diplomat whose appointed function did not consist in waiting
until "things go of themselves" after the critical moment was past. Rather,
a diplomat should emulate the midwife and make preparations for the crisis to
insure that all might go well. The Hague diplomats, carefully shunning him,
doubtlessly would not have appreciated his concluding piece of rusticity: "And the corps diplomatique, with all their superb pomp, are but a company of grannies."  

Hardly had the ink dried on this pronouncement when Adams on February 8, 1781, received the Journal of the Continental Congress. He read therein that he and the other ministers abroad had been commissioned to accede to the maritime regulations drawn up by the neutral powers. As Congress' resolution was taken as a result of a letter from Adams the previous April, he was jubilant. "Thus you see that I began the mischief, and I assure you I am ready to finish it, if properly invited, and a very little invitation will do."  

Having this information was one thing; being able to use it was another. Rummage through the mail packet though he would, he could find no commission for the purpose nor any resolution authenticated by the secretary. Dana was requested to consult Franklin and others as to the proper step to take in this contingency. In the meantime Dumas was sent a copy of the Congressional Journal with the directive to have the extract published in its entirely unless he saw some cause for not doing so. Adams acknowledged himself anxious to be recognized as the instigator of "such fine compliments to the Empress, and the display of so much simple wisdom in Congress."  

Possibly Adams could not repress himself until Dumas responded. In any case, the Amsterdam Gazette published a translation of the article from the Journals on the same day that Adams transmitted a copy to Dumas. Dumas expressed great pleasure at the news itself but deep regret that it had been published so precipitately in the Amsterdam paper. He was doubly annoyed to find errors in the translation published. One "vicious error" certain to
cause trouble, was in translating as though the United States had been invited when the original text established the condition "if invited thereto." La Vauguyon had pointed out this particular problem to Dumas and agreed with him on steps to be taken to repair the error. The Amsterdam translation would be treated as one not proceeding from Adams. Dumas would then issue what might be considered the official translation from the original possessed by the minister. In order to effect this, Dumas requested Adams not to take the translator to task or have him make the necessary corrections in a future issue. 

Dumas had a second cause for regretting the Amsterdam publication. He had desired to use the information for political ends first and then give it to Luzac to publish. Dumas thought he recognized in the resolution an easy means of securing a connection, perhaps an interview, between Adams and a minister of a foreign court residing at The Hague. This arrangement would now be rendered more difficult and possibly unattainable. Dumas also regretted that Luzac's interests had been neglected. He reminded Adams that Luzac was an old and trusted friend and had merited the preference rather than a man who was a recent convert. He went on to warn the minister not to be too communicative in political affairs, especially not to those motivated by self-interest or jealousy, and intimated to Adams that gazetteers could belong to this group. Piqued at Dumas' criticism, Adams informed him that anything published in the Journal was free booty to any novelist and so an item could not be saved for a favored editor. Congress meant it to be published as quickly as possible so that captains of vessels who were not formerly governed by the regulation would know and abide by the new rule. In addition, the confidential use to which Dumas desired to apply it before
A few weeks later the proper commissions arrived. Dumas and Adams met then to decide on appropriate action. They agreed to present a memorial to the States General and to the ministers of the three other courts involved. Adams then retired to Leyden to compose a proper memorial and a series of letters to Van Berckel, La Vauguyon, and the ministers of Russia, Denmark and Sweden. In this memorial, presented on March 8, 1781, Adams introduced himself as the minister plenipotentiary from the United States. He did not mention to whom he was accredited. Regarding the enclosed resolution of October 5, Adams stated that, as the American Revolution "furnished the occasion of a reformation in the maritime law of nations," he hoped it would not be thought improper that the United States should participate in the benefits and duties flowing from these regulations. The letters to Prince Galitzin of Russia, to Baron de Saphorin of Denmark, and to Baron d'Ehrenswerd of Sweden each enclosed a copy of the congressional resolution with a courteous request that it be transmitted to the minister's respective court as Adams was unable to personally present it at the court in question. Adams sent these letters to Dumas for any additions he thought it expedient to make. When satisfied with their contents, Dumas was carefully to seal and deliver them in person. Dumas called the next morning at the home of the president of the States General but that gentleman was out so the delivery of all the packets was deferred until the following day. On March 10 he delivered the correspondence beginning, according to Adams' directive, with the President of the States
General. The President questioned him about the contents of the letter and its origin. After answering these questions, Dumas was permitted to leave the packet together with his own name and address. He next attempted to visit the ministers of the Northern powers, but, as it was the day for their courier, he gained admission to the home of the Danish minister only. This gentleman promised to send Adams' letter to his court. At the other houses, he could only leave the packet with his card and hope for satisfactory action. Adams sent a copy of the resolution to La Vauguyon, also, with the information that he had already communicated it to the other ministers concerned. He requested La Vauguyon's concurrence in the measure if an appropriate occasion should arise. La Vauguyon notified Adams that it would be completely impossible for him to second the measure without the express order of his court. Concerning this reply Adams later commented that "knowing perfectly well the game of the Count de Vergennes and his ambassador, it was precisely what I expected." Within the week Adams was impatient for a reply from the States General and began to fear that the president might have the constitutional right to pocket, to suppress, or even to deliver to the stadholder papers addressed to Their High Mightinesses. The president, Dumas assured him, was not permitted to either suppress or to deliver to another person papers addressed to the States General. The States General, however, could neglect or defer answering such papers as long as they wished. In the present situation, especially until England responded to Russia's current overtures to act as mediator between England and the Netherlands, Adams should expect a lengthy wait.

With that small consolation the minister had to be satisfied. In spite
of Dumas' faithful efforts, further information on the fate of the memorial was sketchy. In the first place, Dumas often had difficulty in contacting a member who could give him the desired information. The Hagué was a rendezvous spot when the States General was in session but the deputies had to return frequently to their own cities or provinces for directives because they did not constitute a sovereign body. Also, anything as insignificant as the memorial was relegated to the background while more pressing matters concerned Their High Mightinesses. March had been a very busy month for the States General. The government of the United Provinces was clumsy and every piece of business took an unconscionably long time. In spite of this handicap, the States General had finally issued a counter-manifesto against the British and had acceded to the offer of a Russian mediation of their difficulties with England. The discussion over the augmentation of the army or navy or both was a party issue which consumed valuable time but never reached decisive action. Consequently, a matter of as little immediate concern as Adams' memorial went begging for a hearing. Early in April, Visscher, a pensionary of Amsterdam and a member of the States General, informed Dumas that, as far as he could ascertain, the President had sent the memorial to the Secret Committee. This committee, composed of the first deputies of the respective provinces, could be expected to grant a general hearing on the measure. The next report sounded the death knell. To his surprise Dumas learned that the memorial had been turned over to the greffier or secretary. Such action was the equivalent of rejection since any matter remitted to the greffier was considered finished unless resuscitated by a new order. In all probability Adams did not accept this news as the heartbreaking blow it
might have been to him under different circumstances. He was already too busy with other plans.

As soon as Adams read in the Journal of the Continental Congress that all ministers were empowered, if occasion presented itself, to guarantee American adherence to the principles of the Armed Neutrality, he cast about him for an exact definition of his political powers. He was already convinced that the possibilities of a loan without some quid pro quo were small. He had sounded Dumas on proposing an agreement with the Netherlands regarding mutual permission for all ships of either country to enter the ports of the other, only to be told that it was a good idea—but not yet. Much of February was devoted to exchanging opinions on the possibilities of implementing Article X of the Treaty of Alliance with France. When he informed Dumas that, according to Searle, Laurens had a commission, his correspondent replied that if Laurens had any powers they were at the bottom of the sea and useless. Furthermore, they had applied only to the Netherlands. Since he was now empowered to pledge American adherence to the principles of the Armed Neutrality, Adams should immediately apply to Congress for powers to treat with all countries concerned, beginning with Russia. It seemed that every path ended at a brick wall unless and until he could discover some way of communicating on a political level.

If this were the case, he would look for the means. By mid-February the minister was toying with the thought that his powers to negotiate a loan implied the power to do whatever was necessary. Congress had expressly promised to ratify whatever was related to the object of a loan although no mention was made of treaties or alliances. "If such a treaty should be
necessary to accomplish a loan, I suppose the power is sufficient to negotiate and execute it and accordingly I should not hesitate to enter into conferences upon the subject ... even to execute in all the forms a treaty, one article of which should be a loan to the United States." When asked by Bicker if he had any power to treat with "bodies politic and corporate," Adams sent a copy of his commission to Bicker to judge for himself. In the accompanying note he pointed out to his friend that no power to make treaties or alliances had been given to him in express words. On the other hand, the members of the commission which had made the treaties with France in 1778 lacked not only the power but also the title of either ambassadors or ministers plenipotentiary. Therefore, he assured Bicker, there was a precedent to follow. If a loan depended on a treaty he would readily execute a treaty, provided one article of it should be a loan, and he did not doubt that Congress would ratify it. Bicker was not convinced; he saw in the commission only the authorization to raise a loan.

Just at this point all quibbling over the possible use and extent of his powers ceased with a definite commission to the Netherlands. On the report of a committee to whom Adams' letters of September 24 and 25 were referred, came a commission giving him "full power, general and specific, to act in that quality of commissioner, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers by the States General of the said United Provinces, of and concerning a treaty of amity and commerce." The commission added that Congress would ratify "such treaty, conventions, and agreements as he shall judge conformable to the ends we have in view." With this commission he received a detailed plan of a treaty and the instruc-
tions to adopt this plan in "whole or without any essential alterations." Above all, care was to be taken to accept nothing inconsistent with the treaties already concluded with France. Unfortunately, the requisite letters of credence to Their High Mightinesses and to the Prince of Orange were not enclosed. These were promised by the next conveyance since Huntington, the President of Congress, had thought it undesirable to delay all the dispatches until these credentials were prepared. Two days after the commission and instructions were dispatched, the credentials were drawn but the "next conveyance" failed to deliver them to Adams until April 6, nearly six weeks after he received the commission.

Without credentials there was little Adams could do in a ministerial way. He applied to Bicker, Dumas, and others for advice but was told to do nothing "for fear of throwing before the people new objects of division and dissension." The country was too overwrought to listen kindly to any proposal which could further endanger hopes for peace. "They are furious for peace. Multitudes are for peace with England at any rate, even at the expense of risk of joining in the war against France, Spain, America, and all the rest. They are in a torpor, a stupor such as I never saw any people in before." It was a relief to him to know that ultimately he would have the requisite commission. For the interim he was sufficiently busy without it. His loan opened the first of March and he was busy signing his "obscure name nine and twenty thousand times" to obligations and coupons. He was decidedly more interested in the memorial on adherence to the Neutral League which he did present to the States General on March 8 than in a commission sans credentials. Oddly, he did not even acknowledge to Congress the receipt
of his commission for nearly a month although he had corresponded with Phila-
delphia in the meantime. When he did write, he emphasized the lengthy process
any request for recognition would follow. After lying upon the table for a
long time, the request would be taken ad referendum, i.e., sent to the various
provinces, cities, and bodies of nobles who composed the sovereignty. These
would "deliberate, and deliberate, and deliberate" before returning any an-
swer. He would do all in his power to secure the desired treaties but felt
"obliged to say that no commission that was ever given required more patience,
fortitude, and circumspection than this." These were, he added with nearly
as much truth as humility, "virtues which I much fear have not fallen in suf-
cient quantities to my share."86

The only action he took during March primarily as a result of his new
duties was to assure Dumas that he had every intention of continuing to use
that gentleman's services.87 On one of the last days of the month, he penned
a rough draft of a memorial requesting recognition of American independence
to be presented to the States General when the opportunity arose. The arrival
of his credentials on April 6 seemingly moved him to make another rough
draft.88 A considerable rearrangement of his thoughts took place between
these two drafts but the message was unmistakably the same. In the first, and
with two very minor changes in the second, he proposed that in case he would
not be accepted as minister plenipotentiary, he had a right and duty to attend
the peace conference wherever it might be held. In addition, he had the right
to demand all the privileges and prerogatives granted by the law of nations
to a minister plenipotentiary travelling through or temporarily residing in a
country other than his destination. These lines definitely evidenced his
recognition of the possibility that he might not be accepted by the United Provinces. His third, and final, draft completely omitted this paragraph and worked on the assumption that he would be admitted. 89 The only other major change between the early drafts and the final one was the omission in the final form of several paragraphs stating his reasons for being in France, his inability—due to English indisposition to treat—to fulfill his previous commission, and his subsequent reasons for having left France and entered the Netherlands.

The arrival of his letters of credence encouraged him to greater activity. After digressing on the complicated series of conveyances by which they reached Amsterdam, Adams promised Congress that he would try to present them shortly although the prospect was dim. He tried writing a note to inform La Vauguyon of the new commission and to express his readiness to confer with the French ambassador whenever it seemed necessary for the common good to do so. For some unexplained reason, he left the note uncompleted. La Vauguyon finally received word of the commission in a very formal note a few days before Adams presented to the States General a memorial seeking recognition. 90

Since he was now endowed with a more permanent character, Adams felt he should establish a residence suitable to his position. He decided to remain in Amsterdam as it was the most convenient city for the merchants who had bills of exchange to settle through him. 91 It was also a favorite city for Americans, both resident and travelling, and a residence there would enable him to meet more of these people. As most of his time, until the previous month or two, had been passed in Amsterdam, he had made numerous acquaintances in the city whom he was loathe to leave. 92 He contacted the
firm of Sigourney, Ingraham, and Bromfield as the best acquainted with Ameri-
can ideas and requested that they procure a suitable dwelling for him.
Elaborating on his definition of suitable, he directed that the kitchen, four
bedrooms for gentlemen and two for servants, a large reception room and a
room for transacting business were to be immediately furnished. A man to
take care of the house and a cook were to be hired. The firm was not to spend
above three thousand guilders a year on the establishment. Planning more
carefully for his needs, he soon decided that two men servants should be
hired—one for the affairs of the house and the other for footman and valet.
A carriage for four passengers was to be provided along with horses and
coachman. To do things in proper style, Sigourney and Company were to pro-
cure three sets of livery to consist of deep blue cloth coat and breeches with
scarlet cape and scarlet waistcoat, and a hat and great coat. His next set
of directions dealt with such incidentals as the number of tea cups, knives,
forks, and table napkins to purchase. After penning these quite explicit
orders, he admitted it was "new work" to him as he had never troubled about
furnishings for a home before.

In mid-March Francis Dana in Paris received a commission to St. Peters-
burg. Instructed by Congress to consult both Franklin and Adams regarding
this commission, he notified Franklin of it. After meeting with the doctor
and Vergennes, he planned a trip to Amsterdam. Before Dana departed for the
Netherlands, Franklin gave a half-hearted consent to the Petersburg mission
but used the occasion to express his sentiments again on militia diplomacy.
He informed Dana that he felt America erred in offering an alliance before it
was desired. He though it far preferable not to have issued commissions for
ministers to the several courts, including those of Spain and Holland, to which commissions had been given, until Congress had ascertained privately whether they would be received. He argued that each refusal was an additional slight and made the business of getting connections at other courts more difficult.

Dana departed Paris on Sunday, April 9 and so undoubtedly was in contact with Adams before that individual completed a letter addressed to Franklin. In this letter Adams couched a strong rebuttal to Franklin's wait-until-invited policy and advocated his own more aggressive method. First, he declared that Europe was really in America's debt and in justice owed America the help she asked.

If America could dissemble enough to threaten other nations with a return to Great Britain they would be ready to hang themselves to prevent it. But America is too honest and sincere to play this game. England would have all the mountains of Mexico and Peru in a few years if America should join her. Yet we are slighted. God forgive them, and enable America to forget their ungenerosity.

He then turned to expound the propriety and the reasonableness of American requests.

America has fought Great Britain and Ireland for six years, and not only Great Britain, but many states of Germany, many tribes of Indians, and many negroes [sic], their allies. Great Britain has been moving earth and hell to obtain allies against us, yet it is improper in us to propose an alliance! Great Britain has borrowed all the superfluous wealth of Europe, in Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and some in France, to murder us, yet it is dishonorable in us to propose to borrow money!

But if, in spite of these facts, European nations were determined to maintain their neutrality, he would gladly settle for a complete neutrality.

Let all Europe stand still, neither lend men nor money nor ships to England nor America, and let them fight it out alone. It would give my share of millions for such a bargain. America is treated unfairly and ungenerously by Europe.
He further justified his diplomatic creed to Dana in a final grumble before involving himself even more deeply in the direct action he admired. The United States were proposing nothing dishonorable. Any European court which did not recognize American aims as consistent with its own, had a right to "candidly say so" and there would be no harm done.  

Verbal sparring with Franklin was not allowed to deter him from the greater duties he was now prepared to initiate. "The black cloud that hung over the whole of the seven provinces; the solemn gloom that pervaded the whole nation; the universal uncertainty and the timidity that had seized upon all minds, determined me to bring my own mission to a trial." It appeared to him that he had much to gain and little to lose by such a trial. He was anxious to receive recognition from as many countries as possible before peace negotiations were opened. He feared that countries at war with England, but anxious for peace, might accede to Britain's desire for stiff terms toward America unless restrained by their own previous recognition of the United States. He assured Congress that an exposition of all his reasons and motives for acting at that particular time would require too much time and space for him to enumerate them. In general, he felt that his measures would be more effective if performed immediately than if they were delayed since "every moment's delay would have been attended with danger and inconvenience."

More and more during the early weeks of April, Adams devoted his time to consultations with friends, many of whom were members of the sovereignty and among the most respected men in the country. These consultations convinced him that it was time to polish a copy of his draft memorial describing
his mission and to present it with his credentials to the Prince and to the States General. If they rejected it, he would simply leave the country. If they accepted it, his mission would be accomplished. If they took it ad referendum, which was the action most to be expected, he and his friends would benefit from an increased safety and security. While the national deliberations dragged on, he would enjoy a quasi-diplomatic position which would secure the protection of government, public faith, and national honor.\(^{101}\)

Dumas cautioned Adams that, when he came to The Hague to present his credentials, it would be prudent to first arrange a meeting with La Vauguyon. By doing so he would retain the ambassador’s personal friendship and good will. There was no expectation that La Vauguyon would approve of the contemplated action but a lack of courtesy could result in strained relations that would be harmful to the project. By giving the Duke "verbal knowledge," Adams could avoid submitting the action or the details of the plan to the determination of La Vauguyon or Vergennes.\(^{102}\) Adams apprehended difficulties in this interview but recognized the prudence involved. He was certain that Vergennes knew of the appointment—perhaps even before he himself had learned of it—and had probably instructed La Vauguyon to throw every conceivable obstacle in the way of any action Adams might take. As distasteful as the interview with La Vauguyon promised to be, Adams judged it preferable to the consequences of neglecting the confrontation. Consequently, he dispatched, with Commodore Gillon who happened to be travelling to The Hague, a very formal note apprising La Vauguyon of his commission and credentials.\(^{103}\)

La Vauguyon requested an immediate interview in the event that Adams was contemplating any specific action. Upon Adams’ arrival at the Duke’s
La Vauguyon explained that he had not received any instructions which would entitle him to make even the slightest observations in an official capacity. From his own personal viewpoint, however, La Vauguyon argued that it was not a good time to present credentials or request recognition. La Vauguyon supported his argument with all the local knowledge that he had gathered through several years' residence in the Netherlands. He suggested that Adams contact some of the Patriots and assured the minister that these would support the ambassador's reasonings. Adams characteristically felt that he knew better what the Patriots approved. He had been in frequent consultation with such persons as Van Berckel, Van der Capellen, Van der Kemp, and Luzac and had their full approbation. In his own mind, he believed them unanimously of his opinion that the American negotiations, both commercial and political, should proceed but "should be kept as distinct as possible from all French influence."

The following day the Duke returned the call and the two men spent the entire morning and into the afternoon in discussion. "He went over all the ground we had trod the day before, and ran all about Europe, especially the Northern Maritime Confederation, to find arguments against the step I proposed to take." When La Vauguyon objected to Adams' intended call on the States General, Adams found "no solidity . . . mere pretexts" in the ambassador's objections. La Vauguyon then desired a postponement of the mission but Adams was too wily to accept that. He was convinced beforehand that Vergennes would be "point blank against me," and he preferred to act without being officially informed of Vergennes' displeasure. The Duke's next inspiration
was to urge that either Adams and La Vauguyon together, or La Vauguyon alone if Adams preferred, solicit the king for a directive to La Vauguyon to support Adams. This, too, Adams rejected as he was well aware who directed the king's decisions in foreign affairs. He then informed La Vauguyon that he was determined to proceed and would not change his mind even if he had a resolution of the king's council right before his eyes. He insisted that time was precious and these negotiations could be spun out for years. Adams then closed the discussion by declaring that no ambassador, minister, council, or court was responsible for his actions. He alone should bear the responsibility for them. There was no choice for La Vauguyon but to yield.

Each man took a dim view of the other's logic. Adams tersely stated, "His topics appeared to me extremely frivolous." La Vauguyon was of the opinion that it was Adams' argument which was weak. "He responded to my observations with very vague reasonings which did not appear to me to be well founded." Notwithstanding, the two men parted as friends. La Vauguyon promised his support as a private citizen although the proposal was contrary to his opinion and advice. Adams, from that time, always expressed deep respect for the personal character of La Vauguyon. Future contacts between the two men were much less infrequent and much more friendly--the Duke and all his family received Adams with courtesy and even "the freedom and familiarity of friendship." Adams always spoke highly of the ambassador and was generous in praising their mutual relations when asked about them by Livingston. La Vauguyon on his part was most careful to assure Adams of his esteem and good will and was pleased to receive Adams' in return. These exchanges of courtesies may have given no direct aid to the American but they certainly
prevented a serious division in the Patriot party and, conceivably, a cause lost before it had time to mature. 110

Vergennes' reaction was sympathetic toward his ambassadór at The Hague. He assured the Duke that he had taken the wisest course, but Vergennes was "not astonished at the little success. . . . I have had in various things to treat with this American plenipotentiary and have never been able to overcome his stubbornness." As for the business itself, "the step on which he has consulted you appears to us out of place in every respect and it can only be displeasing to the States General as it is not yet their convenience to recognize the independence of the United States." He then gave La Vauguyon directions for the future. "You will make no step to favor the admission of his letters of credence and if they are not received, as will probably happen, you will endeavor to convince him that they could not be in the present circumstances." Vergennes had not added the final phrase as a device to remove the sting of rejection from Adams' heart in case of failure. It was a much more pragmatic approach than that. If Adams did not accept La Vauguyon's explanation, "your words will serve at least to justify our proceedings if Mr. Adams should place us in the situation of making them known in America."111 Small wonder that Adams complained that after the treaty was signed Vergennes gathered unmerited credit. The Foreign Secretary had his minister in America formally announce to Congress that France had assisted in forming the connection between the two republics, at which announcement Congress approved a vote of thanks. 112

The necessary interview with La Vauguyon settled, Adams proceeded to the next step. He wrote out and signed two copies of his memorial. On the
nineteenth of April these were addressed to Peter van Bleiswick, the Grand Pensionary of Amsterdam, and to M. Fagel, the Secretary of the States General. The memorial to the States General was of considerable length. It briefly developed the causes which had led America to declare her independence and dwelt at greater length on the country's intention of maintaining that independence. He then explored the topic of natural alliances between the new world and the old and pointed out that the most natural alliance of all was one between the two republics. This statement led to a discourse on the several political, religious, and commercial ties between them. As the Netherlands was a highly commercial country, Adams devoted a large part of his memorial to the discussion of the commercial advantages which would accrue to the Dutch nation through an alliance with America. He concluded with the information that he was fully accredited to witness America's friendship and regard for her sister republic. In a much briefer memorial to the Prince of Orange, Adams informed the stadholder of his commission as minister plenipotentiary and his desire to present his credentials to the Prince. He briefly noted that it was in the spirit of renovating old friendships rather than of introducing new ones that he presented himself. 113

Barely had the two copies of the memorial been addressed when the States of Holland adjourned. Dumas, whose advice in these details Adams generally accepted, counselled presenting his memorial when the States of Holland were in session. This he thought would be early in May. 114 Adams used the interim to good purpose. It had been the general opinion of his friends and conferees that the memorial should be published in the three languages—French, Dutch, and English. Copies were to be prepared for every
member of the sovereignty in all the provinces—somewhere between three and
four thousand persons. Adams preferred that Luzac make the French transla-
tion because of his great reputation throughout Europe for articles in French.
Dumas, however, pleaded for the privilege and Adams yielded. By this time
Dumas was completely converted to the policy of prompt action and was as
anxious as Adams to proceed. His translation was shortly completed and ready
to go to the printers whenever Adams gave the signal. The Dutch transla-
tion was made by Luzac’s brother-in-law, a bookseller, printer, and gazet-
teer at Delft. He enjoyed the reputation of being "one of the most masterly
writers in the nation in their own language." The translation in good hands and under control, Adams was free to
marshal other forces and to apply pressures from a variety of directions. To
Jenings he sent "some broken hints" and requested that Jenings expand them and
have them published as a subject of importance. The general theme of his
"hints" was the importance of American independence to the Dutch and the dire
consequences to the latter if, in the future, America and England joined
against a Dutch nation that had been unfriendly. These hints were complemen-
tary to those of a former letter to Jenings in which he dwelt extensively on
the idea that the Hollanders could not justly say that they had nothing to
gain from the war. They had a great deal to lose and the question was one of
retaining and defending what they had. As usual Jenings responded immediately
and by April 30 had met with a collaborator to get the "hints" into good
form. Contrary to all his former ideas, Adams wrote to Franklin that he
was inclined to begin protesting bills. American bills of exchange were in
excellent credit and much sought as they were selling above par. If a set
were protested, the merchants would get busy and exert their influence to re-
build the credit. "There is an appetite here for American trade as ravenous
as that of a shark for his prey; and if they saw any prospect of having their
trade broken up they would do much to save it." Even the aid of his wife
was requisitioned although her help would necessarily be long in arriving.
Having informed her that he was destined to stay in Holland for some time, he
requested that she have one of his early writings, The Dissertations on the
Canon and Feudal Law, printed either in pamphlet form or in the newspapers.
She was then to send a copy by every opportunity until sure that one had
arrived. He mentioned his anxiety to have it for a special purpose. The
particular use to which he put it was to have a reprint made and addressed to
Their High Mightinesses to help their deliberations on the justice of the
cause he represented. This reprint he later included in the volume of papers
which he caused to be printed relative to his reception as minister.

On the first of May Dumas carried to Van Bleiswick a note from Adams
requesting an interview for early the next morning as Adams had something of
importance to communicate. Van Bleiswick, Grand Pensionary of Amsterdam,
was the most important citizen of the republic and, therefore, his good will
was of paramount importance. At the ensuing interview Adams told the Grand
Pensionary of his commission and of his intention to communicate his powers
and credentials on Friday, May 4, to the States General and to the Prince.
Van Bleiswick suggested that there would be a problem involved in accepting
these since America's independent status was not yet recognized. Adams
failed to see that this should present any barrier since the Netherlands were
at war with England. To this reply, Van Bleiswick merely smiled and agreed
that they had a common enemy. Accordingly on Friday morning, Adams, on the advice of La Vauguyon, visited Van Bleiswick again in order to give him a copy of the memorial. Van Bleiswick declined it with the advice that it was not the custom for foreign ministers to present to him any missive intended for the States General. He suggested that the copy intended for him should rather be presented to the Secretary, Fagel. He also warned Adams of the conduct to be expected of the President of the States General when the minister approached that gentleman. Bleiswick had cause to be well informed on the forthcoming reaction of Van Lynden van Hemmen, the President for that week. After his interview with Adams on May 2, Van Bleiswick had informed the Prince of Adams' intentions. Together they concerted a plan which William V outlined to Van Hemmen. A meeting of William, Fagel, Van Bleiswick, and Van Hemmen was then called to discuss the appropriate action for all to follow. After leaving the home of Van Bleiswick, Adams approached Van Hemmen. This gentleman responded exactly as predicted by Van Bleiswick and as agreed in their conference two days before. He refused to accept a copy of the memorial as doing so could be interpreted as diplomatic recognition of America, a step for which he could not assume the responsibility. He was willing, however, to listen to Adams and to report the business immediately to Their High Mightinesses. He assured Adams that it would thus be referred to the deliberations of the several provinces. Adams accepted this promise as the best arrangement he could procure. Nevertheless, he informed Van Hemmen that it was his intention to have the memorial printed and distributed so as to avoid misconstructions. Since no copy of the memorial was accepted by the States General, none could be published and thus distributed to all members of the
sovereignty by that body. Adams chose the only method which could accomplish this objective, i.e., make copies available himself. President Hemmen smiled at this proposal but made no comment. After Adams’ departure, Van Hemmen appeared before the States General to make his report. The deputies of all provinces except Zealand asked for copies of the President’s report to transmit to their respective provinces. This was what was technically known as taking the affair ad referendum.

While Van Hemmen was making his report, Adams visited Baron de Larrey, secretary to the Prince, to deliver the briefer memorial intended for the Prince with a copy of the memorial to the States General. The secretary promised to present it. Since the President had declined to accept the memorial, Adams and Dumas decided to dispense with taking one to Fagel, the Secretary of the States General. Approaching him under these conditions seemed improper although it had been Van Bleiswicke’s suggestion. They therefore returned to Adams’ lodgings to await results. About two hours later, de Larrey brought the unopened packet with the Prince’s explanation of the impropriety of his receiving any letter from Adams before the nation had recognized American independence.

Adams had now done all in his power to secure an official acceptance of his memorial and credentials. In view of the fact that he had apprised the President of his intentions of having the memorial printed and distributed, he felt no qualms in proceeding. Therefore, Adams signed the French translation made by Dumas and ordered Dumas to have it published. The next morning the minister again visited La Vauguyon to inform him of the actions and reactions of the previous day. The ambassador once more promised to
support Adams in his private capacity although he was still of the opinion that the measure was taken at a most unfavorable time. 131

Before Adams departed from The Hague, La Vauguyon explained to him that in all probability ministers of the republic would wish to know the French position on the action taken by Adams. The ambassador intended to inform them that he had had no communication or instruction from his court on the subject and therefore could not take any stand. In brief, he would assume a neutral position. 132 Adams was very agreeable to this proposal as it was all he had hoped or expected from the French ambassador. Soon, however, La Vauguyon had second thoughts. Delicate negotiations 133 between France and the Netherlands could be jeopardized by the embarrassments Adams' memorial might have caused the States General. Expediency required that he convince the leading members of the republic that the action, in spite of his disclaimer, was not secretly French instigated. His intention to dissociate France from any unpleasantness in connection with the memorial took on a new urgency. La Vauguyon contacted Van Bleiswick and various republican leaders and assured them that the proceedings of Adams were not concerted with France. 134 In order to prevent later criticism from Adams he carefully refrained from passing adverse judgment on the step itself, but emphasized his own non-participation in it. Apparently he carried off this maneuver with a considerable degree of success. Even such Anglophiles as Schultens and Van Goens, 135 although normally inclined to suspect French intrigue, were persuaded that he had condemned rather than assisted the work. An intelligence report sent to England also interpreted La Vauguyon's attitude as adverse to Adams' project. Further, it sought to explain the French failure to
countenance Adams' action as a sign that France was disposed to abandon the "rebels" to their fate. The Prussian ambassador, Thulemeyer, who could generally furnish a reasonably accurate running commentary on men and events, was not so easily convinced. He informed Frederick II that La Vauguyon seemed discontented with Adams' proceedings but that he himself privately thought the French minister had probably been the author of it.

This deduction Vergennes was as anxious to avoid, or to dispel, as was La Vauguyon. He instructed his minister to explain to those who might approach him that not only had he not concerted the step with Adams but he had done all in his power to deter the American. He was to add that the French government censored the démarche as being made "out of season." If Adams were to apply for further advice, La Vauguyon was to inform the minister that he had set himself the rule of not hazarding more counsel where that already given had been so lightly regarded. At the same time he was to break his newly-made rule by extending "one last mark of interest." He was to try to persuade Adams to withdraw his credentials quietly and await more favorable circumstances for presenting them. In the meantime La Vauguyon was not to worry about the complaints his actions would probably elicit from Adams.

Vergennes had already instructed his minister in America, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, to present the facts of the case as they affected French conduct and principles to Congress. He was justifiably convinced that Adams would receive little sympathy there.

Vergennes had more important things in mind than merely preventing Adams from receiving congressional sympathy. He had long been working through Luzerne to have Congress put a check on the precipitous minister before Adams'
ventures could seriously disrupt the Count's careful diplomacy. Vergennes expressed the opinion that the minister's actions were not according to the intentions of Congress but rather the outgrowth of Adams' own "exalted imagination" and his desire for "a political role." The presentation of the memorial and credentials and their subsequent rejection by Prince and States General tended to compromise the United States and so furnished Vergennes another opportunity to demonstrate to Congress that Adams was irresponsible. Luzerne was therefore to urge Congress to transmit to Adams "instructions capable of moderating his ardor." To prevent further risks to delicate French diplomacy through similar rash actions by Adams or anyone else, Congress was to be persuaded to "prescribe once and for all to all its agents in Europe" that they take no action of a political character without previously consulting France.

Adams remained blissfully unaware of, or blissfully unperturbed by, the French machinations. He was far too busy.

I was minister plenipotentiary for making peace; minister plenipotentiary for making a treaty of commerce with Great Britain; minister plenipotentiary to Their High Mightinesses the States General; minister plenipotentiary to his serene highness the Prince of Orange and stadtholder; minister plenipotentiary for pledging the faith of the United States to the Armed Neutrality; and what perhaps at that critical moment was of as much importance to the United States as any of those powers, I was commissioner for negotiating a loan of money to the amount of ten millions of dollars, and upon this depended the support of our army at home and our ambassadors abroad. Never bashful about letting his light shine upon the mountain, he described himself as "ardently engaged and indefatigably occupied" in the business of discharging all these duties. Although Adams admittedly was not the master of the understatement, his activity probably matched his words.

Before leaving The Hague he had directed Dumas to have copies of the
Dumas assumed the responsibility for omitting a short section at the beginning and the end in which Adams mentioned his commission to the Netherlands. He ordered an initial allotment of five hundred copies in each of three languages—Dutch, French, and English. Of these, three hundred were to be placed with the bookdealer who had charge of printing them. The bookdealer, in turn, would sell or distribute them to his correspondents throughout the seven provinces. One hundred sets were to be sent to Adams for whatever use he wished to make of them. Dumas himself would take charge of the final one hundred sets and distribute them to those persons who properly should be among the first to receive copies. He would also provide the gazetteers with copies as soon as possible so that they could reprint and thus aid in spreading the knowledge of it. Adams, when informed, was perfectly satisfied with the arrangements. His only desire was to see it printed and distributed as soon as possible so that the Dutch might see that their prosperity and very existence depended on an early connection with the United States. On May 11 the printing was completed and the distribution began. The bookdealer, according to previous arrangement, sent packets of the memorial to his correspondents in all the principal cities. Adams received a hundred sets. He carefully dispatched two copies to La Vauguyon and distributed the remainder where he believed they would have the greatest effect. Dumas estimated that he sent out nearly one hundred and fifty copies that first day. Already on the next morning, the twelfth, word was received at The Hague that Amsterdam was reprinting the Dutch and possibly the French translations. As soon as the memorial was made public, the majority of the journals of the country inserted copies. In order to avoid
breaking up the memorial into shorter sections, the widely circulated Courier of the Lower Rhine added an extra news sheet. In the course of the week the memorial was well known throughout Europe as well as in the republic.  

The reception accorded it was favorable beyond expectation. Even the Anglophiles were able to find very little to dispute in it. Dumas posted men in various centers to discover what the general reaction was and to send him word. These assured him that they had heard no criticism of it but a great deal of praise. Adams discovered the same to be true in Amsterdam, where the popular cry became "Health to Myn Heer [sic] Adams, and health to the brave Americans," but he was too seasoned a public figure to take praise at its face value. He candidly wondered "if the effect will advance beyond the applause." Dumas' early pollsters had also inquired about the probable result but "everyone keeps a profound silence on that." Adams very naturally informed Congress of the step he had taken and enclosed copies of both memorials. Although he was pleased to add that the printed memorial was well received, he cautioned Congress that "the public voice has not that influence upon government in any part of Europe that it has in every part of America." Congress should, therefore, not expect any immediate results. He himself did not. Dumas submitted the opinion given him by a friend that it might take three or four weeks for the various cities and provinces to act. Adams, not expecting a reply that soon, was perfectly willing to give time for deliberation. He would be satisfied with a response in eight or ten weeks, particularly as he presumed the Netherlands would postpone a decision until Russia's course of action was known. If Russia did not join in the war effort, he believed it probable that the Netherlands would willingly
accept an invitation to join the Franco-American alliance. The first step toward this would be the acceptance of the memorial and the concomitant reception of the American minister.

The rapid dissemination of the memorial led to some errors in printing and in editorial comment. In general, Adams took these in stride much better than Dumas. In the Courier of the Lower Rhine, the editor stated that President Van Hemmen had accepted the memorial from Adams and would serve as its patron. This inaccuracy worried Dumas, but the minister's only reaction was to thank Mr. Manson for the extra page he had devoted to the memorial and for his editorial comment. Dumas' special animus was reserved for the author of the article on the memorial in Le Politique Hollandais. This unfortunate gentleman irritated Dumas by claiming that his English translation was made before The Hague translation appeared. He further offended by making several errors in translation, all of which Dumas carefully pointed out to Adams. To offset any harm done by the publication of these errors, Dumas sent an amending article to the Courier of the Lower Rhine, the paper most widely read and most apt to correct misimpressions successfully. Dumas concluded his criticism of Le Politique Hollandais to Adams with a warning on a matter on which he and Adams had disagreed earlier. He cautioned Adams to be careful in conveying information to the gazetteers since they were not all as discreet, as prudent, or as sincere as Luzac; and some of them could be led to betray confidence by a public that flattered them. If Adams responded to this, his answer apparently has not survived. The plenipotentiary was more interested in several errors he had noted in the English copies—only one of which, however, he considered of material importance. This was the use of the word
Dumas checked the original English manuscript given to him by Adams and informed Adams that the word "treaties" appeared in that copy.  

Other business besides his memorial encroached on the minister's time. His ultimate objectives were to achieve a loan, a commercial treaty, and recognition of American independence. The memorial was the only method he could devise to achieve these objectives directly from the States General. There was a possibility that the same ends could be achieved indirectly through the aid of France and the application of Article X providing for the admission of other countries at war with England to the Franco-American treaty of 1778. Before presenting the memorial to the States General, he took occasion to formally remind La Vauguyon of this article. He assured the French ambassador that, whenever La Vauguyon received word from his court to take measures in accord with the article, the American plenipotentiary would be ready. Later in May Adams enclosed copies of his memorial and a note to Franklin suggesting that the maritime countries be invited to join the alliance under Article X if they declared war on England. He could see no obstacle to inviting the Dutch to join right away. On the other hand he envisioned the Dutch furnishing their own self-made obstacles to accession—they simply lacked the necessary determination to join. "Indeed, the military character, both at land and sea, seems to be lost out of this nation. The love of fame, the desire of glory, the love of country, the regard for posterity—in short, all the brilliant and sublime passions are lost, and succeeded by nothing but the love of ease and money."  

Bills of exchange were regularly being presented for him to authenti-
cate. Nearly every week the accumulation had to be recorded for Franklin so that he might provide the necessary funds. Adams' interposition was required in approaching the responsible United States officials for the purpose of reclaiming Dutch ships retaken from the English by American privateers.

In the event that the vessel could not always be regained from the privateer, Adams at least felt his time well spent in securing and publishing the explanation of the court's judgment. In the meantime Dumas found himself in financial straits and applied to Adams for succour. When Adams had received his credentials, he had invited Dumas to continue in the position of agent or special assistant which he had been holding under Franklin. However, no specific agreement had ever been made between Dumas and Congress or between Dumas and Franklin. Dumas was under the impression that he had been promised the position as secretary to Laurens at five hundred pounds a year. He was having difficulty meeting current expenses as he was receiving from Franklin only in the area of two hundred pounds a year—a sum insufficient to support a family.

Adams claimed no knowledge of any promise made by Congress but upon investigation learned that Congress had reduced the grant for a secretary from five hundred pound to exactly one-half that sum. He promised, however, to do all that he could to alleviate Dumas' distress.

Adams never wearied of supplying the presses and encouraging others to do so. As a bolster to his memorial hopes he had Van der Kemp assemble the early communications between Van der Capellen and Governor Trumbull relative to the importance of an American minister in the Netherlands. Van der Kemp then translated the Articles of Confederation and the piece, "Heads of Enquiry and the Answers to It" and printed all as a unit relative to Trumbull's
letter. A friend of Van der Kemp translated a number of other pieces and several speeches relative to the Massachusetts Constitution. With a preface by Van der Kemp, these were also published as a separate unit. As a result of the many efforts of Adams and his friends, Thaxter could write that "the government and the people of this republic are infinitely more enlightened than formerly upon American affairs." 161

Toward the end of May word finally reached Adams that Maryland had ratified the Articles of Confederation and these would now become formally effective for all thirteen states. Directly the minister wrote letters, on the express instructions of Congress, to the States General and the Stadholder to inform them of the Maryland ratification. Dumas was to peruse these and either post them or deliver them in person as he thought wisest. Adams suggested that mailing the notifications would prohibit questions or disagreements and therefore might be best. 162 Having consulted friends, Dumas, on their advice, determined to deliver the letters in person as the more courteous behavior. When he did so on June 5, both the president of the week, Baron Pallant de Glintheusen, and the Prince's secretary, Baron de Larrey, accepted the letters and requested Dumas to return the following morning. At that time de Larrey returned the letter destined for the Prince. He apologetically explained that the Prince could receive no United States communique until the States General had granted that country recognition. It was a most convenient excuse for not doing what the stadholder had no intention of doing in any case. Glintheusen also returned the letter--opened--but charged Dumas with having deceived him into accepting it in the first instance by omitting the term "plenipotentiary" when delivering it. On opening the letter he had
found it signed in this manner and therefore refused to accept it. Dumas was disinclined to take it back on such specious reasoning since Adams had openly assumed the title as everyone, including Glintheusen, knew. The President, however, concluded the interview by dropping the letter into Dumas' hat, admonished him for having advised Adams to move so quickly, and departed. 163

Neither the minister nor his aide was to be that cavalierly frustrated. The attempt to act as a quasi-accredited minister having failed, their next recourse was to print. Dumas advised against printing the rejected letters but approved inserting the act of accession itself. The publication of this act would publicly and formally give the lie to British propaganda that the American union was on the verge of disintegration. 164

Internal affairs of the nation similarly claimed Adams' interest since his own future reception partially depended upon the outcome of these. On the day Adams presented his memorial (May 4), Van Berckel demanded either a trial so that he could defend himself or a declaration of innocence for his part in the Lee-Neufville treaty. It was a question whether the two affairs would aid or injure each other. 165 In mid-May the city of Amsterdam sent an address to the provincial assembly condemning the inactivity of the country in military preparations. This address directed the Amsterdam regents to push in the States of Holland a negotiation with the court of France for reciprocal plans of operation. Adams exulted that this tacitly included the United States and rejoiced to see finally some of the "old Batavian spirit." 166 He assumed a generous portion of credit for the awakened interest on the grounds that the presentation and publication of his memorial had provided the city fathers with an opportunity to feel the public pulse. Since the memorial had
been so highly acclaimed, the Amsterdam regency had taken courage and decided to profit by the new-found public spirit.\textsuperscript{167} In reality the new spirit was just as likely based on exuberance over the news that La Motte-Piquet had met the English convoy of ships taken at St. Eustatius and had retaken twenty-one of them.\textsuperscript{168} This was the type of news that could really cheer the mynheers. To increase its charm there was also good news arriving from General Gates in the Southern states and from the Spanish at Gibraltar.\textsuperscript{169}

In June the regency of Amsterdam petitioned the Prince to dismiss Duke Louis of Brunswick from his counsel. The regents assured the Prince that they did not accept as true the popular accusation that the Duke was excessively attached to the Court of London, acted in bad faith, or was politically corrupt. They did, however, feel that his usefulness to both the country and William was a thing of the past and that he should be dismissed from all public affairs and from William's person and court. Louis had acted as the boy William's tutor and the adult William's mentor and intimate friend. Demanding his dismissal took courage. Adams predicted that the reverberations of this petition would cause a crisis in business, but he declared himself incapable of predicting the final results. Once again he gave pride of place to the wonderful acceptance of his memorial in emboldening the Amsterdam regency.\textsuperscript{170}

There were other signs of reviving spirit in some of the cities during May and June—an account of which Adams faithfully forwarded to Philadelphia. A proposal was made in the States General for increasing the bounties for sailors and somewhat improving their conditions so as to help build up the navy. Their Grand Mightinesses of the States of Holland were so successful
in floating a loan for 8,000,000 florins that they decided to raise it to 12,000,000 "for their defense." Holland and West Friesland consented to augment their land forces to nearly 18,000 men and also voted the East India Company a 1,200,000 florin loan at 3%. Most of the major cities of the province petitioned for convoyage to the East Indies. Deputies from some of the cities of Zealand joined Holland in petitions for increased defense—a matter of some note as Zealand was almost entirely under the sway of the Anglophile stadholder. But all these and other examples were to the minister "faint, feeble symptoms of life" transmitted for lack of "more vigorous ones." He informed Congress that he had been told that "this vis inertia is profound policy" but, as far as he was concerned, if it were policy at all, it was "so profound as to be perfectly incomprehensible."

Throughout the early months of 1781 Adams consistently distinguished between the attitude of the people and that of the government. He rejoiced at the signs of a rejuvenated courage among the former and groaned at the "faint, feeble symptoms" of spirit in the latter. Possibly he misread both to a degree. At least the reaction to a loan floated by the French government would indicate that the populace and their government were much more in accord in their response to active participation in American affairs than Adams realized. An important segment of each group were interested in increased trade and were sympathetic to whatever would promote this end. On the other hand they were unwilling to offer any challenge that might lose for them the good will of the neutrals. This was very evident in the manner in which they accepted a loan sponsored by France.

In mid-April Vergennes informed his minister in The Hague that the
king wished to stand as guarantor for a Dutch loan of five million florins at
four per cent on behalf of the United States. He cautioned La Vauguyon that
the idea must be proposed very carefully and directed his minister to contact
their friends in Amsterdam in order to concert with them the time and manner
of proposing it. 173 In spite of all his efforts, La Vauguyon encountered
formidable obstacles to floating a loan publicly destined for the United
States. This was partially because the Americans lacked credit in Holland
and partially because the Dutch were unwilling to compromise themselves with
the neutral powers by even an indirect recognition of American independence.174
John Laurens bluntly informed Congress, "The event has proved that its being
a concern of the United States was sufficient for political reasons to occa­sion
the overthrow of the business." 175 Only after the reference to America
as co-sponsor was withdrawn and the king promised to borrow only in his own
name and to assume full responsibility for the loan was there any prospect of
success. By August Their High Mightinesses were disposed to open it on their
own credit at 4%, the principal and interest to be secured by a general French
bond. Since the States General, although permitted to pay no more than 3%
interest for themselves, normally found easy sale for their notes, it was cor­rectly presumed that a 4% loan would quickly be filled. 176 The ultimate de­stination of the money, although remaining a verbal understanding, was not
officially committed to paper. 177 In spite of this circumspection, the States
of Zealand refused to sanction the loan until December 4, after which date
the loan, with all reference to America obliterated, filled rapidly. During
the same interval the loan publicly acknowledged as American stood still at
only a few thousand florins. 178
Thus the first half of 1781 witnessed within the Netherlands the inauguration of various activities, political and financial, which would require time to develop fully. In the meantime, beyond the confines of the Netherlands, situations were developing which could well have hampered or completely obliterated any possibility of Adams accomplishing his mission.
Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 25, 1780, Wharton, IV, 209.

Van der Capellen to Adams, Dec. 24, 1780, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 345. Van der Capellen was inclined to become discouraged rather easily but the smallest improvement in a situation reanimated all his hopes.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 30, 1780, Wharton, IV, 218.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 25, 1780, ibid., p. 209.

Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 14, 1781, ibid., p. 231.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 30, 1780, ibid., p. 218.

Adams to Jenings, Jan. 3, 1781, Adams Papers.

Ibid.

Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 4, 1781, Wharton, IV, 226.

Ibid.


Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 4, 1781, Wharton, IV, 227.

Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 14, 1781, ibid., p. 231.

Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 4, 1781, ibid., p. 227.

Jameson, AHR, VIII, 697.

For a complete analysis of the importance of St. Eustatius and the consequent loss suffered by the Dutch see Jameson, AHR, VIII, 683-708. Blok, History of the People of the Netherlands, V, 195, estimated the value of St. Eustatius to the English at approximately forty million dollars and two thousand prisoners.

Dumas to President of Congress, Apr. 2, 1781, Wharton, IV, 323.

Ibid.

Dana to Adams, Jan. 1, 1781, ibid., pp. 222-23.

Digges to Adams, Dec. 26, 1780, Adams Papers.

W. S. Church to Adams, Feb. 11, 1781, ibid. Underlining in manuscript.
22 Luzac to Adams, Jan. 22, 1781; Thaxter to Adams, Jan. 23, Jan. 25, and Feb. 2, 1781, ibid.

23 This was possibly a pamphlet of that title authored by Samuel Cooper in 1766. The thesis of Cooper's pamphlet was that England could not tax the Americans arbitrarily without destroying the essence of her own liberties.


25 Burnett, The Continental Congress, pp. 482-83; George M. Wrong, Washington and His Comrades in Arms, Vol. XII of Chronicles of America, ed. by Allen Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), pp. 209, 246. These events were of so little significance that they have generally been overlooked in accounts of the war.

26 Dumas to Adams, Feb. 19, 1781, Adams Papers.

27 Dana to Adams, Feb. 12, 1781, ibid.

28 Williams to Adams, Mar. 6, 1781, ibid.

29 Jenings to Adams, Jan. 18, and Feb. 18, 1781, ibid. Neither Adams or Jenings ever indicated in their correspondence who the author was. There was a publication entitled Lettres Hollandoises, ou Correspondance politique in eight volumes published in Amsterdam between 1779-1781 (Union List of Serials) but it is questionable if the editor would be residing in Brussels.

30 Jenings to Adams, Feb. 18, 1781, ibid.

31 Jenings to Adams, Mar. 19, 1781, ibid.

32 Adams to Jenings, March 12, 1781; Jenings to Adams, Mar. 19, 1781, ibid.

33 Van der Capellen to Adams, Nov. 28, 1780, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 336.

34 Neufville to Adams, Jan. 22, 1781, Adams Papers.


36 Adams to President of Congress, Feb. 7, 1781, Adams Papers.

37 Ibid.

38 J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 378; Adams to Neufville and Sons, Feb. 2, 1781; Neufville and Sons to Adams, Feb. 8, 1781, Adams Papers.
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40 J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 399.

41 Adams to Neufville, Mar. 11, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 376. He very shortly expressed interest in engaging a broker at The Hague (Adams to Neufville, Mar. 17, 1781, ibid., p. 379).

42 Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 314.

43 Neufville to Adams, Mar. 26, 1781, Adams Papers.

44 Adams to Neufville and Sons, Mar. 27, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 383.


46 Resolution of the States General, Mar. 16, 1781; States General to Russia, Mar. 23, 1781, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXVI.


48 Adams to Dana, Jan. 18, 1781, Wharton, IV, 239.


50 Dumas to Adams, Jan. 28, 1781, ibid., p. 363.

51 Dumas to President of Congress, Feb. 5, 1781, Wharton, IV, 250.


53 Dumas to President of Congress, Feb. 5, 1781, Wharton, IV, 250.


56 Adams to Dumas, Feb. 6, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 364.

57 Ibid.


60 Adams to President of Congress, Feb. 7, 1781, marked "not sent," Adams Papers.

61 Ibid.


64 Hunt and Ford, Journals of the Continental Congress, XVIII, 905-906; Letter of April 10, 1780, found in Wharton, III, 606-608; J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 386, citing his letter to Dumas, Feb. 8, 1781.

65 Adams to Dana, Feb. 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 253; J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 386, citing his letter to Dumas, Feb. 8, 1781.

66 Dumas to Adams, Feb. 10, 1781, Adams Papers.


68 Memorial to the States General, Mar. 8, 1781.

69 Adams to Dumas, Mar. 8, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 372.

70 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 10, 1781, ibid., p. 375.

71 Adams to La Vauguyon, Mar. 8, 1781, ibid., pp. 374-75; La Vauguyon to Adams, Mar. 14, 1781, p. 378.

72 J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 402.

73 Adams to Dumas, Mar. 17, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 379; Dumas to Adams, Mar. 21, 1781, Adams Papers.

74 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 30, 1781, Adams Papers.

75 Copy of counter-manifesto, Mar. 12, 1781, Wharton, IV, 306-312; Acceptance, Mar. 23, 1781, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXVI.
76 Dumas to Adams, Apr. 2, 1781; Dumas to Adams, Apr. 18, 1781, Adams Papers.


79 Adams to La Vauguyon, Feb. 19, 1781, but marked "not sent," Adams Papers.


82 Huntington to Adams, Jan. 1, 1781, Wharton, IV, 224; Huntington to Adams, Jan. 3, 1781, p. 225; Adams to President of Congress, April 6, 1781, p. 351.

83 Adams to Bicker, Mar. 1; Adams to Dumas, Mar. 1, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 372; Adams to Dana, Mar. 12; Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 284-85.

84 Adams to Dana, Mar. 12, 1781, Wharton, IV, 285.

85 Adams to Jenings, Mar. 22, 1781, Adams Papers.

86 Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV 313-314.

87 Adams to Dumas, Mar. 27, 1781, Adams Papers. In Adams' letterbook this falls between letters for Mar. 27 and Mar. 29, Draft Memorial, ibid.

88 April 6, 1781, ibid.

89 Memorial to the States General, Apr. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 370-76.

90 Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 19, 1781, ibid., p. 314; Adams to La Vauguyon, Apr. 16, 1781, Adams Papers; Adams to La Vauguyon, Apr. 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 364.

91 Adams to Franklin, Apr. 27, 1781, Wharton, IV, 390.

Adams to Sigourney and Co., Apr. 9, 1781, Adams Papers. This firm leased a large house for him on the Keizersgracht, near Spiegel Street (Adams to Franklin, Apr. 27, 1781, Wharton, IV, 390).


Franklin to Dana, Apr. 7, 1781, Wharton, IV, 354.

Adams to Franklin, Apr. 16, 1781, ibid. p. 364.

Adams to Dana, Apr. 18, 1781, ibid. p. 369.

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 430.


Adams to President of Congress, May 7, 1781, ibid. p. 403.


J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 431; Adams to La Vauguyon, Apr. 16, 1781, Adams Papers.

La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 21, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.


For a detailed story of these discussions see J. Adams, Boston Patriot, pp. 432-433.

Ibid., p. 432; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 21, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.


Adams to Livingston, Feb. 19, 1782, Wharton, V, 187; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 21, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.

Since the adherents of Adams and La Vauguyon were approximately the same people, any rupture between the two men would divide the Patriots. Those strongly interested in American trade would follow Adams. Those more inclined toward continental trade and French protection would continue to adhere to La Vauguyon.

Vergennes to La Vauguyon, May 6, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.
112. J. Adams, *Boston Patriot*, p. 433. No evidence of this can be found in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*.

113. Memorial to the States General, Apr. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 170-76; Memorial to the Prince of Orange, Apr. 19, 1781, *ibid.*, pp. 376-77.


117. Adams to Jenings, Apr. 27, 1781; Adams to Jenings, Apr. 23, 1781; Jenings to Adams, Apr. 30, 1781, Adams Papers.

118. Adams to Franklin, Apr. 27, 1781, Wharton, IV, 390.


121. Dumas to President of Congress, May 1, 1781, Wharton, IV, 393; Adams to President of Congress, May 3, 1781, *ibid.*, p. 398.


123. Each week the States General selected a new president. Van Hemmen was a deputy from Guelderland.

124. William V to Van Blieswick, May 2, 1781, Stevens, *Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS*, LXXVII.

125. Dumas to President of Congress, May 4, 1781, Wharton, IV, 394.


128. *Ibid.*. Adams used "de Ray" but he was notoriously poor on spelling proper names. The spelling used by Dumas, who was much better acquainted and more careful in this, is the form used here.

Only a few days previously, on May 1, a convention on vessels re-
captured from the English had been signed by representatives of France and the
Netherlands. It was hoped that this first step would lead to closer connec-
tions (Adams to President of Congress, May 25, 1781, Wharton, IV, 435). Also
La Vauguyon was aware of, if not actively promoting, a forthcoming resolution
by Amsterdam to concert with France on mutual defense arrangements. Not only
would suspicion of French involvement tend to diminish the confidence which
Patriot leaders placed in La Vauguyon and France but would hinder or prevent
further diplomatic negotiations.

La Vauguyon to Vergennes, May 11, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.

J. J. Schultens was a university professor at Leiden and a frequent
respondent of Van Goens, a former imperial councillor to the Prince of
Orange, the author of numerous Anglophile tracts and one of the major leaders
of the Stadholderian party. He was also a magistrate of Utrecht and in 1782
appointed councillor of justice (Brieven Aan R. M. Van Goens /"Werken van het
Historisch Genootschap," New Series, Vol. 3, Utrecht: Kemink and Zoon, 18867,
II, 5-6, 114-15).

X to van Eupen, May 21, 1781, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign
Archives MSS, LXXVIII. X identified as Triquette, agent of the king of
Sardinia at The Hague, who was paid by the British for information (identifi-
cation in Sir Joseph Yorke's hand, Mar. 19, 1781, ibid., LXXVI).

Thulemeyer to Frederick II, May 8, 1781, ibid., LXXVII.

Vergennes to La Vauguyon, May 11, 1781 and May 17, 1781, Sparks
Transcripts, LXXXIII.

Vergennes to Luzerne, May 11, 1781, Doniol, IV, 563.

Ibid. First Vergennes and then Luzerne sweetened this request with
the assurance that France was too interested in the destiny of America to give
any counsel other than that which had America's dignity and advantage as
their principal objects. The letter was reported to Congress on September 21,
1781 (U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, III, 34) but was of little
material effect as Congress, under the persuasive influence of Luzerne and the
insistent demands of Vergennes, had by that time curtailed Adams in the manner
Vergennes desired (see below, Chap. IV, pp. 170-78). A motion was presented
for his recall but his friends pleaded excess of zeal and the motion was de-
feated (Luzerne to Vergennes, Oct. 18, 1782, Canada, Archives, Report of the
Except for a few days spent at The Hague while seeking to present his memorial, Adams had been residing in Leiden for some weeks previous to May 5. However, Charles had taken ill and his recovery was slow. His father, therefore, removed him to Amsterdam—a city believed to be more healthful than Leiden—and Adams spent the next weeks there with Charles and the secretary, Thaxter.

Adams preferred to remain at home on the twelfth in order to avoid "any semblance of affectation" and he also resolved not to introduce the subject of the memorial if company stopped. How far in this direction Adams' self-abnegation carried him is open to conjecture as he apparently did not record his activities of the day.

Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 394.

Ibid.; Thaxter to Abigail Adams, May 27, 1781, Adams Papers.


Adams to Dumas, May 19, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 420; Dumas to Adams, May 18, 1781, pp. 419-420.

Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 419.

Dumas to Adams, May 6, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 411; Adams to Dumas, May 7, 1781, p. 412; Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 419.

Dumas to Adams, May 18, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 419; Adams to Dumas, May 19, 1781, p. 420.

Dumas to Adams, May 23, 1781, Adams Papers.

Adams to Dumas, May 19, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 420.

Dumas to Adams, May 23, 1781, Adams Papers. The earliest print in the Collection of State Papers used "treaties" (p. 12). Later copies, however, beginning with Adams' copy to the Boston Patriot used the word "connections," e.g. Wharton IV, 327; C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 399; John Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 442.
A listing of the bills here would be tedious but the following is a sampling from Adams' May reports to Franklin:

- May 8--50 bills for 1100 guilders each and 40 for 550 each;
- 10--66 bills for a total of 77,000 crowns 3 livres;
- 19--total 27,000 crowns and 3 livres;
- 23--to pay on clothing contract, estimated 16,264 pounds sterling;
- 25--40,000 to 80,000 livres (Adams Papers).

Adams to Gov. Greene of Rhode Island, May 9, 1781; to President of Congress, May 23, 1781, Adams Papers, are examples of this aspect of his work.

Adams to Dumas, Mar. 27, 1781; Dumas to Adams, May 23 and May 24, 1781; Adams to Dumas, May 26, 1781, Adams Papers.

Thaxter to Abigail Adams, May 27, 1781, ibid.

Adams to Dumas, June 1, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 423.

Dumas to Adams, June 3, 1781, Adams Papers; Dumas to Adams, June 6, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 424-25.

June 6, 1781, Adams Papers. An unsigned note but in Dumas' handwriting, possibly a postscript to the letter published in Works above.

Adams to Franklin, May 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 404.

Adams to President of Congress, May 24, 1781, ibid., pp. 432-33.

Ibid.

This became generally known about mid-May (Franklin to Adams, May 11, 1781, Adams Papers).

Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 419.

Petition enclosed in Adams to President of Congress, July 17, 1781, Wharton, IV, 584-88; Adams to President of Congress, June 26, 1781, Wharton, IV, 517-19; John Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 522.

Adams to President of Congress, June 5, 1781, Wharton, IV, 468-69; Adams to President of Congress, June 12, 1781, pp. 495-98; Adams to President of Congress, June 23, 1781, p. 515.

Adams to President of Congress, June 5, 1781, ibid., p. 469.
173 Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Apr. 13, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII. France already had a loan in progress in the Netherlands and so anything invested in this new loan in excess of the five million florins would be credited to a loan then being contracted for the French government in the Netherlands. Vergennes presumed that the Patriots would clearly see that their interest lay in helping America "whose success will be of as great advantage to Holland as to the United States." He also expected that the withdrawal of Dutch funds from the British would exhaust the resources of the Court of London and necessarily curtail the British war effort. In the event that the king's guarantee alone was insufficient to go beyond the sum mentioned, he suggested that the States of Holland be prevailed upon to present themselves as guarantors. This he predicted would serve to open all the exchanges as the Dutch would prefer to withdraw their funds from England and place them more advantageously in this new loan. He then proceeded to give more minute instructions. The loan was to be kept completely separate from the one in progress under Adams' aegis. To make certain that this was the case, Neufville was not to be employed in it. Negotiations were to be handled through Fizeaux and Grand. The American plenipotentiary, however, was not to be by-passed. Under specific direction from Franklin, Adams would undertake all the engagements demanded on the part of the United States (Ibid.).


175 Laurens to President of Congress, May 15, 1781, Wharton, IV, 416. John Laurens, the son of Henry Laurens and a colonel in the American army, had been commissioned to assist Franklin in securing additional funds in France.

176 Vergennes to Luzerne, May 11, 1781, Wharton, IV, 725-27. Throughout the summer efforts were made to get the loan underway. Even when the Prince promised not to impede it (La Vauguyon to Vergennes, June 29, 1781, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXVIII), and shortly later promised his vote for it (July 20, ibid.), the loan still failed to meet with any success. Van Bleiswick, who as Grand Pensionary was very influential in the States of Holland, declared handling an American loan in the States would be unconstitutional. The Prince agreed that it should be preceded by an acknowledgement of American independence (August 3, ibid.). Later he suggested that the loan might be permitted if its ultimate destination (America) were not mentioned (Aug. 21, ibid.). The British were quite unconcerned (Intelligence from The Hague, Sept. 11, 1781, ibid., LXX).

177 Dumas to President of Congress, Aug. 30, 1781, Wharton, V, 37.

178 Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 4, 1781, ibid.; Fruin, Dépêches van Thulemeyer, p. 292.
Innumerable efforts to effect peace, general or particular, were made during 1781.¹ The English declaration of war on the United Provinces (December, 1780) and the accession of the latter country to the Armed Neutrality (effective November 20, 1780 but final signatures January 3, 1781) brought Russia very much to the foreground. At first it was presumed by practically everyone that Russia would fulfill the obligations imposed upon her by the convention of the Armed Neutrality. Even Sir James Harris, the English minister at St. Petersburg, did not doubt Catherine's sincerity in the convention. He therefore determined to convince her that the Dutch could claim no assistance as the rupture between Great Britain and the United Provinces was unrelated to that convention.² Catherine in reality was anxious to find other means than war to fulfill her obligations and so informed the Dutch ambassador. Already in January the empress was reputed to have written to Frederick II desiring him to offer his mediation to the United Provinces.³ Frederick made tentative efforts through his minister, Thulemeyer, but very quickly withdrew in favor of a Russian mediation.⁴

By the beginning of 1781 England was agreeable to a general mediation provided it was under the auspices of friends. Consequently, in January the Court of St. James verbally communicated to Emperor Joseph II of Austria
that Catherine had made an earlier offer of mediating the peace. This was sufficient inducement to elicit a similar offer from the Emperor who then communicated his intentions to Spain and France. France responded with an invitation to Austria to join in the mediation earlier proposed by Russia. Catherine accepted Joseph as co-mediator and she agreed to Vienna as the most suitable place for opening the negotiations. However, she insisted that a reconciliation must be effected between England and the United Provinces before the general mediation could take place. The Netherlands accepted the mediation offered but England objected to a separate peace. Therefore, the proposal was dropped and plans for the joint mediation were again under way.

Adams, busy about many things, was intermittently aware of these rumblings of peace negotiations but refused to put any stock in them. In January of 1781 his news services informed him of Stormont’s efforts to improve English connections with the Emperor and then to secure Joseph’s co-mediation. He forwarded the information, with his personal reaction, to Dumas. "The English are laboring with all their might, intriguing with all their subtlety, and bribing with all the money they can spare in order to draw in the House of Austria to some connections with them." He personally believed that there was "nothing to be gotten by a connection with them except broken bones." In mid-March he was still very much of the opinion that the proposed mediation of Emperor and Empress was "only the artifice of England to embroil all Europe." To Jenings he acknowledged, "I don’t wish she may succeed, but I don’t much care if she does." He rather thought Europe deserved to be penalized for her partiality and, furthermore, America was more apt to gain than to lose in this eventuality. He assured Huntington that
"England is at her old game of seduction and division, and is laboring under the pretense of employing the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia in mediations for peace, insidiously to embroil all Europe in the war." He personally did not believe there was "the least prospect of a general peace."\(^\text{11}\)

America's allies, however, were not equally indifferent. France was anxious to bring an end to the war, but was disposed to view the projected mediation with misgivings. Austria's traditional friendship for England and Vergennes' record in thwarting Russian foreign policy\(^\text{12}\) did not augur well for French interests in a Russo-Austrian mediation. On the other hand, it would never do for France to offend two such powerful countries as Russia and Austria by an outright refusal of their good offices. The offer of mediation, therefore, put France in a diplomatic bind which required delicate manipulation. At this Vergennes was skillful and could hope for success if no one were in a position to upset his designs. But here lay the problem. The friction between Vergennes and Adams the preceding year had made the French Foreign Minister fearful of entrusting any--much less such delicate--negotiations to Adams. As soon as there seemed some possibility of a mediation within a reasonable length of time, he decided to exert his influence to have the unwanted minister replaced by someone more flexible. Consequently, Vergennes informed Luzerne that although he had now become convinced of Adams' adherence to the alliance--a matter which he had doubted the previous July--he very much questioned the plenipotentiary's discretion.

His character and turn of mind are essentially opposed to what is proper in political intercourse; he is, and will be, a negotiator as embarrassing for his superiors as for those who have business
relations with him. I am so convinced of this as to foresee with a sort of pain Mr. Adams taking part in the negotiations for peace.

The only possible solution was to remove the negotiation from Adams' discretion and he sent directives to this effect. "You may see, if possible, in case another may not be substituted for him, that he may have a colleague capable of restraining him."13

As the possibilities of a mediation increased and no word was received from America, Vergennes' anxieties regarding America and Mr. Adams increased.

A second dispatch of the ninth of March informed Luzerne of further developments.14 Vergennes wrote that France had not yet sent a formal response to the imperial courts but had indicated her willingness to accept the mediation if her allies were similarly agreeable. Spain had declared it her obligation to conclude the direct negotiations with Cumberland before acquiescing to the general mediation.15 Vergennes pointed out to Luzerne that "these replies constitute an eventual acceptance" and that it was important that America also accept the mediation and, through the good offices of the king, make this decision known to all the powers participating. As for Adams, Vergennes still regretted seeing the American entrusted "with a business so difficult and so delicate as that of pacification because of his pedantry, stubbornness, and self-importance." These qualities Vergennes argued, would "give rise to a thousand vexations to the despair of his co-negotiators." The Frenchman probably found no solace in the thought that he would be the chief of these. Since his earlier dispatch he had reconsidered and now explained that he realized Congress would experience great repugnance in recalling Adams and therefore Luzerne should desist from further effort in that regard. He should, nevertheless, make Congress feel the necessity of directing Adams to
subordinate his actions to the directions of the king or his ministers. 16

Vergennes knew the instructions on pacification originally given to Adams. 17 In order to improve the possibilities of a successful mediation, he saw a necessity of these instructions being reconstructed along more flexible lines. Luzerne was therefore to urge Congress to use all the moderation possible in drawing up new instructions in order to win the favor of the mediators. Since London was expected to be difficult to deal with, a truce might be the solution. Accordingly, the American plenipotentiary should know Congress' decision relative to this. 18 Vergennes communicated to Franklin—in an effort to win his support also—the information that a joint offer of mediation had been made and the king’s response that he was obliged to consult with his allies before acquiescing. Adams, the man with the commission for peace negotiations, was given no information at all in regard to this. Franklin was requested to transmit the information to Congress. Since Vergennes had no doubt that Congress would perceive both the necessity and the usefulness of the mediation, Franklin was to urge them to send such instructions as seemed proper to their plenipotentiary. To this appeal Franklin dryly remarked that he was of the impression that Adams already possessed any necessary instruction. He did, however, in his next communication to Congress very briefly relate the interview and forwarded Vergennes' request on instructions for Adams. 19

Negotiations proceeded very slowly in Europe but through March and April the various courts gradually framed their preliminary conditions. In the meantime, Luzerne transmitted to his chief Congress' disavowal of John Adams' position vis-à-vis Vergennes the preceding summer. 20 Vergennes was
not at all satisfied with the scope of the remonstrance given Adams as it did not in the least curtail his powers in the approaching mediation. He pointed out to his minister that Congress had checked Adams only on the one point of securing French approbation before making known his full powers. They said "absolutely nothing of other objects on which I believe some remarks ought to be made to Adams." Vergennes desired that Congress would enjoin Adams never to undertake the "slightest step" without the previous consent of the king. This, Vergennes believed, was the "only means of restraining Adams and of rendering us master of his conduct." He was convinced that Adams had "not the ability to appreciate fine distinctions which is a requisite of a negotiator" but rather inclined to follow the "flights of his too ardent imagination." Vergennes did not state his views primarily for the enlightenment of Luzerne but for that of Congress. Luzerne was directed to impress Huntington with Vergennes' opinion and "to make him feel its justice" in order to secure from Congress a supplement to the instructions given to Adams.²¹

In a second dispatch of the same date Vergennes warned that the prospects for peace were not favorable. England, he wrote, demanded as preliminary agreements the dissolution of the alliance between France and America and the return of the colonies to a dependent status. If England held to this, there were no hopes for peace. Nevertheless, a negotiation might open during the coming campaign and Congress ought to have instructions prepared.²² A month later Vergennes informed Luzerne that Adams had assumed the character of minister to the States General—a stroke which confirmed all Vergennes' bad impressions of the redoubtable Adams. The mediation still bore every appearance of being considerably in the future. The admission of America as a
negotiating power constituted the major obstacle to initiating the proceedings. Vergennes advised that the most effectual means of removing that particular difficulty lay in a decisive American victory over the British. In brief, Vergennes was repeating advice he had given directly to Adams two years previously—America should put more effort into the war and leave the politics of Europe to France. ²³

The reception of Vergennes' letters—all of which arrived at approximately the same time—was Luzerne's signal for action. He applied to Huntington for a committee to whom he might communicate the information and the advice that they contained. ²⁴ The appointed committee (Messrs. Carroll, Jones, Witherspoon, Sullivan, and Mathews) met with Luzerne on May 26 and heard the French ambassador detail the position of his court. After the meeting, the majority of the committee departed, but the chairman (Daniel Carroll) remained with Luzerne and under his guidance drew up a report for Congress. ²⁵ This report was an obvious repetition of the ideas forwarded in Vergennes' letters. Much of the conference, according to the report, had been devoted to observations on the past conduct of Adams and to suggestions on the future dependence of both Adams and Congress on the good offices of the king. Faithful to his instructions, Luzerne praised the patriotism of Adams but made it abundantly clear that, in the French estimation, the man's prudence left much to be desired. The committee was plainly told that Congress should "draw a line of conduct to that minister, of which he may not be allowed to lose sight."

Luzerne carefully recalled to their minds the ill-fated incident wherein Adams thought he had a right to declare publicly his mission to treat with Britain. The moral of the tale was made unmistakably clear. If Congress had the faith
in the king which his majesty's wise and benevolent conduct should have inspired in them, they would easily perceive the necessity of subordinating the actions of their plenipotentiary to the judgment of his majesty. Congress, Luzerne insisted, should have the greatest independence in establishing broad outlines for the minister's guidance, but "with respect to the manner of carrying them into execution, he was to receive his directions from the Count de Vergennes." 26

There were other circumstances of which Congress should similarly be mindful. Congress had no connections with the powers involved in the mediation and it devolved upon the king to represent the United States. Luzerne assured the committee that the king would, as a matter of "prudence and justice," support the American representative unless "this minister, by aiming at impossible things, forming exorbitant demands . . . or misconstruing his instructions" would cause a rift between himself and the French negotiators. In this unhappy event France would necessarily proceed without constant communication with the American minister and the apparent contradiction between the allies would have a deleterious effect on the negotiation. 27 Although Luzerne promptly added that it was understood that "the most perfect independency" was to be the "foundation of the instructions" given to Adams, his remarks left no doubt that "independency" was not to wander beyond French guidelines. Having proposed severe restrictions on the plenipotentiary appointed, he proceeded to delimit the subject matter within Congressional competence. On the supposition that England was in a sufficiently strong military position to "debate with the greatest energy and obstinacy" any articles relating to America, he counselled Congress to great moderation in
drawing up instructions. To secure the good will of the mediating powers, the plenipotentiary should be free to yield on any point, save independence. Following Vergennes' instructions, Luzerne further observed that the great difficulties which might arise in forming a definitive peace might possibly lead the mediators to propose a truce and, consequently, the American plenipotentiary should know the intentions of Congress in that regard. 28

On June 6, while the unsuspecting Adams was anxiously watching the repercussions of his memorial, the foregoing report was taken into consideration. The committee proposed the resolution that the plenipotentiary be instructed to concur with the king in accepting the proposed mediation but that he be instructed at the same time to accede to no treaty that did not guarantee the independence and sovereignty of all thirteen states and which did not leave the treaties with France in full effect. 29 Accordingly, the only two stipulations recommended by the committee were those which Luzerne had indicated—the recognition of American independence and the fidelity to the Franco-American treaties. An effort, in the form of a motion, was made by Witherspoon, delegate from New Jersey, to set guidelines for the settlement of disputed boundaries. This resolution was in two parts. The first stated that the "desires and expectations" of Congress relative to the boundaries had been set forth in the earlier instructions of August 14, 1778, and delivered to Adams in the fall of 1779, but that Congress thought it "unsafe at this distance" to bind the negotiator with "absolute and peremptory directions" on any points except independency and the Franco-American treaties. Beyond this, Adams might use his "own judgment and prudence," in accordance with circumstances, to secure the interests of the United States. The
second part of the Witherspoon resolution enjoined consultation with the ministers of France on all subjects and concurrence with them in the negotiations for peace or truce. Consequently, this final paragraph was a faithful rendition of Luzerne's requests. When a vote was called for on this paragraph, only Ward and Lovell, both of Massachusetts and staunch Adams defenders, voted "nay."\textsuperscript{30} The instructions, then, consisted of the original resolution to accede to the mediation and to accept no treaty infringing on the sovereignty of the thirteen states or negating any part of the treaties between France and the United States, and the additional motion of Witherspoon to consult, and, in specific cases, to concur with France.

John Witherspoon next proposed an additional instruction relative to the power to agree to a truce. By his former instructions, Adams was authorized to accept a truce only on a long-term basis and if it were accompanied by the complete withdrawal of all British land and naval armaments.\textsuperscript{31} The new instructions provided for greater flexibility. They empowered the plenipotentiary to agree to a truce of any duration thought necessary by the other belligerents provided that it did not infringe upon the right to complete independence and provided that Great Britain be not left in possession of any part of the thirteen states.\textsuperscript{32}

Adams' ministerial power was thus rapidly succumbing to the chipping process inaugurated by Luzerne. Nevertheless, as long as Adams remained the sole American negotiator (a negotiator that was concomitantly in process of parrying a vaguely worded invitation from Vergennes to come to Paris for peace discussions), there was reason to believe that he would interpret the instructions as he would wish to interpret them. It was still necessary to
give him colleagues capable of restraining him. A feeble effort in this direc-
tion had been made by the committee in the form of a report and resolution, but the suggestion of adding co-negotiators had been rejected by a vote of five to four. When the revision of the instructions was completed, Congress directed the committee to communicate confidentially the substance of the instructions to Luzerne. The ambassador was not satisfied. He informed them that the instructions were incomplete as they entrusted entirely to Adams' judgment the decisions in regard to peace and the best interests of the United States. Luzerne reminded them that their minister was capable of mis-
interpreting instructions and had won the censorship of Congress for that very thing. He pointed out the dubiousness of a man who embroiled himself with the friendly court of France being able to placate the mediators, and he injected the idea that ineptness in diplomacy could easily vitiate the entire pacification. He also appealed to sectional interests to sever support from Adams. He averred that Adams was so blinded by the interests of the Eastern States that he would assure to them the right to the fisheries even if, to secure these presumed rights, he would have to ignore the distress of the South and the needs of the nation. Adams, he concluded, would see no danger in continuing the war to secure the interests of the few states whose allegiance he commanded.

After their discussion with Luzerne, the committee formulated a plan of action. The minister or ministers were to be made much more dependent upon French advice and consent. Accordingly, the committee submitted recommendations as a basis for further revision of the instructions. In the second paragraph of his instructions, Adams had been given the right to "use
your own judgment and prudence" to secure the interests of the United States subject only to the bonds imposed by circumstances. The committee wished the above quoted words changed to "are therefore at liberty to secure. . ." a statement which obviously left him the job but did not specifically sanction his "own judgment and prudence." When this was brought to a vote, the amendment was accepted. It was further recommended to insert after the word "concurrency" in the directive to undertake nothing without French knowledge and concurrence, the words "ultimately to govern yourself by their advice and opinion, endeavoring in your whole conduct . . ." In the vote on this, Connecticut joined Massachusetts and Rhode Island in voting "nay." Bland of Virginia also opposed and Pennsylvania turned in a divided vote, but the recommendation was accepted.36

As soon as these recommendations had been accepted, the committee proposed a reconsideration of the question whether another person or persons should be joined to Adams in the negotiation. In accord with the bidding of Luzerne,37 the committee suggested the addition of two co-negotiators. This was too much for John Witherspoon. Up to this point he had agreed to, and proposed in Congress, most of the restrictive resolutions advocated by the French ambassador. He now thought that to go any further and either discharge Adams or shackle him with co-negotiators would be "an act of too great obsequiousness," one which would set a poor precedent for the "future conduct of our affairs."38 On the whole, however, Congress was not averse to the idea but met difficulties in choosing the additional two men. On Wednesday, June 13, John Jay was elected and, after some French interference, Franklin, Jefferson, and Henry Laurens were added to the commission.39
Agreement on the major issues reached, Congress proceeded to draw up the proper commissions— to accept the mediation and to treat of peace. They also gave the instructions a final approval. These new instructions read very differently from the set Adams had been carrying for over eighteen months. Adams was now only one of five and by many considered subordinate to Franklin's leadership. The 1779 boundaries were no longer his sine qua non but only an optimum which permitted of unspecified amputations. No longer was Adams or even the commission permitted explicitly to use their "own judgment and prudence" in securing American interests, but they must ultimately govern themselves by French advice and opinion. This last clause aroused some antagonism even among those who normally followed the lead of Luzerne and who were not interested in "saving face" for Adams. These argued that the instructions made the American negotiators extremely subservient to France. But Luzerne, aware that he commanded a majority, took the high position of insisting that France would accept such a trust only if it were willingly accorded, and called for a vote. It was no time to lose French friendship. The ruse worked and the instructions were confirmed. Both sides then settled down to a few weeks of an uneasy truce marred by sporadic exchanges while they prepared in earnest for future warfare over Adams and his commissions.

Adams, completely unaware that he was the subject of these important deliberations, was reluctant to permit himself any expectation of using the commissions which he held. There could be little doubt that, if he had for a moment suspected that the powers he held were in process of curtailment, he would have devoted much more thought and energy to the pursuit of any opportunity, no matter how vague, in which they might be used. Knowing nothing
of the intrigue in Philadelphia, he proceeded about his normal affairs and
paid little attention to newspaper articles on the Russo-Austrian mediation
proposals. His friends in Philadelphia, in the meantime, were working hard
to preserve or restore as much of Adams' independency of action as was pos-
sible.

One of the first struggles of significance centered on fishing rights
off Newfoundland. These fishing rights were a major interest to the New
Englanders. They had furnished a primary reason for the bargaining to secure
for Adams the commission in 1779. The belief was current that the British
would sign a peace treaty only if they could sign a commercial treaty with
the United States the same day. As long as Adams was sole negotiator for the
commercial treaty he would be in a position to delay the entire pacification.
His friends attempted to strengthen his position by making these fishing
rights a sine qua non of the commercial treaty. When the motion to do so was
first introduced, it was rejected; but Luzerne thought he saw the handwriting
on the wall and rushed the information to Vergennes. 44 Early in July Marbois,
charge d'affairs in Luzerne's absence, sent similar news. He notified the
Foreign Minister that the Adams faction was planning to arouse public feeling
on the question through the medium of the press. His special concern was a
pamphlet dispatched from his post in the Netherlands by Adams which was caus-
ing quite a stir in the New England States. In this pamphlet Adams stressed
the necessity of independence for Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and
claimed that European powers should not participate in the fisheries of those
areas. 45 The disparity between Adams' ideas and those which Luzerne had been
seeking to promote was apparent. A few days later, a motion was carried to
revoke Adams' power as sole negotiator for a commercial treaty. 46

Hardly had the commercial treaty power been revoked when Arthur Lee moved to reconsider both the appointment of additional commissioners and the entire instructions of June 15. The motion was defeated then but was again brought up on August 2 only to be postponed by adjournment. The same fate attended its resumption on August 5. Finally, on the eighth of August, Lee again moved a reconsideration of the June instructions. In the debate several of the most loyal supporters of France deplored the instructions, but they argued the necessity of accepting them. Madison admitted that they were a sacrifice of national dignity. On the other hand, he insisted that the sacrifice was more apparent than real since it was only "ultimately" that France must be consulted and this was already necessary due to the treaty of 1778. He also noted that French interest and policy would dictate to them the rendering of every possible advantage to the United States in order to alienate America from Great Britain. 47 The pro-Gallican Jenifer of Maryland agreed that France would procure "tolerable terms" for America as the best means of promoting her own interests but admitted, "I trust more to her policy than to her justice." Witherspoon, who had had much to do with the formation of these instructions, defended them on the grounds of the disputes between Adams and Vergennes. Due to these disputes Congress was bound either to pass these instructions or to recall Adams. They had chosen the former as less wounding to national dignity. When brought to a vote, the instructions stood unchanged from their June 15th format. 49

The long-awaited news of all these changes reached Vergennes only in September. He sent congratulations to Luzerne for his "vigor" in opposing
the first set of revised directives. These he agreed had placed too much
authority in Adams' hands where, "with his character and his principles,
these powers would have been dangerous." Vergennes also expressed relief at
the increase in negotiators. He did not really expect either Jefferson or
Laurens to arrive but was satisfied that Franklin's "sagacity will temper the
obstinacy of Mr. Adams."50

The Foreign Minister's joy was perhaps proportionate to the anxiety
which had preceded it. On May 21 Russia and Austria had again officially of­
fered mediation services and enclosed their propositions as a basis for a
general peace. To reject the offer outright would be tantamount to making
enemies of these powerful countries. On the other hand, acceptance could be
delayed only so long. Time was running out and still there was no answer to
the Foreign Minister's letter requesting restrictions on Adams and co­
negotiators with him. Finally, Vergennes decided that Adams should be on
hand in case the negotiations opened. Therefore he had Beranger extend an
invitation to Adams to return to Paris as soon as possible.51 His only ex­
planation—American interests required his presence there. Such ambiguity
failed to pry Adams loose from the many interests he was busy promoting in
the United Provinces. He returned a polite letter to the Secretary asking for
more information on the nature of this important business. After enumerating
the tasks on which he was engaged, he explained that these matters were too
important to be lightly laid aside. Therefore, unless the Paris business was
of great weight, such as either a general pacification or an invitation to
the United Provinces to accede to the alliance with France and the United
States, he declined the invitation until affairs could be put in better order.
When Vergennes received this response he dispatched just the necessary atom of information to bring Adams. Berenger was told to inform Adams that there was a question of peace negotiations and it was necessary for Vergennes to consult with the American peace commissioner. 52

If there had been any very specific information available, Adams would have been grateful for it. He had not received any type of official notification prior to Berenger's report although he had been following the frequent articles on mediation in the public papers. Aware that he was unacquainted with official development, he surmised that he was intentionally being kept in ignorance since "perhaps something has been expected from the United States which was not expected from me." Apparently he was not as concerned as he might have been that France would secure more moderate terms to offer the mediators directly from Congress than would be offered by himself. He was not inclined to take an optimistic view of the efforts at mediation as he simply refused to believe that England was sincere in her pretentions for peace. The major part of his hopes—until this expectation was completely destroyed in mid-June—had been founded on the assistance of the Armed Neutrality. For a brief time, he feared a private settlement between England and the Provinces but England's refusal of a separate mediation dispelled that worry until the following spring. He found England's substitute offer to accept a general mediation only a little less threatening. He was persuaded that it, too, was but an "insidious maneuver of the British ministry." 53

Russian intentions he was unable to fathom. He had heard through the Dutch ambassador at St. Petersburg that Catherine would participate in a general mediation only on condition that the British accept the maritime treaty and grant American
independence. He personally believed the Russian statements "so faint, re-
served, and mysterious" that no faith could be placed in them. Obviously
Adams was not being kept up-to-date on the progress of the mediation. This
view was being expressed a full month after Russia and Austria had presented
their preliminary positions on peace to the courts of Versailles, Madrid, and
London. In spite of the Dutch ambassador's report, these preliminary proposi-
tions in no way indicated a "must" on independence.

On the other hand, a summary of his views on mediation indicated that
Mr. Adams had a good comprehension of the pitfalls of any immediate negotia-
tion. "I confess I should dread a negotiation for a general peace at this
time, because I should expect propositions for short truces, uti possidetis,
and other conditions, which would leave our trade more embarrassed, our union
more precarious, and our liberties at greater hazard than they can be in a
continuance of the war; at the same time it would put us to as constant, and
almost as great an expense." Fortunately for his peace of mind he was unaware
that, only a week before he wrote these words, Congress had made possible the
very things which he dreaded.

Long before that unsettling news arrived, he had received Berenger's
notice of the proposed peace talks and made preparations to leave Amsterdam
for Paris. At the same time Dana was preparing to begin his mission to Russia
where he hoped to gain recognition as American plenipotentiary. Since he de-
sired a secretary, he sought and obtained Adams' permission to take the young
John Quincy Adams with him. Charles, who was suffering from homesickness, was
permitted to accompany Jackson, a friend of his father's, home to Braintree.
Adams left Thaxter to handle his affairs in Amsterdam and Dumas those at The
Hague. Between them they carried on all the works Adams had begun—including the regular collection and translation of all available state papers. Some of these were transmitted immediately to Congress; others were retained for Adams' signature and transmission after his return from Paris at the end of July.56 Once the boys were in safe hands and his various responsibilities delegated to his assistants, Adams set off for Paris where he arrived on the evening of July 6, 1781.

The following morning he applied for an audience with Vergennes but found the minister in council. The Count sent a message that unfortunately he must leave the city immediately on business but that Adams should call upon M. de Rayneval, Vergennes' undersecretary. Rayneval would be able to give him the information which Vergennes wished the American to have. That afternoon Adams paid his respects to Rayneval who told him of the proposed mediation. In the ensuing discussion the American learned that England had not made any specific proposals—a conclusion Adams had reached while still in Amsterdam—but that Vergennes wished to discuss various points before a mediation should begin. Among these points Rayneval mentioned the problem of whether Adams was a "British subject" or in what light he was to be considered. The patriotic Adams bristled at this needling and assured Rayneval that he was not and had no intention of becoming a British subject again. He would prefer to be "a fugitive in China or Malabar." In closing the conference Rayneval suggested that Adams remain available as Vergennes desired to confer with him that they might understand each other's views.57

Two days later Adams received an appointment from Vergennes for nine o'clock on Wednesday morning the 11th of July. When he arrived at the Foreign
Minister's Versailles office, he was shown a copy of the first three preliminary articles offered by the co-mediators. Since the copy was in French and the fourth article was carefully concealed by a book, he requested a copy of the entire communication but was refused. In the course of the conversation, the French officials informed him that the Spanish answer to these propositions was already prepared and the French answer in process. Neither Vergennes nor Rayneval could say whether or not England had as yet responded. The interview finished, Adams rushed to his lodgings to prepare a report to Congress and to begin organizing his own response to the articles proposed by Russia and Austria. Having neither Thaxter nor Dana with him, the minister was left to write, translate, and make copies of everything himself.

Having read but not received a copy of the three articles, Adams committed them to paper from memory and dispatched a copy to Congress with some first thoughts on the matter. He introduced them as articles submitted by St. Petersburg and Vienna "in consequence of some wild propositions" made to them by England. He assured Congress that it would be a "long time before anything would come of the maneuver."

A few days later he condemned the project as an English effort to win desertions from the American army and apostates from the cause of independence and alliance through the art of "seductions, deception, and division." In a subsequent letter he expressed the opinion that England was using the mediation in an endeavor "to administer soporifics to their enemies." On the first proposition—that a separate peace should be concluded between England and the colonies without the intervention of either the other belligerents or the mediators unless the latter were specifically requested to attend—he posed
no objection provided the negotiations were held only after the mediators acknowledged American sovereignty. The second proposition—that this separate peace be signed conjointly with the peace among the other belligerents and that the terms of both peace treaties be guaranteed by the imperial and neutral powers—he also found acceptable if it were agreeable to France and to Spain. The third proposition—to declare a general armistice on the basis of the status quo for a year or longer while the terms of the peace were being worked out—he strenuously rejected. To justify this rejection he urged that there were numerous arguments, "momentous and decisive," against any armistice. Peace, he charged, would be retarded rather than expedited by relaxations and concessions. The real recipe for a good and lasting peace was a combination of successful warfare in the United States and firmness, patience, and perseverance in the peace chambers.

In drawing up his position to present to Vergennes, he was disturbed a little by the uncertainty whether his answer was entirely for the Foreign Minister's own enlightenment or whether Vergennes intended to forward Adams' impressions to the imperial courts. He had no objection to either of the first two articles provided that France had none, but he explained his objections to the third in detail. A truce, which he admitted was not explicitly mentioned in the article but had been alluded to in some of Vergennes' observations, he feared would lead only to a bloody war once the truce was over. A short truce would be even more dangerous to America. Therefore he proclaimed his reluctance to enter into any discussion on the subject. If, however, virtue must be made of necessity and such a discussion must be held, there were two express conditions prerequisite to that discussion. In the
first place, the allies would have to agree that the existing treaties would remain in full force for the duration of the truce period and until such time as Great Britain did acknowledge American independence. The second prerequisite involved the complete removal of all British land and naval forces from every part of the thirteen states. If these two conditions, which would indicate virtual independence, were accepted, Adams in turn would accept the term "truce" rather than hold Britain to the humiliation of a forthright acknowledgment of that independence. His reasoning he then carried a step further and inquired how England could treat with the representatives of America upon either a truce or an armistice without thereby acknowledging the independence and sovereignty of the thirteen states. The interrelation between representation and sovereignty opened the question of the character of the American representative at the Congress. He declared that there was no justification for discussing American affairs as they pertained to America at any congress in which the American representative was not present. On the other hand, the very presence of an American representative was an avowal of American sovereignty by the other members of the congress. The only solution to the anomaly—and a very obvious one he thought—was for the mediating powers to issue an article recognizing the United States and inviting their minister to participate in the Congress.

From the position that the presence of a representative from a country constituted recognition of that country, Adams quickly advanced to the position that he would be willing to confer with a minister from England. For the moment, he saw no inconsistency in going to Vienna and treating with and English minister without waiting for recognition since the "very existence
of such a congress would be of use to our reputation." This decision may have rested partially on his belief that England was trying to capitalize on her pretension of desiring peace but was at the same time refusing recognition as a means of preventing a peace settlement. He was convinced that England was not sincere and this was a means of calling her bluff. Accordingly, he assured first Huntington, and then Vergennes, that he was willing to go to Vienna without being previously recognized. The only preliminary on which he would remain adamant was that neither an armistice nor the status quo appear on the discussion agenda. To the Frenchman he offered the explanation that his instructions positively prohibited either of these. Although the new instructions of June 15th had not yet appeared in Europe, he was citing more the desideratum than the absolute even of the old directives, since these had permitted a lengthy truce under specific conditions.

On his part, Vergennes had been taking his time and carefully awaiting development before responding to Adams' remarks on the three articles which he had permitted the American to see. Apparently the thought of Adams arranging conferences with the English at Vienna galvanized him into action. He dispatched a letter addressed to "Mr. Adams, agent of the United States of North America." Since this address was in the handwriting of a clerk and only the signature in that of Vergennes, Adams was uncertain whether the term "agent" was a clerk's "blunder" or the Foreign Minister's "art and design." Whatever the explanation, the fact irritated the minister and aroused in him a suspicion that Vergennes was perhaps indicating by this a conformity to the views of the mediating courts. Regardless of the superscription, there were things that Vergennes was determined to make very clear to Adams in the letter.
Above all Adams must not seize the initiative and start for Vienna. In no uncertain terms Vergennes wrote that he had shown Adams the propositions and requested observations on them because of his confidence in the American's judgment and zeal for his country—not because things were sufficiently advanced to present the American response to the imperial courts. Adams was curtly informed that there were "preliminaries to be adjusted with respect to the United States" before Adams could put in an appearance. In the meantime, all business must of necessity be transacted through the French court.68

The blunt reminder evoked another change of thought from the plenipotentiary and the immediate reply that he had no intention of appearing in Vienna or of "ministerially or otherwise" approaching the mediators. He stated that he held too poor an opinion of the whole affair to become involved unless duty called him thence. He could not, however, resist calling the Foreign Minister's attention to the inconsistency of the mediating powers in not inviting him. He reasoned that in actual fact they had acknowledged a "belligerent power in America" of sufficient importance to claim their attention. Also, in the propositions they communicated to the several courts, they did "imply that America is a power, a free and independent power." He reminded Vergennes that his mission had been sufficiently touted that the co-mediators could be presumed to be aware that he was in Europe and vested with all necessary powers. They could likewise be presumed to understand that he could not know that there was a congress or be expected to repair to it and there meet the British for talks unless he were informed of it. And the proper persons to do the informing were the co-mediators. Therefore, he had reason to expect an invitation might still be forthcoming.69
In the event that Vergennes had succeeded in forgetting Adams' basic philosophy of diplomacy, he thought this a singularly attractive occasion to recall it to the minister's mind. "The dignity of North America does not consist in diplomatic ceremonials or any of the subtleties of etiquette; it consists solely in reason, justice, truth, the rights of mankind, and the interests of the nations of Europe; all of which, well understood i.e., as Adams would have them understood are clearly in her favor." Then as a parting shot and with a full turn to the argument Vergennes had raised, Adams assured the Count that he would not insist upon all the niceties of etiquette but would "certainly go to Vienna or elsewhere, if your excellency should invite or advise me to go." Judged from the activity Vergennes had initiated in Congress to restrain or replace him, this apparently was not exactly what the Foreign Minister had in mind.

When this lengthy letter was followed by another two thousand words the following day, Vergennes must have been exasperated. As Adams thought over Vergennes' remarks, he feared that he had not conveyed his full meaning in the letter of July 16 in which he had discussed going to Vienna without a special invitation. He now explained that he did not hold this intention irrespective of any other consideration. Rather he based it on the supposition that the mediating powers planned to accept him in whatever capacity he was sent and grant him all the prerogatives of that particular character. However, since writing the former letter, he had looked over the articles again and now took issue with the wording of the first article. There were no "American colonies" but a sovereign United States of America and the very word "colony" implied ideas long rejected by the States. Since this term had
been employed, it now seemed to him that a more explicit recognition should be
a prerequisite of any conference. There followed a lengthy exposé of the in-
consistency of calling any congress or offering any mediation if the entire
affair were but the internal one of subjects not obeying their sovereign.
Mediation of its very nature involved only sovereign powers. 71

In spite of his series of letters to the ministry, Adams received only
the one brief communiqué from Vergennes. This he considered "poor encourage-
ment" to continue being overly communicative with the French ministry. Con-
sequently, he began to plan for his return to the Netherlands where he thought
it possible to "negotiate for peace with Great Britain much more rapidly than
in France." 72 Before he was content to leave Paris, however, there was one
final point he thought necessary to bring to Vergennes' attention. In a last
epistle, he expounded at length on the constitutional impossibility of the
imperial courts soliciting a minister from each separate state rather than a
representative of the United States as a unit. He remarked that this scheme
would not only meet with complete failure but would be considered in so un-
favorable a light as in all probability to meet with a solemn remonstrance
from Congress. 73 His words were not simply beating the air in spite of the
total silence with which they were met. The mediators had discussed and Ver-
gennes had more or less approved a four or five year truce during which each
state would separately declare its intentions regarding independence. In
fact, Luzerne had been enjoined secretly to feel out the states which seemed
more inclined to submission and was already about it. 74 Adams' intervention
scotched this along with the projects for a truce or uti possidetis.

Although at the time his Paris sojourn seemed frustrating and
discouraging, Adams later took great pride in the results of the efforts he had made there. When writing the whole story for the Boston Patriot, he attributed the eventual defeat of this "profound and magnificent project . . . for the purpose of chicaning the United States out of their independence" to his correspondence with Vergennes and to his remarks on the three preliminary articles. To support this statement he quoted lengthy extracts from the French reply to the mediating powers and remarked that every idea and almost every expression in their response was taken directly from his communications with Vergennes. Adams was not known for timidity in acclaiming his own success but on this occasion at least he was not unique in thus evaluating his work.75

Adams could only speculate why Vergennes had uttered no word of approval if, and when, their views so closely coincided. The "midnight silence" he eventually concluded was a necessary concomitant of Vergennes' efforts to have his mission revoked. He argued that if he were to transmit to Philadelphia (which he would be sure to do if he had copies) the king's intended answer so like his own or any words of approbation or agreement from the French court, the results could have been disastrous to Luzerne's efforts to manipulate Congress.76 His intuition was probably correct. When Vergennes informed Luzerne of the general progress of the mediation he gave the impression that Adams had played merely a passive role of charmed agreement. "He has appeared very satisfied with this which we have said and done in favor of his country and I persuade myself that he will render to Congress an account which will leave nothing to be desired."77 Luzerne, in presenting this account to Congress, described Adams as satisfied with the effort Vergennes had made. He
reported that the major obstacle to a negotiation was the difficulty of agreeing on the status of America. This problem, he assured them, Vergennes was still attempting to solve and in due course would notify them "concerning the conduct which the state of affairs will require from Congress." If Vergennes was inclined to accord Adams only token recognition, Luzerne was determined to by-pass him altogether.

Having no faith in the "sublime bubbles" blown by the mediators and "weary of such roundabout and endless negotiations," Adams was in such haste to get back to the important affairs awaiting him in Holland that he rode day and night. In the long run this was not a time-saver as the weariness induced by the trip in combination with the uncommon heat of the summer and the "pestilential vapors" from the stagnant waters of the Netherlands brought on a severe fever. He managed to handle business as usual during the early part of August as the advance of the fever was slow. From the latter part of August until early October he was completely incapacitated and able to transact no business; even his beloved letter writing was put aside from the 25th of August until the 4th of October. For several days he was delirious and near to death. His recovery was extremely slow and he did not regain full vigor until several months later. For a time he despaired of regaining his health if he remained in the Low Countries. He believed himself of "so little use to the public, that I cannot but wish it may suit with the views of Congress to recall me." However, the skill of his physician, the administration of an "all-powerful bark," and the self-cure of "obstinate perseverance in walking" finally restored him to health.

His views of the situation in the Netherlands tended to fluctuate. At
times, when it was particularly jaundiced, he found no virtue in the Hollanders at all. That was the case in a letter he wrote on August 4 but had the good sense not to post. At the time he fumed about the internal divisions and animosities, the inertness of the military, and the debilitating talk of peace. He even envisioned the Dutch using America as the purchase price for their own peace. A few days later affairs appeared in a different light. "This people must have their own way. They proceed like no other." He demonstrated his point by regaling Congress with the shrewdness of the government in their system for handling naval prizes. The owners of privateers rather than the government gave the captains orders to take their prizes to any friendly port—specifically including American ports—and to join ships of these friendly powers "to undertake jointly anything advantageous." This ruse enabled the government to claim the orders were merely independent directives of the ship owners to their captains. Adams saw it as an indirect acknowledgment of American sovereignty.

The news of the "glorious victory" on August 5 of Admiral Zoutman over Admiral Parker won general applause throughout the nation and encouraged the Dutch navy and Adams in roughly equal degree. The minister was sure that if the Amsterdam regency, which had been largely responsible for the enthusiasm shown among Zoutman's officers and men, were to propose treating with the Americans in the States of Holland, the proposal would meet with similar acclaim throughout the nation. For the first time, he opined that public sentiment was growing sufficiently strong that either a separate peace or concessions to the British were unthinkable. A few days later, the last day on which he tried to dispatch any business before succumbing to the
fever, he reported the new zest in the Dutch navy and in the country at large to Dr. Franklin. With a wonted exaggeration he crowed, "If I ever did any good since I was born, it was in stirring up the pure minds of the Dutchmen, and setting the old Batavian spirit in motion after having slept so long." 85

When he had sufficiently recovered from his illness to undertake again the duties of his office and to re-open his correspondence, he happily observed a continued upsurge in the general attitude toward America. He praised the "almost universal" sentiment that "the English are wrong and the Americans right in this war." He had several explanations for this change in Dutch outlook. The commercial cities—and they were the real population centers—were strongly determined not to relinquish American trade. The Dutch, also, were finding the conduct and principles of the Americans very like that of their "venerable and heroic ancestors." 86 Both of these attitudes Adams had skillfully and ceaselessly nurtured through interminable writings and discussions. During his sojourn in Paris and his subsequent illness, he had been unable to personally produce as much material for publication as he had formerly. He did, however, continue to take a vital interest in the work of others and to sponsor it whenever possible. 87

On the whole Adams found it a great deal more simple to make his thoughts known in the Netherlands than back home in Philadelphia. In spite of the fact that he was a prolific letter writer—sometimes dispatching to Congress two or three letters in one day—that august body was at times months behind in receiving his messages. This caused him no little chagrin. 88 The cause lay partially in distance and the vicissitudes of the weather; ill-health prevented all correspondence for several weeks, but chiefly, the lack of
communication was plain bad luck. He had been advised shortly after he first arrived in the Low Countries to send his dispatches for Congress through Curson and Gouverneur at St. Eustatius. Accordingly, he had sent several packets of letters and various papers to their address. A number of these were apparently confiscated when St. Eustatius was taken although he knew nothing of it until a July 26 notice in a London paper reported the confinement for high treason of these gentlemen on the charge of an illicit correspondence with Adams. The illicit correspondence could refer only to the official dispatches as he had addressed to the defendants such packets only with a brief request that they be forwarded to Congress. Another "half a cart load . . . all my letters to Congress for 6 or 8 months" were aboard Gillon's ship. Gillon left the Netherlands in June, 1781, but did not arrive in the United States until late the following spring. Letters sent via several other vessels were intentionally thrown overboard to prevent confiscation. When he could arrange safe conveyance to the French ports, his correspondence stood a moderate chance of crossing the Atlantic safely. A major difficulty was to get packets to a French port. Opportunities by private hand were scarce and letters sent by public post were sure to be opened and probably copied. These various difficulties in transmitting correspondence necessitated a great deal of copying and recopying of all communications in an effort to secure safe conduct for at least one copy.

Much of his attention was claimed by some of the lesser duties of his office. Bills of exchange never ceased arriving. In each case, the minister had to judge the authenticity of the bill, record it, and apprise Franklin of it in hopes that money could be provided. At times this came close to
being a vain hope. Adams had barely returned to the Netherlands when Franklin warned that Adams and the other ministers of Congress would no longer be able to depend on France for their salaries as the French government planned to transmit future loans directly to Philadelphia. By June, bills were once more being drawn on Henry Laurens who was still confined in the Tower. Adams requested Franklin to pay these but described the affair as a "phenomenon" which only "you philosophers" could explain. To this request Franklin was forced to respond that he could not get any money from France and thought it time to test Adams' earlier avowal that a few protested bills might serve the American cause in Holland. Adams' own efforts to borrow money were unavailing. In mid-October his loan amounted to less than three hundred pounds.

By late fall political affairs again, after a long, quiescent period, began to consume his time and energies. The possibilities of a mediation still dragged on when on August 24, he had received the news of the appointment of co-negotiators to sit at the peace table with him. His first reaction was one of relief. For one thing, he had no expectations of a treaty materializing and momentarily thought of going home to wake those who might be lulled to sleep by dreams of peace. Secondly, he was glad to be joined by others possessing a talent for peace as "my talent, if I have one, lies in making war." When he next wrote of the subject, his views were largely the same. "It is still a great satisfaction to me, because I think it is a measure essentially right, both as it is a greater demonstration of respect to the powers whose ministers may assemble to make peace, and it is better calculated to give satisfaction to the people of America in all parts, as the commissioners are chosen from the most considerable places in that country." He also
found it a "great consolation" as it removed the possibility of delay due to his illness, "when, for many days together, there were many chances to one that I should have nothing more to do with commissions of any sort." He repeated these same thoughts to the President of Congress later and curtly refuted Jenings' remark about a "trial of spirit and fortitude" with the declaration that, on the contrary, it was "more honorable than before and much more easy." Even at the end of November he accepted it as "a measure which has taken off my mind a vast load, which . . . would have been too heavy for my forces." 97

Through December, as his health improved and new possibilities in Holland whetted his political appetite, he became successively more sensitive to the motive behind his diminution. 98 When he received his wife's expressions of outrage, he counseled her not to be too upset about the malicious attempts of his countrymen but "let them take their course and go the length of their tether." His system was not only right but was already triumphant so he could only laugh at "their impotent range and fury." 99 He explained himself a little more fully to his friend Dana when he informed the latter of the retraction of the commission for a commercial treaty. Vergennes and followers had been forced to "adopt our system of war and politics" in order to succeed in undermining Adams' powers. "I will consent, upon these terms to be diminished down to the size of a Lilliputian, or of an animalcule in pepper water." He added with disarming frankness that he could be "the more indifferent" as there was presently no prospect of peace and he had no expectations of being called to act on these commissions. 100 By the end of the year he was convinced that he had been "colleagued" with malice aforethought. "It is true that I am a sheep and that I have been fleeced...
No, I had rather say that I am a bird, that my feathers have been plucked and worn as ornaments by others." Philosophically, he was not of a mind to be too upset. "Let them have the plummage if they will; it is but a geegaw," and of little importance until it became possible to get "possession of the bird."  

The prospect of peace appeared too far in the distance to excite him but a new commission for an alliance with the Netherlands, received toward the end of November, was a different matter. It seemed so perfectly designed to fit into the developing situation there. Through the fall the mynheers were gradually becoming more sensible of their own relations to England and to the United States. This awareness Adams attributed in part to his own activities. In August he was exulting at the beneficial results of the publication of his memorial. He extolled it as the very thing needed to "arouse the nation and bring forth the public voice," and credited it with making known "with absolute certainty the sentiments of the nation." As proof he cited various instances where public opinion had promoted or prevented government action. Other forces were also at work. Shortly after Zoutman's encounter with the English fleet on August 5, the States of Holland resolved that another squadron be ordered to convoy the merchant fleets of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. A resolution presented in the States of Holland advocated concerting naval action with the French and sponsoring the French loan in order "to annoy the common enemy by strengthening the Congress of North America." In a debate in the States of Guelderland, regarding the loan to France for the benefit of America, the question of alliance with France was again discussed. One deputy claimed "he had rather acknowledge the independence of the Americans than contract an alliance with France." He was answered
by Baron van der Capellen de Marsch, cousin of Capellen tot den Poll the close friend of Adams, with the observation that an alliance with America was worthy of consideration. Capellen supported the observation with a brief homily on the advantages to be derived therefrom. Adams rejoiced to recount it as the first opinion, publicly delivered, in favor of American independence. Nevertheless, he was wary of believing the battle against the Anglophiles of the United Provinces was won. He prefaced his account of Capellen's remark by explaining that it was as "problematical as ever" what was the political system of the country or if it even had a system, and closed with the comment that it would be "long, very long" before the country was unanimously of Van der Capellen's opinion. 105

It was at this juncture that Adams reported the offer of a Russian mediation between England and the United Provinces. England, none too willingly, accepted the Empress' offer but flatly refused to have Denmark and Sweden participate as co-mediators. 106 The Provinces also accepted Catherine's services but several of the major cities, including both Amsterdam and Rotterdam, were little disposed to favor a separate peace. La Vauguyon regarded it even more unfavorably and tried to sow disunion among the members of the assembly of Holland to prevent a favorable vote. 107 The war itself furnished cause both for sorrowing and for rejoicing. St. Eustatius was regained from the English on November 27. On the other hand, on November 21, Negapatam in the Dutch East Indies was lost and a part of the Dutch African coast would have been if the French fleet had not come to the rescue. 108 The greatest news of all was that of the American victory at Yorktown. By the twentieth of November the word reached Europe through the Frenchman, Lauzun. In the
Netherlands many immediately concluded that the congress at Vienna would now materialize. Adams was not to be so easily deceived. He contended that the "Cornwallization" was insufficient of itself to bring England to terms to which the Americans could agree. The victory was not completely barren, however, as a number of "persons of consequence," who were not normally interested in his proceedings, had gone out of the way to congratulate Adams. Even more encouraging to the potentiary was the personal approbation given by La Vauguyon to Adams' desire to implement a new commission to negotiate a Dutch-Franco-American alliance.

Nearly a year earlier, on January 9, 1781, Vergennes had informed the French ambassador in America that England had declared war on the Provinces and that the resulting situation presented a favorable opportunity for a union between the two republics. The French court, at that time, advocated that Congress dispatch a "wise and enlightened envoy" with full powers to complete an alliance with the Netherlands. Count de Vergennes insinuated that it was to be "desired" that this envoy receive his "principal direction" from Franklin, in order to avoid "discordant proceedings" and to "give unity to the political affairs of Congress." A confirmatory dispatch of February 19 followed. An authorization to Luzerne to offer the interposition of the king to effect this alliance between the two republics and a hint that Congress ought to prepare these measures without delay were the only significant additions in the February dispatch. This offer Luzerne first officially presented in May but no action was taken. Although, from time to time, he expressed surprise that the king's generous offer should be neglected, Luzerne was soon busy about many interferences of a more imminent nature. Finally, having
circumscribed Adams' authority in the pacification to his satisfaction, the minister requested on July 20 a committee to receive the messages relating to an alliance. Immediately the same committee (with the solitary exchange of two members) as had in June cooperated on the denuding of Adams' commissions so effectively, was appointed to again meet with the French minister. The committee submitted their report after the meeting on July 23 and again on August 1,113 but no action was taken until August 9. The report recommended that the French court be notified that Adams already held a commission to propose a treaty of amity and commerce and that he would be further directed "to confer on all occasions in the most confidential manner" with La Vauguyon. Adams, in turn, would be notified of these proceedings and instructed to take full advantage of the French interposition both through the services of La Vauguyon and through correspondence with Franklin.114 After some debate the report was accepted, and the committee was directed to report instructions for Adams on a treaty of alliance with the United Provinces. Four days later they reported back. They prefaced their recommendations with the directive that, if Adams could form a treaty of amity and commerce in which the independence of the United States was recognized according to his previous instructions, he was not to open the subject of an alliance either offensive or defensive. If, however, he found it impracticable to operate on his previous instructions he might form a defensive alliance provided that certain stipulations regarding American relations to France and to the United Provinces be observed.115

Further discussion was postponed until August 16 when final instructions, differing somewhat from those of August 13, were prepared for Adams.
It was this set with the accompanying commission which Adams so rejoiced to receive in November. The new instructions, in direct opposition to the August 13 edition, authorized Adams to seek an alliance with the United Provinces and, if possible, a triple alliance to include France. In general, the instructions emphasized recognition of American sovereignty. To the original requirement that the United Provinces must recognize the sovereignty and independence of the United States was added the phrase "absolute and unlimited, as well in matters of government as of commerce." The clause against peace or truce until all three countries agreed was amended to proscribe any laying down of arms until American sovereignty and independence were acknowledged in a treaty terminating the war. The clause permitting mutual guaranty of possessions was deleted—the minister was not to sign any stipulation for offensive action or guaranty of possessions. In other particulars, not repugnant to these instructions, Adams might use his own discretion but was specifically enjoined to confer on all occasions and in a most confidential manner with the French minister at The Hague.

Not only were the new instructions less subservient to Luzerne's requests than those on pacification in June, but in this instance the deliberations of Congress were not presented to him for approval until after the final vote was taken. The Chevalier was made acquainted with the details of the entire proceeding only on August 22. As he had had difficulties leading Congress to act at all, he could hardly have caused the business to be reopened. He could only inform Vergennes of the congressional reluctance and admit that he had in no way influenced the resolution which differed considerably from his suggestions. He noted that this was proof that Congress wished
to conclude "without intervention" a treaty limited in duration and purely defensive. 119

If Luzerne had been able to get an account to Vergennes in time of his untiring efforts to motivate Congress, he would have received congratulations as on other occasions. Vergennes still knew nothing of Luzerne's success when in October (1781) he again directed his minister in a vein similar to that used in January and February. 120 In October's dispatch Vergennes, although less inclined to believe the Provinces would embarrass their peace negotiations by opening communications with America, was still anxious to have an accredited American representative in the republic. He was convinced that sooner or later circumstances would make some type of negotiation possible. Worried that Adams was transcending his instructions by corresponding with the opposition in England, 121 he emphasized the importance of his February observations on the desirability of the envoy receiving directions from Franklin in order to avoid disparity in the negotiations. He succinctly added that Adams was very capable of causing just that. 122 All of these objectives Luzerne had tried to accomplish but Vergennes did not receive the news until late November or December (1781). By that time he had completely reversed his former expectations on a Dutch-American alliance and had developed the conviction that the Dutch would regard any advances as too much complicating their own quarrel with England. 123 The Foreign Secretary, therefore, chided rather than congratulated Luzerne for his activity, especially for giving ministerial form to his insinuations to Congress. Luzerne, he wrote, should have understood that the king's offer was a service he wished to render to the Americans and not one he expected from them. One
communication to Congress would have been sufficient to make the offer known. Vergennes' concluding thought betrayed his annoyance at the indirect repulse. After telling Luzerne to stop discussing any French offer of interposition, he explained that this was the only proper course to "annul the defiant resolution" taken by Congress and to make Congress "feel indirectly how much this defiance was poor gratitude to His Majesty."124

With the news of the Yorktown victory, Adams received this commission to negotiate, in league with the French ambassador, a triple—or, if Spain wished to join, a quadruple—alliance. To whomever he wrote, Adams exulted that this new commission was "well-timed," and at a "strategic time" for foiling Britain's "insidious trick." Only the new commission would prevent the mediation, which he termed a "master piece" whose "supreme excellence consists in its matchless effrontery," from succeeding. He anticipated with pleasure the announcement of a triple alliance and declared that if Their High Mightinesses were to make the proposal it "would be the greatest stroke of policy which they have struck this century." But experience with Dutch indecision and dilatoriness quickly pulled him back to reality and he added, "They are not to be depended on."125

Eager to put this commission into execution while the situation in the Netherlands seemed favorable, he sent Thaxter to inform La Vauguyon of the arrival of important dispatches. La Vauguyon called on Adams at his home about one o'clock the afternoon of November 24. The two ministers spent approximately an hour and a half reviewing the possibilities. They were of one opinion as to the good effect such a proposal might have in counteracting the British "artifice" of a separate mediation between Britain and the Netherlands.
La Vauguyon described the subject as "very well seen and the measure very well concerted." Nevertheless, he was more than reluctant to take any decisive steps as he had received no orders from his court. When the conference was over, Adams, in compliance with La Vauguyon's request, dispatched to the French ambassador a copy of the instructions he had received. In his accompanying note he suggested three alternative methods of procedure for the Duke's deliberation. First, the French minister might make the proposal to the States General in the name of His Most Christian Majesty. Second, the two ministers might make a joint proposal. Or third, Adams might make the proposal as a consequence of his former proposal (April 19) of a treaty of commerce.

Immediately after the consultation, the French ambassador returned to The Hague to receive the final approval of the States General to the loan to be floated on French security. According to their agreement, Adams forwarded a summary of their conversation and a copy of his commission to La Vauguyon at The Hague. Upon receipt of these, La Vauguyon expressed his personal zeal to concert with the American plenipotentiary but reminded Adams of the necessity of a direct authorization from Paris. He confided to Dumas that he intended to return to Paris within a few days and there confer with Vergennes on the business. During the conversation he enlarged on Adams' third alternative suggestion relative to a commercial treaty. He carefully intimated that it might be appropriate for Adams to insist on an answer to his earlier memorial as a preliminary opening wedge. Thus, the subject of the memorial of April was re-introduced to the minds of all three men. It would lie dormant only a very short time.
In the meantime, the ordinarily impetuous Adams was not dismayed by the forced wait for Vergennes and his minister to decide on how and when they wished to proceed. On the contrary, he expected the wait to be beneficial. Time was on his side. The majority of the people appeared to him to desire an alliance with France and America and were being restrained from it only by "whimsical fears" and "party quarrels." Since a goodly number of newspapers and pamphlets were busily advocating an alliance, Adams judged a little time would help to prepare the way for his proposal. He was further encouraged by a proposal for a treaty with the United States from Oostergo, a small area in the Province of Friesland. This quarter was the first public body to venture such a proposal, although Van der Capellen de Marsch, speaking as an individual, had done so in the assembly at Zutphen. Oostergo was only a minute part of the sovereignty, but Adams predicted that "the whole republic must follow. It was necessitated to it by a mechanism as certain as clockwork." He wisely expected no precipitous rush to follow the Oostergo example, as he knew the operation would be "studiously and zealously slow." There were other indications that the Dutch were beginning to take a slightly stiffer line. They declared themselves unwilling to accept the Russian mediation except on the fulfillment of two preliminaries. These were that England agree to accord them 1) the enjoyment of all the rights of the Neutral League and 2) complete indemnification for all losses sustained in the war. Such terms England could not accept and "this little bubble will burst like the great one at Vienna."

Not only was the situation in the Netherlands gradually assuming a more favorable aspect, but Adams' relations with France appeared to him to be
improving. He considered himself as being on excellent terms with the Duc de la Vauguyon and rejoiced that the "miffs at Passy and Versailles seem to be wearing away."\textsuperscript{132} His latest commission appeared to reinforce that impression. From the wording of the instructions, which directed that he concert action with the French ambassador, Adams gathered that the commission resulted from an agreement between Luzerne and Congress. He, therefore, presumed that it was an outgrowth of an approved French policy.\textsuperscript{133} Consequently, he expected no problem in obtaining Vergennes' sanction on its implementation whenever he and La Vauguyon decided. He was completely unaware of the fact that the attitude at Paris had changed considerably from the time that the suggestion for a triple alliance had first been forwarded to Luzerne. Due to the slowness of trans-atlantic communication and the dilatoriness of Congress Adams found himself possessed of a commission supposedly initiated or at least favored by the French ministry but which, unknown to him, the French government was no longer willing to support.

La Vauguyon, too, was unacquainted with the change in Vergennes' thinking and had, therefore, encouraged Adams to expect French co-operation in proposing an alliance. He had even taken the unexpected step of intimating that Adams might now request an answer to his April memorial.\textsuperscript{134} This latter proposition was entirely agreeable to the American plenipotentiary and, while he awaited Vergennes authorization on the alliance—a wait which proved unending,—he proceeded to make arrangements accordingly.

A first step was to accept an invitation from Dumas to meet and discuss with some personages at The Hague the idea of requesting a categorical answer on the memorial.\textsuperscript{135} He planned to keep the appointment on December 18,
but the Duke's arrival at Amsterdam on his way to Paris caused a postponement until the following day. La Vauguyon called upon Adams at his home about noon on the eighteenth and during the ensuing discussion the two men talked at length upon the possibilities of a categorical answer. La Vauguyon believed that the recent "Cornwallization" warranted a "higher tone" and that a request for an answer would be entirely proper. He suggested that Adams go to The Hague at a time when there was a president favorable to American aspirations and demand an answer from the States General. To support his demand, the minister ought then to apply to the regencies of the various cities of the Province of Holland. The two men agreed that, as a preliminary, Adams should seek the reaction of the important government officials he had planned to meet at The Hague. Grateful for the good understanding subsisting between himself and La Vauguyon, Adams resolved to follow the advice but to "take care not to advance too fast, so as to be able to retreat." Consequently, the following morning, he visited The Hague where his friends similarly advised him to see the President of the States General at the first favorable opportunity and demand a categorical answer. Once that was done, he planned to wait upon Van Bleiswick, the Grand Pensionary, Secretary Fagel, and the pensionaries of all the cities of Holland and to apprise them of his intention. Adams and La Vauguyon met again at 10:00 o'clock on December 21 to discuss the advice Adams had received at The Hague. They were both becoming quite enthusiastic. La Vauguyon in requesting the appointment had expressed himself as "impatient" to converse with Adams on the affair. He had in fact stayed over in Amsterdam the extra days primarily to get a report. It was agreed at their meeting that La Vauguyon should acquaint Vergennes with the
proposal for a categorical answer. Adams also requested that the ambassador
should inform his chief of the American's personal disposition to follow the
directives he had received relative to an alliance. At the same time La
Vauguyon was to impress Vergennes with Adams' firm determination to act only
with French approbation. Vergennes, when informed by La Vauguyon of the
plan for a categorical answer, raised no objection to it provided that Adams
restrict himself to a purely verbal communication. Adams was, furthermore,
to limit himself to a request for information as to whether there had been
any deliberation on the memorial and as to what answer he might communicate
to Congress. No permission was given for introducing a treaty of alliance.

The approbation was scarcely a week old when Adams put it into execu-
tion. Dumas had returned with Adams to Amsterdam after the latter's Hague
consultation with influential friends. Thus both were at Amsterdam when La
Vauguyon's message arrived and they immediately made plans. The States
of Holland—that all important section of the sovereignty—was to reconvene
on January 8. The States General was also to be in session then with the
sympathetic Van de Sandheuvel as president for the week. The minister and
his agent travelled to The Hague on the eighth and sought an audience with
Van de Sandheuvel at ten the next morning, January 9, 1782. In a brief
verbal communication, Adams reminded the President of his memorial of the
previous April notifying the States General of his plenipotentiary powers and
his readiness to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce. He added that the
president at that time (Baron de Hemmen) had promised to present his communi-
cation to the States General but that he had not received any answer from
Their High Mightinesses. He concluded with a formal "demand" for a 'categorical
answer which I may transmit to my sovereign." Having received the
President's assurance that he would report the interview to the States General for their deliberation, Adams sent a request to Van Bleiswick for an interview. Due to illness, the Grand Pensionary was unable to grant the interview but indicated that public business could be presented through his secretary. Dumas then presented Adams' message verbally to the secretary for transmission to the Grand Pensionary. 141

The following morning the pilgrimage continued. The first stop was at the home of Secretary Fagel who assured them that he knew all about it. President Van de Sandheuvel had immediately reported to the States General and this body had taken Adams' request ad referendum as was their custom. Adams must await results. 142 After his visit to Fagel, the minister began his visits to the official headquarters of the regencies of each city in Holland beginning with that of Dort. There he met the pensionary, M. Gyselaer, who not only officially received the communication but in his private capacity expressed willing acknowledgment of both Adams and America. The entire delegation of Haarlem received him cordially and, while unable to promise more than to pass the information to their constituents, sincerely wished him success. He continued his calls at the houses of Leyden, Rotterdam, Gouda, and others until all eighteen deputations had been visited. Each deputation accorded him a good reception and several expressed an earnest wish for friendship between the two republics. 143 Adams was well satisfied with his efforts and with the reception they had received. 144 He very probably would have been even happier if he could have read, over Franklin's shoulder, a page from his own book. Franklin, shortly after he heard of Adams' proposed demand for a categorical answer, wrote to Jay in Spain. "I conceive there
would be nothing amiss in your mentioning in a short memoir . . . pressing them to give you an explicit, definitive, immediate answer, whether they would enter into a treaty with us or not, that you might inform Congress and, in case of refusal, solicit your recall." This was a classic statement of militia diplomacy.
1 For a good account of these see R. B. Morris, *The Peacemakers*, pp. 173-190.

2 James Harris, *Diaries and Correspondence of Sir James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury* (London: 1844), I, 366-385, particularly his correspondence with Lord Stormont.

3 Elliot (English minister at Berlin) to Harris, Feb. 10, 1781, *ibid.*, I, 384.


5 Carmichael to Committee of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 29, 1781, Wharton, IV, 242. For a general survey of the offer as it affected France, see Flässan, *Histoire de la diplomatie française*, VII, 300-322.

6 Harris to Stormont, Jan. 15-26, 1781, Harris, I, 377.

7 The English court informed Russia that both wars had been caused by treaties with England's rebellious subjects and that the assistance given secretly to the Americans by way to St. Eustatius was one of the chief causes of the rebellion. Therefore England sought a general rather than a particular peace. Peace with Holland would be impossible on any terms short of a complete return to and fulfillment of the treaties of 1678 and 1716 between the two countries (Stormont to Simolin, April 17, 1781, Stevens, *Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS*, LXXVII).

8 Adams to Dumas, Jan. 31, 1781, Adams Papers.

9 Adams to Dana, Mar. 12, 1781, Wharton, IV, 284; see also, Adams to Cooper, Mar. 11, 1781, Adams Papers.

10 Adams to Jenings, Mar. 12, 1781, Adams Papers.

11 Adams to President of Congress, Mar. 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 315.

12 Meng, Comte de Vergennes, pp. 26-27, 94.

13 Vergennes to Luzerne, Feb. 18/19, 1781, Durand, pp. 235-38. Durand apparently incorrectly dated this letter. Other sources, e.g. Bancroft Transcripts: Francaises--Etats-Unis, and Doniol, IV, 583, give the date as Feb. 19.

14 Vergennes to Luzerne, Mar. 9, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Francaises--Etats-Unis. Part of the letter may be found in Durand, pp. 236-37 and in Doniol, IV, 555, and *Canadian Archives*, 1913, pp. 181-182.

15 Cumberland was recalled in February, but he asked for his passport only on March 11, 1781. He left Spain some ten days later (Stevens, *Catalogue
Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXVI).


18. Vergennes to Luzerne, Mar. 9, 1781, Canadian Archives, 1913, p. 182. Luzerne had been informed in a January memoir (ibid., p. 178) that a truce seemed to France to offer greater possibilities than a definitive treaty. Luzerne however was not to make these sentiments known in Philadelphia.


20. Luzerne to Vergennes, Jan. 2, 1781 and Jan. 28, 1781, ibid., pp. 441-44.


22. Ibid., No. 16. France's own preliminary terms were diametrically opposed to those of England. The French demanded the ultimate admission of the American plenipotentiary to the negotiation and a specific determination of the basis on which England would treat with her former colonies arrived at before the mediation began (see Bemis, pp. 181-82).

23. Vergennes to Luzerne, May 11, 1781, Sparks Transcripts, LXXVIII; Advice given on the occasion of Adams' farewell visit to Vergennes on leaving France in 1779 (Adams to Livingston, Sept. 6, 1782, Wharton, V, 704).


25. Luzerne to Vergennes, June 8, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Françaises--Etats-Unis.


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp. 423-24, June 6, 1781.

30. Ibid. After protracted debate on various boundary proposals, Congress simply reverted to, and passed in the affirmative, the original motion made by Witherspoon (ibid., pp. 432-33); June 8, 1781, pp. 433-435.
35 Luzerne to Vergennes, June 11, 1781, Doniol, IV, 604.
36 June 11, 1781, U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, II, 439-440. Only Massachusetts and Rhode Island and one member (Bland) from Virginia objected. Four days later on June 15, a motion was made by McKean of Delaware to reconsider this amendment. The motion for reconsideration was rejected seven to four with North Carolina divided (June 15, 1781, ibid., pp. 444-45).
37 Luzerne to Vergennes, June 11, 1781, Doniol, IV, 607.
38 Witherspoon's speech in Congress, June 11, 1781, Burnett, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 116-117.
39 U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, II, 442-43. General Sullivan, under the tutelage of Luzerne, nominated Franklin and delivered a lengthy address in his nominee's favor. His efforts proved insufficient to win Franklin's appointment. Three times a vote was taken and each time Jefferson received five votes, Franklin four, and Henry Laurens one vote. Sullivan then proposed to add all three--Franklin, Jefferson, and Laurens--to the commission. By proposing that all three be approved or rejected together, Sullivan forestalled Franklin's opponents from calling for the vote on each nominee separately, thus leaving Franklin to the end and ultimate rejection (Luzerne to Vergennes, June 14, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Francaises--Etats-Unis). The partisans of Franklin hoped that his inclusion in the peace commission would secure him the leadership of the commission and thereby subordinate Adams (Thomas Rodney to Caesar Rodney, June 14, 1781, Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 120).

The French ambassador identified Sullivan of New Hampshire as the person to whom "under the appearance of a present" he had remitted a moderate sum to assure Sullivan's loyal cooperation. Vergennes approved and authorized Luzerne to continue the practice as long as Sullivan remained in Congress (Luzerne to Vergennes, May 13, 1781; Vergennes to Luzerne, July 27, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Francaises--Etats-Unis).
41 Thomas Rodney to Caesar Rodney, June 15, 1781, Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 121.
In private the fulminations went on, especially among the friends of Adams. Arthur Lee assured James Warren that the entire raison d'être for Luzerne's communications was Adams' honesty and firmness. Since he could not be bought to the opinion of the French court, Adams was to be disgraced or shackled (A. Lee to James Warren, June 15, 1781, Warren-Adams Letters: Being Chiefly a Correspondence among John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Warren. Massachusetts Historical Society Collections," Vol. 72-73; Boston: 1917-257, p. 167. Henceforth cited: Warren-Adams Letters). Lovell bitterly informed Adams of the new arrangements. He noted that Adams could have rejoiced at the multiplicity of negotiators if their purpose were to alleviate the difficulties facing a peace commissioner but that this was not the case. He fumed: "Blush, blush, America, consult and ultimately concur in everything with the ministers of his most Christian Majesty." He cryptically added that it was "needless to turn well diggers on this occasion; the whole is on the surface" (Lovell to Adams, June 21, 1781, Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 124-25). Elbridge Gerry criticized the "undue influence" of France and concluded that the necessary thing was to revoke these new instructions and return to the former set with one minister to execute them. He admitted that the chances for that were slim (Gerry to Abigail Adams, July 30, 1781, Adams Papers).

Luzerne to Vergennes, June 30, 1781, Canadian Archives, 1913, p. 195.

Marbois to Vergennes, July 11, 1781, ibid., p. 196.

July 12, 1781, U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, II, 463-64. The motion carried by eight votes but Massachusetts was determined to have it reconsidered. Marbois feared this possibility. He believed that an article dealing with commerce could be introduced into the peace treaty if England were determined on it. To him the difficulty encountered in getting around the commercial treaty was preferable to leaving the negotiations in Adams' hands (Marbois to Vergennes, July 14, 1781, Canadian Archives, 1913, p. 197). Vergennes was in complete agreement with his ministers. He conveyed to them his pleasure at the revocation of the commission for a commercial treaty as it was "dangerous to permit the peace to depend on this article and above all from the point of view under which Mr. Adams had judged proper to consider it" (Vergennes to Luzerne, Oct. 7, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Françaises—États-Unis).


Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer (Maryland) entered Congress in Nov. 1778. He shortly identified himself with the French party and became "its most active and radical member" (Phillips, pp. 180-81).
Bellenger to Adams, June 5, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 424. Bellenger was the secretary of the French embassy at The Hague and chargé d'affaires during La Vauguyon's absence.

Adams to Bellenger, June 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 484-85; Vergennes to Bellenger, June 17, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: France-Ministry to Holland.

Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 420; Adams to President of Congress, June 15, 1781, p. 507; Adams to President of Congress, June 23, 1781, p. 513.

Berenger to Adams, June 5, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 424. Bellenger was the secretary of the French embassy at The Hague and chargé d'affaires during La Vauguyon's absence.

Adams to Bellenger, June 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 484-85; Vergennes to Bellenger, June 17, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: France-Ministry to Holland.

Adams to President of Congress, May 16, 1781, Wharton, IV, 420; Adams to President of Congress, June 15, 1781, p. 507; Adams to President of Congress, June 23, 1781, p. 513.

Ibid., p. 515. These possibilities were embodied in the new instructions of June 15th. Another disquieting piece of information, had he known of it, was the weakening determination of France to secure advantages for America. R. B. Morris, The Peacemakers, concluded that Vergennes, after the Cumberland mission to Spain demonstrated the weakness of the Franco-Spanish alliance, revamped his policy toward the United States. He no longer defended American territorial claims either in Florida or along the Mississippi. At the same time, he found a new willingness in his heart to accept "some kind of quasi or de facto independence (p. 60). In July Vergennes directed Luzerne to determine the attitude of the majority on the status quo and on an armistice, conditions which he himself was ready to accept (Vergennes to Luzerne, July 27, 1781, Correspondence politique, Etats-Unis, 17:455, cited by Morris, p. 187).

Adams to Abigail Adams, July 11, 1781, Adams Papers. Adams expressed the hope that John Quincy would be satiated with travel in his youth and not care for it in his maturity. Adams declared himself weary of the frustrations and wished he might have wings with which to fly home and bury his cares. J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 534.


J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 110. He was not shown the fourth article as it applied only to the belligerent powers and America was not recognized as a power. The purport of the article was that the belligerent powers would send fully accredited ministers as soon as the preliminary articles had been accepted by all parties. For other articles see Wharton, IV, 561.

Adams to Abigail Adams, July 11, 1781, Adams Papers.

Adams to President of Congress, July 11, 1781, Wharton, IV, 560.
Adams to Vergennes, July 13, 1781, ibid., p. 573; Adams to President of Congress, July 14, 1781, ibid., p. 574.

Adams to President of Congress, July 11, 1781, ibid., pp. 560-61.

Adams to Vergennes, July 13, 1781, ibid., p. 571-73. In describing Adams' answer to the articles, the pro-French Doniol (IV, 551) declared that Adams' response was so filled with political impertinence and vain pretentions that the French would have had to transact business without further consulting Adams if the negotiation had ever seriously opened. Adams and several recent historians would not have agreed with this evaluation (see above, p. 190 and note 75).

Adams to President of Congress, July 15, 1781, Wharton, IV, 575.

Adams to Vergennes, July 16, 1781, ibid., p. 576.

Adams to President of Congress, July 15, 1781, ibid., p. 575; Adams to Vergennes, July 16, 1781, p. 577.

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 123.

Vergennes to Adams, July 18, 1781, Wharton, IV, 589.

Adams to Vergennes, July 18, 1781, ibid., pp. 589-590.

Ibid.

Adams to Vergennes, July 19, 1781, Wharton, IV, 591-94.

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, p. 130. In reviewing his reasons later he commented that the maxim, "Si velis pacem; para bellum," induced him to think that political connections with Holland and the Maritime Confederation and a loan would have much greater effect than any type of mediation (ibid., p. 149).

Adams to Vergennes, July 21, 1781, Wharton, IV, 595-96.

See Morris, pp. 169-172, 183, 203-209. In spite of his assumed indifference, Vergennes came to realize the validity of Adams' position and in the answer prepared by him for the mediating courts repeated a number of Adams' arguments (C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 667-675, copy of Vergennes' response).

J. Adams, Boston Patriot, pp. 139-141. His friends then and authorities since have agreed. "The essential truth of this assertion has been confirmed by later historians, since it is clear that Vergennes was almost ready at this critical point in the war to compromise France's pledge of independence and throw the United States on the mercy of Great Britain" (John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, II, 458 note). This view is upheld in the recent work, The Peacemakers (pp. 209-210), in which Morris concluded, "Truly, Mr. Adams had put a spoke in the wheel, and the mediation soon came to a stop."

77. Vergennes to Luzerne, July 27, 1781, Doniol, V, 52.


80. Adams to Abigail Adams, Oct. 9, 1781, Adams Papers. Adams reported this as the opinion of his physician, Dr. Osterdyke, a professor of medicine at the University of Utrecht. Adams was too inclined to be health conscious to be a reliable witness in his own case.


82. Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 4, 1781, Adams Papers. He was convinced that the scheme would not work but thought there was "a baseness of soul in it that would disgrace Shylock, the Jew."

83. Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 8, 1781, Wharton, IV, 626.

84. At the time both sides claimed victory although the battle was soon admitted to be indecisive. Nevertheless, the Dutch were thrilled (*Le Poli­tique Hollandais*, Sept. 3, 1781).


86. Adams to President of Congress, Oct. 15, 1781, Wharton, IV, 778.

87. He had furnished Luzac with a complete copy of the various state constitutions and of the Articles of Confederation. Luzac lent these to an acquaintance to translate into Dutch so as to make known to his compatriots the political, civil, and religious liberties which governed America (Luzac to Adams, Sept. 16 and Dec. 10, 1781, Adams Papers). Adams determined to procure copies of this Dutch translation to be placed in the principal libraries of the United States (Adams to Luzac, Dec. 13, 1781, *ibid.*). Van der Kemp published a second collection of American papers including a copy of the new Massachusetts constitution. To this he added a preface drawing a parallel between America and the United Provinces (Van der Kemp to Adams, Nov. 26, 1781, *ibid.*). When Jenings forwarded to him Thomas Hollis' Memoirs of which Adams' *Common and Feudal Law* formed a part, Adams promoted its dispersal in Holland and sent copies home to be put in the American gazettes (Adams to Abigail Adams, Oct. 21, 1781, *ibid.*).
In February of 1782 he learned that Congress had not officially known until the end of November (1781) of his presentation of the memorial of the previous April. The news then reached Philadelphia via Dumas which gave Robert Livingston, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, an opportunity and some justification, for chiding Adams. "We are astonished that you have not written on so important a subject" (Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, Wharton, IV, 850).

Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 6, 1781, Wharton, IV, 624.


Franklin believed that all of Adams' letters to him had been opened and counterfeit seals used. It was a common practice of the day to go through official correspondence (Franklin to Adams, Nov. 7, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 475).

The English played so many "villanous tricks" with American paper that Franklin refused to accept bills on the sole verification of a Dutch banker who would necessarily be insufficiently acquainted with American "handwritings and printings" to detect fraud (Franklin to Neufville, June 6, 1780, Smyth, VIII, 84).

Franklin to Adams, Aug. 6, 1781, ibid., p. 291.

Adams to Franklin, Aug. 17, 1781, Adams Papers. His own hypothesis was that Congress had taken the mediation so seriously that they believed he had been to Vienna, settled everything, gone on to be received at St. James, and procured Laurens' release. Adams admitted that that was a pretty wild hypothesis. Franklin to Adams, Aug. 31, 1781, Wharton, IV, 682.

"It would fill a small volume to give the history of my negotiations with people of various stations and characters in order to obtain a loan, and it would astonish Congress to see the unanimity with which all of them have refused to engage in the business."


He knew nothing of the instructions to conform to French advice until the following fall as no copy of the instructions was enclosed in his notification of co-negotiators. Only in October, 1782, did he learn, and then
unofficially, of these instructions. He assured his informant that he did not believe it was true. "It is not consistent in Congress . . . to send ministers to Europe and then tie their hands. Subjecting them to the French ministry is, I say it freely, chaining them hand and foot. These chains I will never wear" (Adams to Arthur Lee, Oct. 10, 1782, Adams Papers).


103. Adams to President of Congress, Aug. 22, 1781, Wharton, IV, 652-54. He listed in particular the failure of the Anglophiles to secure Van Berckel's censure; the resolution of Amsterdam that the state was too inactive and the court too slow in preparing defenses; and the revamping of the court's system of relying entirely on the Duke of Brunswick for advice.

104. Dumas to President of Congress, Sept. 2, 1781, ibid., p. 657.


106. Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 13, 1781, ibid., V, 44.

107. Thulemeyer to Frederick, Dec. 4, 1781, Fruin, Dépêches van Thulemeyer, p. 281; Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Dec. 18, 1781, p. 290.

108. Edler, p. 190.


111. Vergennes to Luzerne, Jan. 9, 1781, Doniol, V, 45; Vergennes to Luzerne, Feb. 19, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Français--États-Unis.

112. Luzerne to Vergennes, Aug. 24, 1781, Doniol, V, 48.


These stipulations were briefly as follows: 1) Their High Mightinesses must expressly acknowledge the sovereignty and independence of the United States. 2) Neither republic was to make peace or sign a truce with Great Britain until both, and France if she agreed to and participated in a similar engagement with the United Provinces, were agreed to the terms of the peace or truce. 3) The United States was not to engage for any offensive operations in favor of the United Provinces. 4) Only if absolutely necessary in order to obtain recognition might the United States guarantee any Dutch possession and then must obtain guarantee for guarantee. Beyond these regulations Adams was to be free to use his own discretion.

In the final report there had been, before it was deleted, a directive against entering into any treaty of amity or commerce with the Provinces unless such a treaty were preceded by a triple alliance or unless overtures which could not be honorably rescinded had been made before the receipt of the instructions. This prohibition Congress considerably tempered to a mere authorization for an alliance without reference to the former commission for amity and commerce.

Adams' willingness to cooperate with Vergennes on the alliance was in part due to his belief that Vergennes was favorable to the project. However, Vergennes' thinking had undergone considerable revision, and he no longer promoted an alliance. Unaware of this change, Adams was left to operate on a false assumption.

Adams was also authorized to admit Spain to the alliance—thereby further altering the original proposal forwarded by Luzerne.

Vergennes, who maintained a spy system on Adams at least part of the time, believed that the minister was in contact with the English although he did not know how actively. He believed these contacts dangerous and "of a character of defiance toward us." This, he wrote, could hardly be the intention of Congress (Vergennes to Luzerne, Oct. 8, 1781, Canadian Archives, 1913, p. 209).

Vergennes to Luzerne, Oct. 8, 1781, Bancroft Transcripts: Françaises--États-Unis.

Vergennes to Luzerne, Dec. 24, 1781, ibid.

Ibid.; this portion of Vergennes letter also in Doniol, V, 54.
Adams to Jay, Nov. 26, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 484; to Franklin, Nov. 26, 1781, p. 485; Adams to Franklin, Dec. 16, 1781, Adams Papers; Adams to Searle, Nov. 29, 1781, ibid.


Adams to Jay, Nov. 26, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 484.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 4, 1781, Wharton, V, 37.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 15, 1781, ibid., pp. 49-50.


Adams to La Vauguyon, Nov. 25, 1781, ibid., p. 484.


Dumas to Adams, Dec. 15, 1781, Adams Papers.

Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 18, 1781, Wharton, V, 55.

Adams to La Vauguyon, Dec. 19, 1781, ibid., p. 60.

La Vauguyon to Adams, Dec. 20, 1781, ibid., p. 67; La Vauguyon to Adams, Dec. 30, 1781, p. 79. Immediately upon receiving the commission, Adams had determined not to act on it without the advice and concurrence of La Vauguyon (Adams to Franklin, Nov. 26, 1781, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 485; Adams to President of Congress, Dec. 4, 1781, Wharton, V, 36). He kept the resolution, but he never engaged to await French approbation on any other project.

La Vauguyon to Adams, Dec. 30, 1781, Wharton, V, 79-80. Vergennes was "shocked" at the use of the words "demand, requisition and categoric answer." The words were Adams' but sanctioned by friends in the Netherlands. He later claimed that they "contained the electric fluid that produced the shock" that brought the States General to act (Adams to Dana, Oct. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 808).

In the meantime, Adams had received the approval of his plan and of the strong terminology from several members of the States General. Van der
Capellen assured him that a request for a categorical response in a tone "appropriate to the greatness of the American Union and to the unworthiness of the reception given to its ambassador" was the correct remedy for a dying cause. Indeed, he thought such a step in the prevailing circumstances "might be brilliant" (Van der Capellen to Adams, Jan. 6, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 502).

141 Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 14, 1782, Wharton, V, 97.

142 Ibid., p. 98. In recounting the visit, Adams pointed out a small personal triumph. Describing Fagel as standing well with the court and as "complaisant to England as any man in this country," Adams noted that the Secretary received him with perfect courtesy and on Adams' departure insisted on accompanying him "through all the antechambers and long entries quite to my chariot door" and then waited on the step until Adams drove off. This attention did more than a little to gladden the heart of the perceptive and unduly proud American.

143 Adams to President of Congress, Jan. 14, 1782, Ibid., V, 98-99; Dumas to President of Congress, Jan. 15, 1782, p. 103.

144 Adams to Van der Capellen, Jan. 14, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 503. Probably the reception accorded was better than he had anticipated. In presenting a copy to Berenger, the French chargé during La Vauguyon's absence, he admitted that this second memorial might well be as ineffective as the first. However, he was hopeful that the commercial interests would bring more pressure to bear (Berenger to Vergennes, Jan. 11, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: France-Ministry to Holland).

145 Franklin to Jay, Jan. 19, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 366.
CHAPTER V

TREATIES AT LAST, JANUARY-OCTOBER, 1782

Having presented his demand for a categorical answer, there was little ministerially for Adams to do but await results. While he marked time, he undertook a number of trips about the countryside, trying to interest influential people in a categorical answer. The first of these trips, made in late January and early February (1782), was through Friesland, the most republican-minded of the provinces. His efforts there were rewarded when, toward the end of February, Friesland became the first province to vote for recognition of the sovereignty of the United States. From Friesland, he travelled to various sections of the country, but the greater part of each week he spent in the major cities of Holland, particularly Amsterdam and The Hague. In this manner, he kept in constant contact with the various areas although there was little he could do to direct their deliberations.

Not only in the matter of recognition, but in all the other projects which he had been pursuing, circumstances dictated a dilatory policy. One of these projects which had to await a more opportune moment was that of negotiating a loan. The Neufville loan had produced practically nothing. To add to the frustration, Franklin informed Adams that he was finding it more difficult than formerly to obtain the money to pay drafts. Therefore, it would be necessary to set the end of February as the tentative date to "shut up shop." This message, in union with his own intense desire to help, led Adams to

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attempt one more effort at borrowing. He quietly applied to an old, established house which had participated in the American trade for a hundred years and could be relied upon to evaluate the possibilities accurately. After two days of study, the banker reported that, until a treaty had been secured, there was no chance of success. He explained to Adams that the entire loan business was controlled by four men. If any one of them would help, a loan could be arranged without much trouble. Without them, no loan could succeed. After indirectly approaching the four, Adams concluded that his efforts were in vain as they were all well paid to resist. According to the information furnished by the banker, the acquiescence of the States of Holland was not legally required for a loan but, in practice, no loan would be given without it. Franklin, aware of the close connection between government and finance, agreed that it was not an opportune time to solicit in the Netherlands for fear of complicating the delicate negotiations on both mediation and the categoric demand. He expressed great "impatience" to hear the results of the latter. Favorable results would relieve him, also, and he was "quite sick of my Gibeonite [sic] office—that of drawing water for the whole congregation of Israel."'

Another project that Adams would have been overjoyed to advance was the proposition of a triple alliance. It was infeasible without French approba-
tion. He carefully abided by, but chafed at, the restraints upon him. While the States General were still debating the latest mediation offer, he informed Franklin that the republic was seriously considering an alliance and that he was sure a proposal to that effect would be successful. He pointed out, how-
ever, that the ardor of many who favored such a measure was "dampened"
by the apprehension that France was not anxious to see it materialize.\textsuperscript{7} La Vauguyon's passion for declaring France neutral on the proposition easily fostered that assumption. When the States General, on February 14, 1782, accepted with reservation the mediation of Russia, Adams grumbled that the French desire to retain the Empress' favor for the day of peacemaking had caused an excellent opportunity to be lost.\textsuperscript{8} Although forced to abandon the idea temporarily, before long he again found an opportunity to solicit French approval. By late February, several small areas of the sovereignty appeared on the verge of acknowledging America. These signs Adams interpreted as certain evidence that the Netherlands were ready for a treaty.\textsuperscript{9} Optimistically, he prepared notes for a proposal of an alliance to be verbally delivered to the President of the States General. Dispatching these notes to La Vauguyon for prior approval, he explained that the general enthusiasm in the provinces made it "high time" for him to execute his instructions of August 16.\textsuperscript{10}

The French ambassador hastened to cool the undesired ardor displayed by Adams. He informed the latter that it was impossible for him to make any statement ministerially as he had received no instructions from Versailles.\textsuperscript{11} Adroitly conveying the impression that, in his private capacity, he heartily endorsed the end to be achieved, he gravely warned Adams that the inconveniences in its accomplishment were serious. The presentation of Adams' proposal, he warned, would more retard than accelerate a treaty. With proper diplomatic finesse, he promised to explain more fully in conversation with Adams if that gentleman planned soon to visit The Hague.\textsuperscript{12} There was no need. Temporarily that squelched the idea as Adams had no intention of going ahead
without French approbation. Periodically La Vauguyon repeated the "no instructions" claim. The very most he would promise was to do nothing publicly either to aid or to hinder an American-Dutch alliance. 13

This neutral ground served French interests excellently. From this vantage point La Vauguyon could impress the independent Dutch with the moderation of the French court in not desiring to interfere in any way in their internal affairs. France, he declared, would confine herself to wishing the Netherlanders well in whatever they judged most conducive to their country's welfare. 14 Adams he hoped to steer away from an alliance by arguing that there was no real object to be accomplished by forming one. By their concert for defense with France, the States General had already united their cause with that of France and, consequently, with that of America. 15 If Adams raised objections to this rather specious reasoning, La Vauguyon was directed to point out to him that the king deemed a neutral conduct prudent, more especially as Congress had shown a repugnance to accept his majesty's offer of intermediation. France, accordingly, felt obligated to demonstrate to Congress her disinterestedness and her delicacy in anything which might give the least offense. 16

To the frustrations on the loan and on the alliance was added the aggravation of criticism from Robert Livingston, the recently elected Secretary of Foreign Affairs. 17 When Livingston took office on October 21, 1781, Congress, due to the misfortunes that had befallen his copious correspondence, had only very poor information on Adams' activities. Of the minister's dispatches, only the brief note of May 16, enclosing copies of the memorial, but giving little explanation of the what, why, or wherefore of it, and no
information on the presentation of his credentials, had been received. Word from several other sources concerning Adams' memorial had reached Philadelphia but the accounts were vague. Consequently, Livingston lacked authentic information on the motives, intentions, and circumstances relative to Adams' presentation. Nothing daunted, he proceeded to trace a proper path of diplomacy for the militia enthusiast.

The first missive containing this unsolicited advice reached Adams only on February 13, 1782, although dispatched the previous October, nearly five months earlier. Adams failed to record his deepest sentiment on the document, but he proceeded to take it apart line by line and, under the diplomatic courtesy of accepting bits of advice, annihilated the entire array of Livingston's arguments. Agreeing perfectly that his situation was "delicate," he assured the Secretary that from infancy he had "passed through an uninterrupted series of delicate situations" and so was accustomed to the experience. With deliberate misinterpretation, he acknowledged that his health was still delicate and that there were some who feared his person was in danger but remarked that he had no apprehensions for himself. Livingston had written that the Dutch were disposed by their constitution and their economy to peace and would accept war only as long as absolutely necessary. America, through Adams, would only open itself to embarrassment by trying to determine them otherwise. Adams agreed that the republic ardently desired peace but, he amended, only on honorable terms. England would not grant such and so the war would continue, and Adams might remain there in a "very insipid and insignificant state a long time without affront or answer." As for the partisanship of which Livingston accused him, he issued a firm denial. He had treated all men alike regardless
of party and had been as well treated by the court party as by the Patriots. Agreeing that the Dutch had a perfect right to judge for themselves on the matter of recognition, Adams rejected the implication that he had portrayed dissatisfaction with their conduct and declared he had "no reason to be dissatisfied." By way of proof he pointed out that time was demonstrating the correctness of his judgment, and the increasing conversion to those ideas had enabled him to proceed. On the advice of Vergennes, La Vauguyon, and several prominent persons, he had subsequently demanded an answer to the memorial and had been received politely by all parties. Complaints that he had not been well received would reach Congress via his opponents, but "they have their views ... and know that this is a good string for them to touch." To Livingston's directive to "avoid giving offense to government by the appearance of intrigue," he staunchly replied, "I stand now in an honorable light, openly and candidly demanding an answer in my public character." If there were any dishonor, he argued, it resided in the republic as none had yet ventured to return a negative answer to him. "The dignity of the United States is therefore perfectly safe, and if that of this republic is questionable, this is their own fault, not ours."21

Having vindicated his position, he expressed complete willingness to subscribe to the Secretary's advice to avoid any measure likely to encourage a public affront. He soothingly assured Livingston that "all appearances of intrigue and all the refinements of politics have been as distant from my conduct as you know them to be from my natural and habitual character." On the point of spending more time at The Hague, and of forming better connections with ministers of uninterested powers so as to glean information from
them, Adams responded that he would in future follow the first part of the advice and spend more time at The Hague. (He neglected to mention that he was at that very time negotiating for a formal residence in that city.) He demurred on the second part. Forming connections with ministers of uninterested powers was a matter "extremely delicate." There were no "uninterested powers." Every country was interested, at least indirectly, in American affairs. Further, every minister had to be on his guard as he had competitors spying on his every move and could not risk openly visiting with an American minister. Nor did Adams think contact with any of them was worth the intrigue it would involve. None of them was entrusted with information of any profundity.  

Within the week after Adams received Livingston's first broadside, he was treated to a second. Written on November 20, 1781, this, too, was a lengthy and pointed criticism of Adams' methodology. Livingston first took him to task for not sending information as was "expected" of him and especially for not explaining the principles and views of each major Dutch party. To this Adams dryly responded that it was not only "somewhat dangerous" to send information but that it was impossible as "the views of all parties are enveloped in clouds and darkness." Since Livingston's October letter, Congress had learned from Dumas that Adams had presented his credentials. The Secretary, therefore, declared himself "astonished" that Adams had not written to explain whatever peculiarity of situation induced him to take measures which placed Congress in such a "humiliating light." Congress, Livingston darkly hinted, would want an explanation of this and of the minister's reasons for publishing the memorial. Livingston then set himself to tutoring Adams
on the best interests of the Dutch—contending that they had nothing to gain from recognition that they could not as easily secure without taking that step. 25

This was just too much, and Adams quickly responded that his letters of May 3 and May 7, 1781, had contained full explanations of all the details that it would have been prudent to commit to paper. He volunteered the information that he had had the advice of friends and that, if he had not acted, his situation would have been "ridiculous and deplorable indeed." Far from placing Congress in a "humiliating light," his step had improved his own position. The measure, he repeated, was so well received that, with the advice of La Vauguyon, Vergennes, and friends, he had carried it further and demanded a categorical answer. He did not expect to receive the answer demanded, but the attempt placed America in a "glorious light." As for printing the memorial, it was the only means to reach beyond the States General and contact the real sovereigns of the country. No one in Europe had made any objections to the publication and, if he had not done so, he would have "met with many disagreeable scenes if not public affronts." 26

To the Livingston advice "to be, in your language and conduct, a private gentleman," Adams replied that that was exactly what he had been. He remarked, however, that he was far too well known to remain incognito and that it was not to the public interest to attempt it. 27 Livingston, although softening it with compliments on Adams' patriotism, injected a thought from the French court. "As our objects must be very similar to those of France, I should suppose it would be prudent for you to keep up the closest connections with her minister, to advise with him on great leading objects, and to
counteract his opinion only upon the most mature deliberations." Adams tossed this off with the simple rejoinder that "without interruption" he had ever had a "friendly connection with the French ambassador." If Livingston's comments on prudent retirement and quiet consultation were pertinent when they were written, they were outdated by the time they were received. The internal situation in the Netherlands had evolved toward a firmer stance vis-à-vis England and a more favorable reaction toward America. Adams could hardly claim prime responsibility for this evolution, but he had understood well how to capitalize on it. His demand for a categorical answer was generally well taken. As far away as Spain, Carmichael informed Congress that, since Adams had presented his demand, he, Carmichael, had been invited to the home of the Dutch minister in Madrid—thereby denoting an improvement in the Dutch attitude toward America. Adams forestalled concern on Dr. Franklin's part by assuring him that there was no need for anxiety over the démarche. It had been well concerted both with French ministers and prominent Dutch officials. Its prime purpose was to force deliberation on a connection with the allies at the same time as consideration was being given to the mediation proposal.

Vergennes and Adams were equally anxious to secure limitations to the Dutch acceptance of the mediation. Vergennes could not afford to lose the Dutch source of naval supplies; Adams could not afford to lose a co-belligerent, especially one with money. The proposal might open the door to his own negotiations or, at least, bring an end to a tiresome wait. He observed, "If it does not suit their affairs to make a bargain with us, let them tell us so candidly and let us all go home." He had not yet completely regained his
health and discouragements were again beginning to crowd in upon him. He personally wished himself "at home again every hour in the twenty-four." Naturally, he had no intention of going home unless recalled or replaced. His primary objectives--loan and treaty--had not been achieved, but his time, he felt, was not entirely uselessly spent. He enumerated, for the edification of Livingston, every allied success--political and military--of the entire past year. He did not claim credit for all of them but submitted that it was "impossible not to believe that the memorial had some influence in producing some of them." Tangible results shortly began to appear. On the twenty-sixth of February, 1782, Friesland recognized American sovereignty and instructed her deputies to move in the States General that the entire republic do likewise. By late February the States of Holland took ad referendum the resolution to recognize the United States and the matter was soon under consideration by the various regencies of the province. This prompted the first burgomaster of Amsterdam to predict that America would be recognized by all seven provinces within six weeks. Although time proved his prediction to be only a week short, Adams was not immediately willing to accept that estimate. The general attitude, it appeared to him, was a desire for friendly relations but not for any treaty, even one of commerce, for a long time. His Hague advisor, Dumas, was largely of the same opinion. He noted a very perceptible change in favor of America immediately after Holland took the memorial ad referendum, but he, too, tended to underestimate the power behind the changes that he observed. Having a long acquaintance with the interminable delays that could result from the ad referendum process, Dumas feared it was to be
used as a ruse for the States General to hide behind. While alleging lack of instructions from their constituents as a reason for not taking action, they could sit back, carefully watch developments, and spend immeasurable time on deliberation. 39

As time passed, Adams appraised the situation as increasingly hopeful, but he continued to entertain some misgivings. Since the beginning of the year, trouble had been brewing from a new and totally unexpected quarter—Amsterdam. Formerly that city had held pride of place in furthering American interests, but altered sentiment in the regency threatened to delay and possibly even to prevent the reception of an American ambassador. 40 A group of Anglophiles resorted to various subterfuges to accomplish their purpose. Representatives of this opposition called on La Vauguyon to discuss the French attitude toward the recognition of America. If the French policy of non-interference could be propagated as one of indifference, much of the enthusiasm of the Francophiles would be negated. La Vauguyon, suspecting the motive of their visit, took pains to assure them that the king would undoubtedly be grateful to see the States General following his example. 41 The Anglophiles then spread the rumor that the French court was jealous of a Dutch connection with America and was secretly working against it. They went so far as to add that the French ambassador had said that his court would not be willing to recognize American independence if it had not already been granted. 42 Another scheme proposed by the opposition was to adjourn the States of Holland without taking a vote on recognition. This plan was opposed by the powerful cities of Dort, Haarlem, and even a major part of Amsterdam itself because of other unfinished business in which they were interested,
particularly the plans forconcerting military operations with France. 43 For
a time Dumas feared that the Anglophiles would attempt to keep Adams' admis-
sion under perpetual deliberation. To avoid this, he personally contacted
many whom he thought would aid in preventing that type of action, and he im-
ployed Adams to visit The Hague and lend the weight of his presence. 44

The Patriots recognized the necessity of counteracting any and all
schemes concocted to prevent Amsterdam's approval of Adams' mission. Without
Amsterdam there could be no recognition. Consequently, they produced a com-
promise plan and forwarded it to Adams for his approval. Basically, it was a
plan whereby the provinces would acknowledge America in such a manner that a
commercial treaty could be drawn up between the two nations, but no public,
formal act of acknowledgment would be made. Adams quickly recognized that
this would provide a nice "out" for the Dutch but would not provide a thing
for him. His approval was not forthcoming. Rather, he viewed the proposal
with "utter detestation." 45 Dumas returned the plan to its chief proponent
declaring that it could not be accepted as it did not provide for the cate-
gorical answer Adams had requested nor did it provide for a public audience
for the American minister. 46 Adams hoped that the strong republican feelings
of Friesland would effect the rejection of the compromise in the States Gener-
al, and thus prevent a permanent crippling of his negotiations by means of it.
He regarded it as a half measure--one by which a country declared itself well
disposed and yet refused to grant an audience--and therefore most unsatis-
factory to him. He could only interpret it as "an answer in the negative . . .
and depart in consequence." 47 For some days the proposition continued to rub
on his mind. At first he believed it to have been conceived by Van Bleiswick
and not by the Patriots at all. Dumas assured him that Van Bleiswick had no part either in its instigation or in its development. It had been formulated by friends who regarded it as the last alternative if they could secure nothing better. Adams feared it the more as La Vauguyon appeared to accept it as a possible solution and, therefore, could not be expected to use his very considerable influence against it.

In order to map strategy, a friend through the agency of Dumas, urged Adams to come to The Hague and confer with Burgomaster Hooft and the regents of Amsterdam. In this way Adams could discover what were their intentions in regard to acknowledging America and receiving her minister. If the regents declared themselves favorable to his admission, Adams could then insist that they espouse the cause openly and support it fully in the provincial assembly. Adams, accordingly, consulted Van Berckel and M. Bicker, Jr. on the wisdom of approaching Hooft and the regency. He also discussed with them the suggestion that he approach Fagel and verbally set a time limit to his demand for an answer. If no answer were received by a given date (April 15 was suggested), he would so inform his government. As the regents appeared generally to hold the desired opinions, Adams was convinced that they would ultimately come to the right conclusion—provided that they were not sidetracked by the conciliatory plan. This project was thereupon dropped and the three men agreed that it would be better to leave the regency to its own deliberations.

As February moved toward March, the minister became more and more aware of the changing atmosphere. Anglophile attempts at arousing mob scenes were no longer successful. Sometimes the mob failed to materialize; at other
times, the tumult was turned against the Anglophiles.\textsuperscript{53} When an opportunity arose to purchase a house at The Hague which would serve well for an embassy building, Dumas and his confreres were elated. After some high-pressured salesmanship Dumas sold the idea to Adams, and the house was purchased at public auction on February 22.\textsuperscript{54} When the identity and the purpose of the purchaser became known, many Hague residents expressed their pleasure while the Anglophiles found it prudent to remain silent.\textsuperscript{55} Sentiment had changed to such a degree that Dumas was convinced that no one would dare to object if Adams were to move immediately to The Hague and assume his ministerial character without waiting the decision of the States General.\textsuperscript{56} Not only were there obvious advantages in the purchase of the house economically, but it appeared to have a good effect politically.\textsuperscript{57}

La Vauguyon, similarly cognizant of the changed atmosphere, notified Vergennes of the enthusiasm which he encountered everywhere for breaking all connections with England.\textsuperscript{58} Vergennes was skeptical; he doubted that the Dutch intended to avow American independence. There was, he argued, no good reason for their doing so; on the contrary, they would only involve themselves in embarrassments. Nevertheless, France had a great interest in Dutch recognition of American sovereignty as this "would cause an entire rupture between Holland and the Court of London"--an advantage not to be lightly eschewed. Therefore, La Vauguyon was to do nothing to discourage the Patriots. To avoid pitfalls on the other side, the minister was carefully to refrain from promoting the action in any way, even indirectly. "We do not wish to impose upon ourselves the obligation of guaranteeing the results which it could have for the Republic."\textsuperscript{59} Vergennes in his communiqué of the following week repeated
the directive "neither to favor nor to contradict" the activities of Adams so that France would not be responsible for the consequences. If La Vauguyon were pinned down on French intentions regarding Adams' demand, he was to state that the king had clearly manifested by his actions his intentions regarding America. Beyond that, his majesty made it an inviolable rule not to advise, particularly in matters of so much importance to the other country. Ever wary of the perspicacious Adams, Vergennes warned La Vauguyon to use prudence in carrying out these instructions so that Adams could not interpret the ambassador's attitude as indicative of a bad disposition or change of principles on the part of France.

Early in March, 1782, the deputies of Friesland, following the directives of their own States, presented in the States General a resolution that American sovereignty be acknowledged. Deputies from all seven provinces took copies of it to present to their constituents. The presentation of a resolution by a province was a significant step and not to be equated with the referendum action taken on a memorial by an unrecognized minister. Popular satisfaction was again apparent. Adams, wherever he travelled, was universally congratulated on his approaching reception at The Hague. He took satisfaction in informing his beloved wife,

Your humble servant has lately grown much into fashion in this country. Nobody scarcely of so much importance as Mynheer Adams. Every city and province rings with De Heer Adams, etc., etc., and if I were to judge of things here as we do in other countries, I should think I was going to be received at The Hague in awful pomp in a few weeks, but I never can foresee one hour what will happen.

The public in general expected the example of the Friesians to be imitated by the rest of the country. French and Dutch gazettes both widely reflected the opinion that the American minister would be received shortly.
Adams feared that too much credence was being given to the popular belief that the Friesians were always sure to attain whatever they undertook. He further discounted the prognosis on the basis of information he possessed of secret intrigues against his recognition both in The Hague and at Amsterdam. 65

The interval between Holland taking Friesland's resolution ad referendum and the regencies of the province submitting their decisions was both busy and nerve-wracking. Although influential gentlemen had promised Dumas not to permit it, there still existed the possibility of the States adjourning before all the regencies and the body of nobles had reported. Dumas, supported by La Vauguyon, desired Adams to spend a few days and lend his influence in The Hague before the final vote was taken. 66 In spite of the good omens there was a real dread of some last-minute slip. It was presumed by the Patriots that the English were strongly endeavoring to separate the Americans and the Dutch from each other and from the French and to involve Adams in any separate negotiations that would render abortive the effort to form a Dutch-American pact. 67

Paul Wentworth was the first of a group who were sent to the United Provinces to gather information on the possibilities of a separate peace. In mid-March a forged article to the effect that Adams was preparing for a trip to London to treat of peace had appeared in a London paper supposedly at the instigation of Wentworth and with the sole object of breeding trouble. When Wentworth completed his professed business of arranging prisoner exchanges, the Patriots insisted on his being requested to leave The Hague. Apparently he proceeded to Amsterdam. It was suspected that he would attempt some ruse to detract from the full authenticity of Adams' reception
if he could not completely prevent it. Another emissary, Thomas Digges, who enjoyed the added advantage of being a former correspondent of Adams, was sent to contact the American minister and to make some inquiries relative to peace negotiations. He requested a very secret interview with Adams. The minister replied that he would receive Digges only in the presence of Thaxter and that he intended to communicate any interview in full to Franklin and to Vergennes. The Russian mediation offer which was still in process was another source of concern. Consequently, Thaxter had some basis for his comment that "some Northern blast, or some demon from Britain may yet disappoint our well-grounded expectations." 

By the end of March both Russian and English ministries, realizing that the resolution on recognition would certainly be brought before the States General very soon, tried to delay the progress of the deliberations. A major effort was initiated through the Russian court. The Russian government, acting as intermediary, communicated to the States General that George III had reversed his policy and was now disposed to permit free navigation to the republic and to negotiate a treaty similar to that of 1674. It was this treaty which permitted traffic in naval supplies and to which Dutch adherence had inaugurated the Anglo-Dutch rupture. At the same time England proposed a truce while these negotiations were carried forward. Fearing that her minister at The Hague was not sufficiently sympathetic to the English party, Catherine dispatched a second representative, presumably more sympathetic to the English cause, to aid in reestablishing peace. The Prince of Orange exerted his influence, not to block Adams directly, but to strengthen the relations with Russia and to retain the right to make a separate peace. He
presumed that France would not object to a separate peace if the Netherlands secured the right to free navigation and the right to export naval supplies. Adams undertook a constant round of conversations, visits, and trips throughout the country. He visited a number of mercantile houses to enlist their aid. As only Friesland, prior to the end of March, had voted recognition, Dumas advocated spreading the idea that an American act of navigation could open to Friesland alone the ports of the United States. This thought was quietly filtered among the merchants and shipowners of the major cities. As the same time news of the ordinance of Congress against British manufactures reached the United Provinces. As the ordinance enhanced the Dutch prospects of garnering a larger share of American trade, its arrival was well-timed to have a strong influence on the Dutch merchants. It was impossible to estimate the degree of influence each of these factors had upon the merchants and business men. They culminated, however, in a deluge of petitions from merchants, bankers, shipowners, and others to their regencies requesting the recognition of America in order that commercial treaties could be signed. Many of the petitions were drawn up by close collaborators of Adams, e.g., Luzac in Leyden, Calkoen in Amsterdam, and Van Zoon in Rotterdam, to mention only a few.

The first of these papers, drawn by Jean Luzac, was the petition of members of the organization of Traders, Merchants, and Manufacturers of Leyden to their city council. It was signed by nearly sixty business houses, and at their request two copies of the petition were forwarded to Adams. A similar petition from the Merchants, Insurers, and Freighters of Rotterdam to their regency followed. The merchants of Amsterdam petitioned first their own
regency and then joined with Haarlem and Leyden in a petition to the provincial States and to the States General. On the latter there were approximately five hundred names, and twice as many would have willingly signed if it had been necessary. Many familiar names appeared, among them that of Neufville and Son, Van Staphorst, de la Lande and Fynje, and Matthew van Arp. A wide number of other petitions, most of them dated March 20 and signed by a greater or lesser number of persons depending on the size and commerce of the area or city petitioning, were also addressed to the regencies, to the States of Holland and West Friesland, and to the States General. Dort was a major exception. In a letter of March 20, the city merchants expressed confidence that their regents would authorize their deputies to vote for the reception of Adams at The Hague. They, therefore, "judged it unnecessary to present a petition." 80 The petitions worked effectively and contributed to the speed of the deliberations. Adams took delight in them as they enhanced the reputation of the American cause and supplied "an increase of strength and power equal to a great army or navy." 82 By March 22, half of the eighteen cities in the Province of Holland had voted for acknowledgment. Some of the most populous cities in the Netherlands were among those acceding, e.g. Amsterdam, Leyden, Dort, and Haarlem.

The stadholder insisted that the measure was premature but decided that the movement was too powerful for him to stop. Therefore, he announced that he did not intend to make the effort. He promised to restrict himself to stating his views as his personal opinion only and not to use his influence against the acknowledgment. 83 The Grand Pensionary, whose intentions Adams had often questioned, had earlier promised to promote the business with all
The most critical stage of the difficult wait was thus over. On March 26, the remaining cities of Holland voted acknowledgment. The States of Holland and West Friesland gave provincial assent on March 28, 1782. The States directed Van Bleiswick to notify Adams immediately of their resolution. Adams assured Van Bleiswick that he was very sensible of the "unequivocal demonstrations" of "national harmony and unanimity" and hoped these would forcibly operate toward a general peace. He also hoped that all other provinces would soon follow the examples of Friesland and Holland. All breathed a sigh of relief as the accession of Holland virtually "amounted to acknowledgment of American independence and opens the road to negotiation."

Other provinces were certain to follow, but delaying tactics would first be tried in some. Zwolle, where half the regency was composed of the nobles, sought to have a committee first take the proposal under advisement before it was turned over to the regency itself. Van der Capellen used his full influence to prevent so lengthy a process. The insistence of merchants and populace were too powerful for any intrigue. Netherland's "inclination for us, like a spring pressed by a strong hand, is escaping and declares for us nobly, by an accumulation of addresses of corporations, which appear from all parts." Petitions continued to flow. Many of them were published in the gazettes. Public opinion and commercial interests so coincided that early in April Dumas quite correctly predicted recognition before the end of the month. On the day of this prediction, April 4, 1782, the third province, Zealand, approved recognition. She was quickly followed by Overyssel on April 5, Groningen on April 9, Utrecht on April 10, and Guelderland on April 17. The States General gave its approval on April 19 and formally received
Adams on April 22. Thus, within three weeks of the affirmative vote in the States of Holland and West Friesland, recognition was accorded.

A reasonable pride in the accomplishment might well be forgiven Adams since he had for over a year and a half looked forward to it as "the turning point"—the final determination of the question whether the Netherlands was for or against the allies. La Vauguyon agreed with this evaluation and rejoiced that the event would separate conclusively the republic from England; that it would fix America more firmly in its independence; and finally, that it would force England to solicit a general peace. No small ends for a determined militiaman to achieve! An admiring Rotterdam citizen thought the deed to have been accomplished in "such an unexpected and singular way that whoever acknowledges a Divine Providence will find her finger upon every step." Adams described it as the "foundation for prosperity and security to both nations." Tired out from the exertions of gaining recognition and the round of formalities and congratulations which followed it, Adams wrote to his wife that "a child was never more weary of a whistle, than I am of embassies." But the very word "embassy" reminded him of the victory that was his—a victory which he believed to be a greater achievement than that of forming the alliance with France.

The embassy here, however, has done great things. It has not merely tempted a natural rival, and an embittered, inveterate, hereditary enemy, to assist a little against G. B., but it has torn from her bosom, a constant faithful friend and ally of a hundred years duration. It has not only prevailed with a minister or an absolute court to fall in with the national prejudice, but without money, without friends, and in opposition to mean intrigues, it has carried its cause, by the still small voice of reason, and persuasion, triumphantly against the uninterrupted opposition of family connections, court influence, and aristocratical dispositions.

The thought of his accomplishment so enchanted him that his official
correspondence repeated it in substance for the delectation of Congress.\(^93\)

Although bursting with pleasure at the event which even "many indifferent people think is a great point," he was too honest not to disclaim complete responsibility. His success, he assured his friends, was the result of a great number and variety of causes operating in the several parts of the globe which he "could no more influence than the fly upon the chariot wheel could raise the clouds of dust."\(^94\)

A full round of congratulations and receptions followed. Several days were almost exclusively devoted to the paying and receiving of visits from members of the government and the court. Adams estimated that there were at least a hundred and fifty of these ceremonial calls during the first four days. First and most important was the formal reception by the whole body of the States General. Following that, Adams was formally received by the Prince of Orange and a few days later by the Princess.\(^95\) Not the least among the formalities—and one which Adams particularly relished—was a dinner given on Tuesday, April 23, by La Vauguyon in honor of the United States. Adams was introduced to all the members of the diplomatic corps at The Hague. This was a novelty since Adams had not been accepted by the vast majority of the diplomatic corps—nor was he destined to be accepted on any but neutral territory for some months to come. Although he railed against a protocol which restricted the exchange of visits with many of these ministers, he cryptically observed that none had missed this event since nothing "in the whole voluminous ceremonial, nor in all the idle farce of etiquette" prevented a minister from partaking of a "good dinner in good company." La Vauguyon, "by paying more attention to the new brother than to all the old fraternity," quite
compensated for any stiffness on the part of those ministers whose country
had not granted recognition.  
Among the very few of whose coolness Adams could not complain was M. de
Llano, the "grave Spaniard." Adams, who possessed his full share of vanity,
was proud to repeat in whole or in part the extremely effusive compliment
paid to him by that dignitary.

You have struck, Monsieur, the greatest blow in all Europe. It is the
greatest blow which has ever been struck in the cause of America. It
is you who have frightened and overwhelmed the Anglomanes. It is you
who have filled this nation with enthusiasm. It is you who have turned
their heads.

Recognizing that the remark could well be regarded as the effusion of the
moment, Adams would relate the scene of the following morning when de Llano
called upon him at his hotel. On that occasion the Spanish envoy, repeating
his remark, turned to a gentleman of his party and added that he had not said
it "in order to make compliments to Monsieur Adams" but "because, in truth, I
believe it is his due." Recounting the incident to his close friend, Jenings,
Adams hastened to assure him that he would not fall an easy prey to such com-
pliments. "They will never turn my head, I assure you." Jenings wryly
replied that the compliment did appear to him a little too extreme. On the
other hand, he observed that Adams deserved plaudits for recognizing the
proper moment to act and seizing it to his "own honor, the public benefit, and
the confusion of his enemies, public and private."  

In addition to the official visits a number of local groups planned
public entertainments in Adams' honor. Because of the pressure of time and
also due to the ill health which revisited him through much of May and June,
these invitations could not be accepted, but even their rejection required
time and tact. Among the most determined was a merchant group from Schiedam.

In March they invited him to be guest of honor at a hundred-place dinner tentatively set for the second week in May. On the day that recognition was accorded, April 19, a delegation from these merchants called upon the minister to renew their invitation. Because of the burden of his occupations, Adams requested Dumas to try to have him excused. Dumas, anxious not to alienate any group, personally called upon the secretary of the city regency and informed him that Adams, out of thoughtfulness for the mixed emotions in the United Provinces, thought it better not to appear in person, but that he would gladly forward their compliments and the invitation in his dispatch to Congress.

Complete entrée to diplomatic circles was by no means granted. Frequently he met members of the court and diplomatic corps at social functions given by Dutch magistrates or at the homes of the French and Spanish ministers, both of whom were instructed to acknowledge him, but many doors were closed to him. Although he was finally invited to dine with the Prince and Princess of Orange at their country estate, the Maison du Bois, time and prodding were required to elicit for Adams an invitation to one of the Prince's receptions. With the exception of France and Spain, the foreign embassies were loathe to exchange visits. The Russian ambassador was instructed to have nothing to do with him. Dana wrote from St. Petersburg that the news of recognition "gave a shock here, and is not well received." That court was irritated that the mediation had neither prevented recognition nor brought a partial peace between Britain and Holland. Ministers of the other countries remained aloof. The Emperor was particularly displeased at the States General's
precipitancy in admitting Adams and forbade his minister to acknowledge the American. Franklin, although pleased that Adams had been recognized, entertained some misgivings on the procedure. It appeared to him that America was harming both her credit and her standing by sending militia diplomats all over Europe, "begging alliances, and soliciting declarations of our independence." On the other hand, La Fayette gladdened the minister's heart with congratulations and a statement of the importance of the Dutch declaration in the current crisis. La Vauguyon even more generously commented that the Dutch had avenged themselves for "all the political and other evils which the English have done them since Cromwell." Louis XVI, through Vergennes, expressed his pleasure at the event which he predicted would permanently sever Anglo-Dutch relations and force the English to solicit peace. When the news finally reached Philadelphia five months later, Livingston described it to the several state governors in glowing terms. He deemed it "an event which widens the basis of our independence and leads to our immediate connection with a powerful nation, whose alliance a variety of circumstances in their origin and government render extremely desirable." 

In England the event caused a "profound sensation" and drove the cabinet to a desperate effort to regain the Dutch. On May 4 Fox dispatched to Simolin a second letter further explaining the communication of March 28 which had proposed an unlimited freedom of the sea. This, in turn, was presented to the States General by the Russian ministers at The Hague. The Tsarina applied pressure through her ambassador at Versailles to enlist French co-operation in urging the Dutch to accept the English offer. To these Russian overtures, Louis XVI used his favorite graceful exit. He responded
that he was sensible of the Empress' efforts but did not desire to interfere in Dutch affairs. 109

In reality, his minister, in concert with Adams and Dumas, was devoting considerable time to interference in the English peace project. No sooner had the first intimations of England's proposal to revert to the treaty of 1674 been made than these gentlemen concerted plans to thwart it. Working through their friends at Amsterdam and in The Hague, they had secured on April 25 a resolution in the States of Holland to refuse the offer made through Russia earlier in the month. 110 When England renewed her offer in explicAted form in May, they again went into action. Unfortunately the secret interviews, conferences, and negotiations kept them too busy to record their activities adequately. They were conscious, too, that many of these meetings "ought not yet to be trusted to paper." 111 As a result of all the activity the States of Holland resolved not to reestablish the alliance or articles of commerce with England, and the States General resolved not to accept a separate peace without French approval. 112

Although Adams had taken a very active part in these negotiations earlier, after mid-May, when they seemed safely launched, he gradually withdrew in favor of the other two diplomats. He himself was busy moving to the new Hotel des États-Unis, resisting separate peace feelers, initiating another loan, and ironing out differences with the States General on a treaty of amity and commerce. Barely was the first round of ceremony over recognition completed than Adams proceeded to revitalize his efforts to secure a loan. He had consistently believed that lack of recognition was the chief obstacle to procuring money and, with that roadblock removed, he was prepared to go to
work. Encouraged by an April report from Franklin that the Paris bankers, Fizeaux and Grand, predicted the success of a loan for five or six million florins if Adams took immediate advantage of the Dutch enthusiasm over recognition, he drew up a set of alternative proposals. He immediately dispatched these to the banker, Hodshon, and invited that commercial house, in union with whatever co-operating houses Hodshon could enlist, to engage to furnish Congress with four or five million florins by the end of July. Although ready to contract for that sum, Adams did not actually expect to obtain it. Dutch profits from trade had been ruined through the past two years, and any money available for investment was already solicited by loans opened for "France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and several other powers as well as their own national, provincial, and collegiate loans." To make the negotiations more difficult, several of these countries were paying higher interest than Adams could offer, and the Dutch money lenders were not the men to let enthusiasm replace financial good sense. His friends assured him that American credit was mounting visibly. He was more pessimistic and observed that the "prodigious" eagerness to act as the American banker was chiefly because of the honor involved and the opportunity of an introduction to American trade. None were willing to guarantee a loan, and the enthusiasm, in spite of appearances, did not seem "strong enough to untie purse strings." Also whatever establishment he chose, a "cry and clamor" from the others was certain to result and led him to complain that he found the avidity of his friends as great an obstacle to success as the ill will of his enemies. He described his position as "that of a man in the midst of the ocean negotiating for his life among a school of sharks."
Adams had scarcely engaged Hodshon as broker when his friend, Cerisier, warned him that Hodshon was an Anglophile at heart and could not be expected to devote his best efforts to the loan. 117 As this news arrived just as Hodshon was engaged in the financial aspects of Adams' removal from Amsterdam to the new American embassy building, Adams was in a delicate position. With some skill he managed to convince Hodshon that the party spirit and disagreeable altercations that would arise from continued association would be damaging to both Hodshon and the public. 118 He thus secured his release from that contract. Just as he verged on the completion of another with a group of bankers, a "fatal" circumstance—the opening of a loan for nine million for the India Company, under the warranty of the States and bearing an interest of one per cent above the ordinary rate—dashed his hopes by threatening to channel any available funds elsewhere. 119

In spite of these unfavorable conditions, Adams, with his accustomed pertinacity, strove to get a loan inaugurated. On May 10 he met and discussed the affair with representatives of three major houses. At this meeting the Dutch bankers pressed for the best possible terms and the conferences ended on a hazy agreement for 4½% for brokerage and charges. 120 In subsequent correspondence, Adams very clearly stipulated that he understood the agreed 4½% to cover all the expenses, receiving and paying to the order of the United States the money in the first instance, receiving and paying of the annual interest on the loan, and receiving and paying off of the capital in the final instance, as well as the brokerage, the fees for the undertakers, and all other charges. 121 The companies regarded the 4½% as the rate for receiving and paying out of the money and brokerage charges but expected to charge an
additional 1% annually on the amount of the interest for the work of paying it out and another 4½% to cover expenses on the final redemption of the obligations. Adams was prepared to compromise, but he was determined not to go the whole way. He accepted the 1% annually on the amount of the interest, raised the original 4½% to 4¼% but flatly refused to pay any percentage on the final redemption. If the bankers were unwilling to accept these terms, he requested that they notify him so that he could find another house. In view of this ultimatum, they quickly agreed to his terms.

There were some differences also on the size of the loan to be opened and on the possibility of America opening other loans before this one should be filled. Adams preferred that it be for three million florins, but the commercial houses preferred five million. They in turn were anxious to bind America against opening any other loan in the meantime. Adams entertained some faint hope of securing the warranty of either the States General or a provincial States and did not want to eliminate the possibility of accepting their offer. Nor did he desire to be completely bound to a house which might or might not make progress in the business. On these points, also, a compromise was worked out whereby the loan would open for five million immediately at 5%, but the "no other loan" clause was to be binding only on Adams personally and not on his successor nor on Congress. Therefore, if Congress' interests should so dictate, they could open further loans by replacing him with another minister. Similarly, the clause would not be applicable to any loan opened for America under the warranty of any segment of the Dutch government as the warranters, not the American minister, would choose the commercial house in that case. If the Dutch bankers could drive a close bargain so
could Adams. With the terms worked out agreeably to both parties, the prospectus was published and the bonds printed.125

By June 20 the first thousand blank bonds (face value one million florins) were ready for Adams' signature. Within two days they were signed and a second thousand in process. Meanwhile, the bankers prepared twenty-five English and twenty-five Dutch copies of the general bonds—five copies in either language of each million florins—to be forwarded to Congress by five different opportunities.126 Adams forwarded to Philadelphia five copies of the contract itself with the reminder that the commission to negotiate a loan had included a promise of Congressional ratification. He urged speedy action as his lenders were fearful of putting out any considerable sum until the ratifications arrived. These contracts and the obligations arrived in Philadelphia on the Heer Adams in mid-September and Congress promptly proceeded to ratify and return them.127 The news had arrived at an excellent time to receive Congress' immediate attention. That body had been occupied with a resolution for a loan of five million dollars on whatever terms they could obtain. News from Adams caused them to lower this sum to four million.128 Livingston, aware of the necessity for a sizable sum of money, urged Adams to "extend every nerve to get it filled; for if the war continues it will be essential to our exertions; if it should terminate, it will not be less necessary to enable us to discharge our army; in every view it is necessary."129

Adams had not given cause for over-confidence in the loan. His covering letter to Congress stressed that he had no expectations of securing the five million for a long time, and that a million and a half by Christmas would exceed his expectations. The Heer Adams also brought his letter of June 9
imploring Congress not to draw on the proposed loan because the "extreme scarcity" of money would make it impossible to realize any great amount.\textsuperscript{130} Unofficially, however, Congress received from other sources the more cheering information that the loan was nearly one-fourth filled when the boat embarked.\textsuperscript{131}

By July the money was coming in. Adams directed his bankers to keep Congress informed of the general progress of the loan but not to make statements in excess of the money actually on hand. He preferred that the amount stated should be a "few hundred thousand guilders under" as bills were still arriving which had been drawn on Henry Laurens two years previously.\textsuperscript{132} The bankers promised to heed Adams' advice and be cautious in the information that they forwarded. They, however, were inclined to take a more favorable view of the prospects than Adams was, and they pointed out to the minister that they had received nearly a million in cash within the first month.\textsuperscript{133} When preparing their report for Congress in August, they notified Adams that to date (August 8) they had received 1,484,000 florins and requested his advice on the sum to be reported.\textsuperscript{134} Pleased to have the affair proceeding so well, Adams suggested that they report 1,300,000 florins and then keep Congress informed most exactly of everything that related to the loan.\textsuperscript{135} His part in the negotiation was more or less completed and he was anxious to devote his full energies to the realization of the second commission which he held in the Netherlands—that of securing a treaty of amity and commerce.

His interest in this project had led him—with full intention of presenting it regardless of eventualities—to prepare a draft of such a treaty even before the first province had voted to recognize America.\textsuperscript{136} Scarcely
had Adams been received by the States General than he applied to President Van Citters for a committee to discuss the proposed treaty. In order to expedite the matter, he presented to the committee the project of a treaty drawn up in conformity to the model furnished him by Congress. This draft the committee immediately had translated--Adams had presented it in English--printed and mailed to all members of the sovereignty. A copy was transmitted to the Admiralty for recommendations or alterations. The Admiralty reported back on May 21 with a list of desired changes. Many of these were inconsequential, really, and involved nothing more profound than minor rewording, e.g., the change in title from the "Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries" to the simpler "United Netherlands." Whenever the "most favored nation" phrase appeared, they wished the additional phrase "in Europe" eliminated as unnecessary and without precedent. To both of these changes Adams was perfectly agreeable. Another change, which he considered important and personally would have been willing to insert, concerned recaptured vessels and letters of marque. However, his instructions did not cover these points and he could only draw up a separate convention with the understanding that the United States should be free to ratify the treaty either with or without this added paper. Another problem, which recurrently was raised in various parts of the sovereignty, was in reference to articles twenty-two through twenty-four. Article twenty-two in a very detailed manner stated that this treaty might not in any way derogate from the treaty of alliance or of commerce with France. The following article referred to the open invitation to Spain to adhere to the alliance at any time. The Dutch were a little leary of being subordinated to French or Spanish interests. But Adams insisted that these articles must
remain in substance. The twenty-fourth article related to the possibility of the United States negotiating with the Barbary States for security of navigation on the Mediterranean, in which case the Dutch consuls in those countries were to second the American requisition. In regard to this article, Adams pointed out that it bound the Dutch to nothing and was no more than an act of good will on their part.\textsuperscript{140}

The Admiralty report, as soon as presented to Their High Mightinesses, was taken \textit{ad referendum} by six provinces. The seventh, Overyssel, being an interior province, determined to abide by the decision of Holland as the principal maritime province.\textsuperscript{141} Since Holland was obviously the key to acceptance of the treaty, Adams deemed it prudent to pay a special visit to the Grand Pensionary. He hoped to remove some of Van Bleiswick's objections and to explain to him the reasons for certain articles, especially those regarding France and Spain. To his relief, the pensionary was not difficult to convince. Indeed, Van Bleiswick made light of the objections being raised and predicted ultimate success, but he warned that time must be allowed for the cities to deliberate and suggested six weeks as reasonable.\textsuperscript{142} Adams was not too sanguine. After his earlier patience-wracking experiences with the complicated mechanism of the Dutch constitution, he expected the final acceptance of the treaties to be at least three months distant.\textsuperscript{143} His estimate proved to be more realistic than that of the Grand Pensionary. In the meantime, he applied himself to the task of answering objections and explaining his position on the various articles to all who inquired.

In mid-July the first positive step was taken. The States of Holland and West Friesland took \textit{ad referendum} a resolution to propose to the States
General that deputies from that body enter into discussion with Adams and work out with him a mutually agreeable treaty. The one firm stipulation was that the offensive articles twenty-two and twenty-three either be omitted or be so clearly stated that the Franco-American alliance could in no way derogate from the proposed treaty between the republic and America.\textsuperscript{144} Van Berckel as usual served as Adams' right arm in Amsterdam and to him Adams sent an explanation of the American viewpoint on the various recommendations of the Admiralty and in particular on the two most troublesome articles. Adams expressed again his willingness to accept most of the changes made by the Admiralty but argued that it would be impossible to omit the two articles in question. Congress had a solemn agreement with France which must be safeguarded. Furthermore, no one had yet demonstrated what possible injury these articles could cause the Netherlands. On the contrary, their sole purpose was no other than that the treaty under consideration should not derogate from the previous treaties with France.\textsuperscript{145}

Adams was correct in his presumption that Amsterdam would again be the key to success or failure in the negotiation. The city hemmed and hawed until every other city in the province had voted approval. Finally, on August 3, the Amsterdam regency gave its approval and added the admonition to its deputies not to retard under any pretext the final accomplishment of the business. The regency, however, submitted minor recommendations made to it by the bourse for discussion with Adams. As a criterion by which Adams might judge whether each recommendation proposed was truly that of the bourse or only that of a committee member, Van Berckel informed him that the bourse recommendations all bore a common characteristic. They were, in every case, to supply or to
ask clarification rather than to add or to retract any essential point. In order to prevent any modifications which might be proposed from delaying the negotiations on the pretext that it must be taken ad referendum, a final clause was added that Their High Mightinesses be given full power to conclude a treaty with whatever changes should be agreeable to the two contracting powers. 146

Amsterdam's sanction received and the proposed conference with Adams held, the States of Holland and West Friesland approved the treaty on August 14. The States General proposed an immediate conference with Adams to put the final touches to it. Another conference on the same subject was scheduled with Van Bleiswick as he was the most influential individual in the States General. 147 These many conferences at every level wearied the impatient Adams and he complained to Mrs. Adams that she could have "no idea of the difficulties" encountered, some "too cruel" even to be committed to paper. 148

On August 22 a committee composed of deputies from each province, Van Bleiswick, and Secretary Fagel met with the American plenipotentiary to present to the latter their remarks and propositions. A compromise was shortly reached on the controversial twenty-second and twenty-third articles, and these were condensed into a single simplified article. 149 A new treaty embodying the compromises was then drawn up as also a convention on the subject of recaptured prizes. All this consumed time and it was mid-September before Adams could write that "all articles, words, syllables, and letters, and points are adjusted, and nothing remains but to write five fair copies, in Dutch and English, and sign, seal, and deliver them." He was pleased with the results which he described as being "as near the spirit of my instructions as I could
obtain, and I think it is in nothing materially variant from them.”

Finally, the signing of both treaty and convention was scheduled for Monday, October 7, but a last-minute delay postponed the event until the following day. At high noon on October 8, 1782, Adams proceeded to the State House where he was received with all formality by two deputies and conducted to the chamber of business. There the copies were properly signed and, as quickly as safe means of transport could be found, copies were dispatched to Congress for ratification. They arrived in Philadelphia and were read in Congress on January 21, 1783. Two days later the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United Provinces as also the convention was ratified. It was proclaimed the same day although ratifications were not formally exchanged with the Netherlands until June 23, 1783.

By October 8 then, John Adams had accomplished the major part of his assigned tasks in the Netherlands. He had secured the recognition of his country and of himself; he had inaugurated a loan that promised to be successful; he had negotiated a treaty of amity and commerce. The only remaining task was that of forming a Franco-Dutch-American alliance. Each time he had broached that subject, his efforts had been stymied by La Vauguyon's claim of "no instructions." Adams was determined to await the advice of France on this matter although he admittedly had gone against it on the occasion of presenting his memorial. This resolution he perhaps found the easier to make as he was convinced that La Vauguyon was well disposed toward an alliance and would give his acquiescence to the undertaking as soon as possible. Vergennes, however, continued to stall. By late summer the none-too-durable patience of Adams began to wear thin. In a dispatch to Livingston he pointed out his
embarrassment in not knowing what action to take. On the one hand, he was anxious to preserve peaceful relations with the French ministers. On the other hand, the wording of the tenth article of the Franco-American treaty directed that any invitation to other countries be extended in concert. He presumed that the concert was settled in Philadelphia, and that his instructions, therefore, to make the proposal were positive. He was anxious to fulfill his instructions, especially when they were so agreeable to his way of thinking. 155 

Before any further action could be taken, he was called to the peace convention in Paris. This convention not only superseded any negotiation on an alliance but nullified the commission to form one since any alliance was to be restricted to the duration of the war.
260

1 Advice, Jan. 25, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: Holland, IV.

2 Adams to Dana, March 15, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 543; Dumas to Adams, Mar. 29, 1782, p. 558.

3 Adams to Neufville, June 1, 1782, Adams Papers. Adams suggested that the unsold obligations be burned as the whole affair was simply "an unfortunate enterprise."

4 Franklin to Adams, Jan. 11, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 358.

5 Adams to Franklin, Jan. 25, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 508-509. The four men are not identified.

6 Franklin to Adams, Feb. 12, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 378-79.

7 Adams to Franklin, Feb. 4, 1782, Adams Papers. La Vauguyon very carefully informed the Patriots that France was not seconding their efforts in an alliance as she wished them to enjoy full freedom to make their own decision (La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Feb. 26, 1782, Doniol, V, 56). While La Vauguyon was in Paris throughout January, 1782, he undoubtedly was instructed not to involve France in a hopeless cause. Vergennes was convinced that the "United Provinces would never turn toward the United States as long as the war lasted in order not to complicate too much their own quarrel with Great Britain (Vergennes to Luzerne, Dec. 24, 1781, Doniol, V, 54).


10 Adams to La Vauguyon, Mar. 1, 1782, ibid., pp. 532-34.

11 La Vauguyon to Adams, Mar. 4, 1782, ibid., p. 534.

12 Ibid.

13 La Vauguyon to Adams, Mar. 17, 1782, Adams Papers.

14 La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Feb. 26, 1782, Doniol, V, 56.

15 Vergennes to Luzerne, Sept. 7, 1782, Sparks Transcripts, LXXVIII.

16 Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Mar. 13, 1782, Doniol, V, 58.

17 Robert Livingston (1746-1813), a native of New York and a member of a very influential family, studied law and was a partner of John Jay for a brief time. Although he had been a member of the committee which drew up the Declaration of Independence, he believed independence was inexpedient at the
time and so neither voted for nor signed the Declaration. He served as a member of the Continental Congress in 1775-76 and again in 1779-1781. Appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs in 1781, he held that position until after the peace treaty in 1783. He approved the instructions to the commissioners to act only with the concurrence of France (DAB).

Luzerne claimed to have engineered Livingston's election and assured Vergennes that the new Secretary could be relied upon to follow French guidance (Luzerne to Vergennes, Nov. 1, 1781, Canadian Archives, 1913, 211-212). In this at least, Arthur Lee would have agreed. He warned Dana that whatever he received from Livingston he might "consider as dictated by the French minister. He made him what he is, and policy, or gratitude, keeps him from disobeying or renouncing his maker" (A. Lee to Dana, July 6, 1782, Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 379).

18 Livingston to Adams, October 23, 1781, Wharton, IV, 807-808.
19 Adams to Livingston, Feb. 14, 1782, ibid., V, 162.
20 Livingston to Adams, Oct. 23, 1781, ibid., IV, 807-808.
21 Adams to Livingston, Feb. 14, 1782, ibid., V, 162.
22 Ibid.
23 Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, ibid., IV, 849-850.
24 Adams to Livingston, Feb. 23, 1782, ibid., V, 185.
25 Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, ibid., IV, 850.
27 It is difficult to know exactly what Livingston had in mind. Conceivably, Luzerne had informed him of Vergennes' directive to La Vauguyon to urge Adams to withdraw his memorial and credentials. Livingston may not have been clear in his own thinking and did not recognize the impossibility of Adams being wholly "a private gentleman."
28 Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, ibid., IV, 850; Adams to Livingston, Feb. 19, 1782, V, 187.
29 English intransigence, the French military concert and evacuation of the barrier towns between France and the Netherlands, the victory at Yorktown, and the retaking of St. Eustatius were contributing factors (see letters between Dumas and Adams, and Adams to Livingston in late February, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 522-532).
30 Wm. Carmichael to Livingston, Feb. 18, 1782, Wharton, V, 176.
31 Adams to Franklin, Feb. 20, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 519. The effort was assured success when both a military concert with France and the mediation, under conditions favored by France, were approved by the States of Holland on the same day (Dumas to Adams, Feb. 14, 1782, Adams Papers).


33 Ibid.

34 Adams to Livingston, Feb. 21, 1782, ibid., p. 527.

35 John Adams, Collection of State Papers, p. 67.


37 Adams to Livingston, Feb. 27, 1782, Wharton, V, 206.

38 Ibid.

39 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 5, 1782, Adams Papers.

40 Adams to Livingston, Mar. 11, 1782, Wharton, V, 235. In December, already, England was making serious overtures for a separate peace (Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Dec. 14, 1781, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXII). Yorke, rumored to be at The Hague in disguise, was in correspondence with the Amsterdam burgomaster, Rendorp, who assured him that several of the principal members of the town were anxious to restore the ancient friendship (Rendorp to Yorke, Dec. 20, 1781, ibid.). The Patriots were aware of the connection between Rendorp and the Anglophiles and impatiently awaited the end of his term when another burgomaster could be elected (Berenger to Vergennes, Jan. 8, 1782, ibid., LXXXIII).

41 La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Mar. 15, 1782, Sparks Transcripts, LXXXIII.

42 Van der Capellen to Valck, Mar. 13, 1782, Beaufort, Brieven Van der Capellen, p. 272. Van der Capellen added that he personally knew that La Vauguyon had acted favorably. Adams came to a similar conclusion. He was convinced that La Vauguyon had not only been friendly but that he had acted very honorably "without, however, doing any ministerial act" (Adams to Franklin, Mar. 26, 1782, Wharton, V, 275).

43 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 11/12, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 541.

44 Ibid.

45 Adams to Dumas, Mar. 13, 1782, ibid., p. 542.

46 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 10, 1782, ibid., pp. 536-37.

Dumas to Adams, Mar. 16, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 545.

Adams to Dumas, Mar. 14, 1782, Dumas Papers.

Identity of this friend is unknown but it may have been the deputy Gyzelauer of Dort, a Patriot and a favored advisor of Adams (Adams to Livingston, Sept. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 688).

Dumas to Adams, Mar. 11/12, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 540-41.

Adams to Dumas, Mar. 13, 1782, ibid., p. 542.

Adams to Livingston, Mar. 10, 1782, Wharton, V, 233.


Dumas to Adams, Feb. 24, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 530; Adams to Livingston, Feb. 27, 1782, Wharton, V, 206.

Dumas to Adams, Mar. 5, 1782, Adams Papers. An opposing opinion was recorded by the Prussian minister who wrote that the purchase occasioned surprise that Adams would prepare to establish himself as American minister before he received the consent of the States General (Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Feb. 26, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: France, Ministry to Holland).

Dumas to Livingston, Apr. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 293.

La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Feb. 26, 1782, Doniol, V, 56.

Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Mar. 7, 1782, Sparks Transcripts: LXXXIII.

Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Mar. 13, 1782, Doniol, V, 58.

Ibid. La Vauguyon succeeded so well that both parties believed themselves the recipient of his support (La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Mar. 26, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: France, Ministry to Holland). He had convinced Adams that it was essential to their common cause that the French ambassador should assume a passive role. Through frequent discussion with Adams, he had led the American, he believed, to accept the idea as his own and so avoided the necessity of informing Adams of the French court's real motive for neutrality (La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Mar. 17, 1782, ibid., same letter in Doniol, V, 59, but under date of Mar. 19, 1782).
England was far more serious in her efforts to effect a peace than Adams realized. He apparently was too blinded by his conviction that England was completely insincere to give more than a minimum of attention to any overture England made.

Toward the end of January, Paul Wentworth arrived at The Hague ostensibly to discuss the exchange of prisoners between England and the United Provinces (Larrey to William V, Jan. 28, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIII), but his activities encompassed a much wider range, focusing strongly on contacts with influential Amsterdamers and devoting close attention to Adams (Le Vauguyon to Vergennes, Feb. 8, Feb. 12, Feb. 15, 1782; Wentworth to Stormont, Feb. 14, 1782, ibid.).

Digges was dispatched by the North government shortly after the Conway resolution was passed. This resolution was to the effect that further war with the colonies would weaken England's efforts against her European enemies and at the same time increase the mutual enmity between England and America and so be fatal to both interests. The resolution was passed on Feb. 27, 1782 (William Cobbett and J. Wright (eds.), The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803 (London: T. C. Hansard, 1814, XXII, 1085). Henceforth cited: Cobbett, Parliamentary History.

Digges to Adams, Mar. 20, 1782, Adams Papers. Digges sent a request that Adams ask for him at the First Bible Hotel as "the gentleman who arrived this night and lodges in room number ten," since he was remaining incognito. He also sent Adams some recent English papers and a letter from a mutual friend who was proceeding to Paris to contact Franklin in an effort to inaugurate a peace.

Digges to Adams, Mar. 21, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 551. Adams met and conversed briefly with Digges but repeated his former advice that Digges would do better to deal directly with Franklin and Vergennes in Paris. On his return to England Digges informed the government that Adams was willing to negotiate secretly (Digges memo to the King and Shelburne, Mar. 1782, Fortescue, Correspondence of George III, V, 487). The falsity of this information became apparent when Laurens was sent to Amsterdam to initiate
peace negotiations and returned with an entirely different message (Shelburne to King, Apr. 2, 1782, Fortescue, V, 487).

72 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 23, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 553; Thaxter to Abigail Adams, Mar. 23, 1782, Adams Papers.

73 The North ministry had been compelled to resign on Mar. 20 and a new ministry, desirous of peace with the United States, was formed under Lord Rockingham on Mar. 27. Lord Shelburne acted as Secretary of State for the North (Cobbett, Parliamentary History, XXII, 1214).

74 Minute of the Cabinet, Mar. 29, 1782, Fortescue, V, 427; Charles James Fox to Harris, Harris, Correspondence, I, 495. Fox stressed England's ardent desire for peace and pointed out that the concession left no room for continued hostilities between the Dutch and the English (Van Bleiswick to William V, Mar. 31, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIII).

P. Coquelle, L'Alliance Franco-Hollandoise contre L'Angleterre, 1735-1788 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie, 1902), p. 266, pointed out a possible snare in this offer as there were in fact two treaties of 1674. The first granted liberty of the sea according to the rights of neutrals. The second was a treaty of close alliance between the two nations by which Holland would go to the aid of England in case of need.

75 Van Bleiswick to William V, Mar. 31, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIV.

76 Harris to Stormont, Mar. 31-Apr. 11, 1780, Harris, I, 295. Harris informed the English ministry that Gallitzin was a French partisan. Others were of the same opinion, e.g., Adams (to Livingston, Sept. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 692) and La Vauguyon (La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 2, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: France, Ministry to Holland).

77 William V to Van Bleiswick, Apr. 8, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIV.

78 Adams to Dumas, Mar. 13, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 542; Adams to Dana, Mar. 15, 1782, p. 543; Dumas to Adams, Mar. 16, 1782, p. 545.

79 J. Adams, Collection of State Papers, pp. 27-33; in Adams Papers the list of signers are appended to each petition.

80 Adams to Dubbledemutz, Mar. 22, 1782; Thaxter to Abigail Adams, Mar. 23, 1782; petitions, Mar. 20, 1782, Adams Papers; Merchants of Dort to their regents, Mar. 20, 1782, Wharton, V, 257.

81 Edler, p. 227.

82 Adams to Jenings, Apr. 3, 1782, Adams Papers.
83. Adams to Franklin, Mar. 26, 1782, Wharton, V, 275; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 9, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIV; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Mar. 26, 1782, Bancroft Transcripts: France, Ministry to Holland.

84. Thaxter to Abigail Adams, Mar. 22, 1782, Adams Papers.

85. "Le grande oeuvre est accompli," (Dumas to Adams, Mar. 28, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 551). Friesland and West Friesland are not to be confused. Friesland was a separate province. West Friesland was an integral part of the province of Holland.


88. Dumas to Livingston, Apr. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 293.

89. Dumas to Livingston, Apr. 4, 1782, ibid.; Adams to Dubbledemutz, Apr. 6, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 566; Luzac to Adams, Apr. 16, 1782, p. 569.

90. Resolutions of each province reprinted in John Adams, Collection of State Papers, pp. 69-74. As soon as Adams received copies of all the resolutions, he bundled them off to Livingston (Apr. 19, 1782, Wharton, V, 315-19). A few weeks later he again sent a complete set of these resolutions and a set of the petitions of the various merchant groups. He suggested that they be printed as a perfect refutation of the "half-Toryfied politicians in America and of the Anglomanes everywhere, especially since the latter have attempted to prevent the circulation of these pieces" (June 9, 1782, Wharton, V, 483).

91. Adams to Dana, Apr. 28, 1782, Adams Papers; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 19, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXV; Alvarez Havart to Adams, Apr. 19, 1782; Adams to La Coste and Courtiau, Apr. 29, 1782, Adams Papers.

92. Adams to Abigail Adams, May 4, 1782, ibid.


94. Adams to Dana, Apr. 28, 1782; to Jenings, Apr. 28, 1782; to La Coste and Courtiau, Apr. 29, 1782, Adams Papers.

Adams was piqued at the "ridiculous" court etiquette that led ministers to assume a "distant, mysterious air" toward a United States minister on the basis of non-recognition when their nations were "not half equal to America in any one attribute of sovereignty."

Adams to Jenings, Apr. 28, 1782; Jenings to Adams, May 6, 1782, Adams Papers.

Adams to Livingston, July 5, 1782, Wharton, V, 595-96.

Dumas to Adams, Apr. 4, 1782, Adams Papers; Jacob Nolet to Adams, Apr. 19, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 576-77; Adams to Dumas, May 2, 1782, pp. 578-79; Dumas to Adams, Wharton, V, 393. A full account of the invitation was forwarded to Congress (Adams to Livingston, July 5, 1782, Wharton, V, 595-96).

Adams to Sam Adams, June 15, 1782, Samuel Adams Papers, 1781-1785 (New York Public Library), p. 233. John Adams' comment on this event—"All this is very right. The Sons of Liberty have the best right of any people under heaven to dine and sup with this family."

Van Bleiswick to William V, July 15, 1782; William V to Van Bleiswick, July 15; Visscher to William V, July 15; and Van Bleiswick to William V, July 16, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIV.

Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Apr. 16, 1782, ibid.

Dana to Franklin, Apr. 29, 1782, Wharton, V, 575.

Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Apr. 26, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXIV; Thulemeyer to Frederick II, May 17 and May 31, 1782, ibid., LXXXVI.

Franklin's Journal, May 13-25, 1782, Wharton, V, 557. Noting that most of the ministers had refused to return Adams' visits, he recalled that they had planned the same treatment for himself in Paris but that he had "disappointed their project by visiting none of them."

La Fayette to Adams, May 7, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 581; Dumas to Livingston, May 10, 1782, Wharton, V, 409; Coquelle, p. 267, quoting Vergennes to La Vauguyon, Apr. 19, 1782; Livingston to Governors of the States, Sept. 15, 1782, Wharton, V, 728.
108 Coquelle, p. 269; Franklin spoke of the sudden fall in English stocks due to the fear of an alliance between America and the Netherlands (Franklin to Adams, Apr. 22, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 432).

109 Coquelle, p. 269, citing a letter from Vergennes to La Vauguyon of June 6, 1782; Adams to Livingston, June 14, 1782, Wharton, V, 493-94.

110 Dumas to Adams, Mar. 30, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 558-59; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 26, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXV.

111 Dumas to Livingston, May 10, 1782, Wharton, V, 409.

112 Dumas to Livingston, June 1, 1782, ibid., p. 466; La Vauguyon to Vergennes, May 24, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXVI; Resolution of the States General, July 1, 1782, ibid., LXXXVII.

113 Franklin to Adams, Apr. 21, 1782, Wharton, V, 545. Fixeaux and Grand held the American account in France. They had houses in several countries of Europe and were considering undertaking the Dutch loan.

114 Adams to Hodshon, Apr. 26, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 575; Adams to Franklin, May 2, 1782, pp. 580-81

115 Van der Capellen to Adams, May 2, 1782, Beaufort, Brieven Van der Capellen, p. 291.


117 Cerisier to Adams, May 14, 1782, Adams Papers. Franklin received similar information in an anonymous crank letter from Ghent. The same letter carried a strong indictment of Adams whose "irresponsibility" was blamed on his recent fever (\(\sqrt{\text{ Franklin to Franklin, May 8, 1782, ibid. }}\)).


119 Adams to Livingston, May 16, 1782, Wharton, V, 421.

120 Willink and others to Adams, May 11, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 583. The houses involved were Wilhelm and Jan Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Staphorst, and de la Lande and Fynje. The last two houses were solidly republican; the first was favorably inclined.

121 Adams to Willink and others, May 13, 1782, ibid., p. 585.

122 Willink and others to Adams, May 16, 1782, ibid., pp. 586-87.
Adams to Willink and others, May 17, 1782, ibid., pp. 591-92.

Adams to Willink and others, May 13, 1782, ibid., p. 585; Willink and others to Adams, May 16, pp. 586-87; Adams to Willink and others, May 19, 1782, pp. 591-92.

Willink and others to Adams, June 6, 1782, Adams Papers.

Willink and others to Adams, June 29, 1782, Adams Papers.

Adams to Livingston, July 5, 1782, Wharton, V, 594; Livingston to Adams, Sept. 15, 1782, pp. 728-29.


Livingston to Adams, July 15, 1782, Wharton, V, 728.

Adams to Livingston, July 5, 1782, ibid., p. 594; June 9, 1782, p. 432.

Gilman to Bartlett, Sept. 17, 1782, Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, VI, 474.

Adams to Willink and others, July 10, 1782, Adams Papers.

Willink and others to Adams, July 11, 1782, ibid.

Willink and others to Adams, Aug. 8, 1782, ibid. Guilder or florin were used interchangeably. Either was the equivalent of two livres or a little less than forty cents.

Adams to Willink and others, Aug. 11, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 608.

Adams to Livingston, Feb. 21, 1782, Adams Papers.

Adams to Livingston, April 23, 1782, Wharton, V, 325. For a copy of the model treaty and accompanying instructions see U. S. Continental Congress, Secret Journals, II, 378-390. Adams had received from La Vauguyon the French approbation of the draft treaty before he presented it to the States General (Adams to Livingston, Feb. 21, 1782, Adams Papers).

Register of Resolutions of St. General, May 21, 1782, Adams Papers.

The Admiralty also asked for "United States of North America" as was used in the Franco-American treaty, but Adams refused on the basis that the "United States of America" was the only legal title.
140 May–June, 1782, Adams Papers.
141 Adams to Livingston, June 9, 1782, Wharton, V, 482.
142 Adams to Livingston, June 15, 1782, ibid., p. 495.
143 Adams to Livingston, June 9, 1782, ibid., p. 482.
144 Resolution, July 18, 1782, Adams Papers.
146 Van Berckel to Adams, Aug. 8, 1782, ibid., pp. 604–605. For a copy of Amsterdam's remarks and recommendations see Adams Papers, Aug. 9, 1782.
147 Dumas to Livingston, Aug. 16, 1782, Wharton, V, 662; Dumas to Livingston, Aug. 19, 1782, Sparks Transcripts, LXXIV.
150 Adams to Dana, Sept. 17, 1782, Wharton, V, 732; Adams to Livingston, Sept. 17, 1782, p. 733; Adams to Livingston, Oct. 8, 1782, p. 804.
151 Adams to Livingston, Oct. 8, 1782, ibid., p. 804.
153 Adams to Franklin, June 13, 1782, Wharton, V, 491; Adams to Dana, May 13, 1782, p. 415.
154 Adams to Livingston, June 9, 1782, ibid., p. 482.
155 Adams to Livingston, Sept. 6, 1782, ibid., p. 706.
CHAPTER VI

TRIUMPH OF MILITIA DIPLOMACY

Long before Adams affixed his signature to the treaties of amity and commerce, the first serious efforts toward the long-awaited peace settlement were being made. Adams, with his customary impetuous distrust of English intentions, refused to grant any credence to the peace emissaries sent to him. In mid-April, 1782, Franklin, who had also been contacted by English envoys, extended a first request to his co-commissioners that they come to Paris prepared to aid in a projected peace settlement. John Jay's militia efforts at diplomacy in Spain were not paying off as Adams' were, and so he accepted the invitation, arriving in Paris on June 23. Adams, in process of being received and of presenting his draft of a treaty of amity and commerce, had excellent reasons for his refusal to be drawn to Paris at that time.

Four months later, in response to a request from Jay to come to Paris, Adams explained his reluctance both in terms of the uncompleted treaty of commerce and of his lack of belief in Lord Shelburne's sincerity. He also pointed out the imprudence of three American ministers converging on Paris at the same time unless the negotiator from England had full powers to treat with America. Adams adamantly refused to accept anything short of a specific statement of American independence. He scornfully rejected all offers of negotiation under ambiguous commissions. England's offer to treat with all the "belligerent powers" was suspect since America had never been recognized.
as a power by England. Adams interpreted that offer as a British device to reserve "to themselves a place for chicane."³ A reputed commission to treat with the "four powers at war with England," he described as equally ambiguous. It could as well refer to "Hyder Ali or the Mahrattas" as to America. Similarly Oswald's commission to treat with "the said colonies or plantations, or any of them, or any parts thereof" proved unacceptable to him. He proudly declared that he was not a minister of any "fourth state" nor of any "American colonies."⁴ Jay and Franklin agreed with him and Oswald was forced to send for a further, and more explicit authorization, which would be acceptable to the American commissioners.⁵

In spite of the fact that Adams refused to come to Paris short of a commission explicitly to treat with the United States of America, he was not the man to ignore any matter affecting the well-being of his country. Consequently, he regularly sought information on any progress toward a negotiation. Finally, the message which the American plenipotentiaries awaited did arrive. Oswald received on September 27, 1782, a commission to treat with "the commissioners of the United States of America."⁶ These words conceded the explicit recognition which the Americans had demanded and which their firmness had won for them. Adams received the message, accompanied by Jay's urgent request, on October 6, a matter of hours before the formal signing of his treaties of amity and commerce with the Netherlands.⁷ With great industry, he signed another two thousand obligations, wrote long explanatory epistles to Livingston and to his family, to Jenings, Dana, and other friends, turned over the affairs at the Hotel des États-Unis to Dumas, fulfilled the ritual of taking leave of the numerous dignitaries, paid farewell visits to friends
at The Hague including La Vauguyon, and set out for Paris on October 17, 1782. He was not to see The Hague again for nearly a year when he would return to solicit more money.

As the roads were bad and travel was difficult, Adams took his time and indulged in sightseeing along the way. Also, he did not really believe England was prepared to make peace and he no longer enjoyed the vigor of a young man. Thus, it was already October 26, when he drove up to his old lodgings at the Hotel de Valois. As the "first thing to be done in Paris is always to send for a taylor, peruke maker, and shoemaker," he spent some time arraying himself suitably as a diplomatic representative of a sovereign country.

Finally, on Monday, the twenty-eighth, he paid his respects to Jay and learned from him the details of the negotiations. Delighted with the conduct of Jay in resisting both English and French efforts to bobtail the American claims, Adams spent the entire day with Jay and worked up an ever greater resentment at every indication, real or imagined, of Franklin's willingness to conciliate either France or England.

He refused for a time to so much as call upon Franklin and declared that it was the Doctor's business to come and see him. A friend, arguing the imprudence of demonstrating a division among themselves to interested parties, finally prevailed upon him to go out to Fassy and see Franklin who was slowly recuperating from a long debilitating siege of the gout. Once there Adams minced no words in expressing his complete approval of Jay's conduct and their mutual resolve to negotiate boundaries and fisheries entirely independent of France. Adams obviously was not in a tractable mood. He had too long felt both restricted and undermined by the Franklin-Vergennes combination.
As he had been blessed with small ability to forget and still less to forgive, his previous trips to France and subsequent unpleasant "flights" to Holland undoubtedly rankled in his mind. On this occasion he had returned somewhat as the victor and his self-esteem dictated a policy that no flight of imagination could call subservient to either Franklin or Vergennes. Franklin wisely heard him out and, before conferences again began in earnest, proceeded to announce his intention of supporting his colleagues in their resolution to keep their negotiations secret from the French court.\textsuperscript{11}

Adams was still more reluctant to contact Vergennes. On previous visits to Paris he had called upon the Foreign Secretary at his earliest possible convenience. Now he permitted two weeks to slip past with no effort to see Vergennes. He excused this dilatoriness on the claim that he was "so constantly engaged forenoon, afternoon, and evening" in peace conferences that he could not find time to go to Versailles or "anywhere else."\textsuperscript{12} Finally, La Fayette took him to task on the matter and pointed out that Vergennes could justifiably resent the neglect. When Dr. Franklin repeated the same message at dinner that evening, Adams resolved to pay his respects the next morning, November the tenth.\textsuperscript{13}

The effort was well rewarded. Vergennes' entire attitude toward Adams appeared to have undergone drastic change. Adams could reasonably deduct that this change was related to his success in the Netherlands. No other explanation seemed probable. A presumption, had the Foreign Secretary entertained one, that treaty negotiations were beyond the point of interference from the "pedantry, stubbornness, and self-importance" of Adams would have been insufficient to induce Vergennes to assume a more congenial air.\textsuperscript{14} Actually the
peace negotiations were quite unsettled and Vergennes had no accurate knowledge of what progress was being made. His mind was undoubtedly relieved to know that Adams was restricted by co-negotiators, but the relief could scarcely have been great enough to explain the new kindliness with which he received a former adversary. His later correspondence proved that he still did not trust Franco-American relations in Adams' hands any further than he had two years earlier. Writing to Luzerne in September, 1783, he warned his ambassador that there were people who would still like to destroy the bonds between the two countries "and chief among these is John Adams." A shrewd diplomat, he may have surmised that Adams would be easier to lead than to drive (though he was not apt to be led very far), but the Comte apparently made no serious effort at this period either to lead or to drive. On the other hand, Vergennes was eminently capable of recognizing another man's success and of appreciating the magnitude of the achievement. Also, he was diplomat enough to know which way the wind was blowing—at the moment the air was laden with Adams' praises—and bend with the breezes. Something of these considerations may have prompted the new respect with which he received Adams. At any rate, he accorded the American minister considerable time and then, when the interview was over, invited him to dinner.

In his diary that evening Adams gloated over the experiences of the day. He had been privileged to conduct the Countess to dinner where, sitting to her right and opposite Vergennes, he received the constant attention of both. "In short I was never treated with half the respect at Versailles in my life." He was fully as pleased with the fulsome compliments of those whom he met at the Count's home. Various gentlemen praised him for his great
success in Holland and for having demonstrated that Americans "understood negotiation as well as war." Having been invited to take care of the war and leave the negotiation to France on an earlier occasion, Adams discovered a special appeal in these words. However, the crowning encomium was, "Monsieur, you are the Washington of the negotiation"—a compliment difficult to exceed. He was to hear it repeated by various persons throughout Paris in the next days and each repetition thrilled him anew.

As generous as these praises were, however, they could hardly exceed Adams' own estimate of the event to which they referred. Barely six weeks after the official presentation of his credentials in April, 1782, he wrote to his confidant, Jenings:

I sometimes think that I shall die a martyr to the Dutch alliance, and I declare to you, if it had been the only action of my life, I should have thought it a life well spent. Such are my ideas of its importance to the cause of our country. The influence of it may not be soon perceived and may never appear in a striking light, but it will exist.

From his beloved wife, he solicited both praise and sympathy.

The American cause has obtained a triumph in this country more signal than it ever obtained before in Europe. It was attended with circumstances more glorious than could have been foreseen. . . . Your friend will never have leisure, he will never have the patience to describe the dangers, the mortifications, the distresses he had undergone in accomplishing this great work. It is better that some of the opposition and intrigues he has had to encounter should be buried in oblivion.

When an admirer had a medal struck in commemoration, a pleased Adams assured him that the influence of April 19 "upon France, Spain, Great Britain, America, and all the neutral powers, has already been so great, and in the future vicissitudes of things will be so much greater."

Adams fully understood that any nation, to enjoy the full fruits of
sovereignty, must be recognized as a sovereign nation by other countries. It was to this end that he directed his struggle against "parties, factions, and nations." His first interest in the mynheers was expressly to make America less dependent upon France, more able to speak in her own behalf. This applied immediately to the financial assistance he hoped to procure but in larger measure to the diplomatic status Dutch recognition must bestow on the United States. The alliance with France, although eminently fair and even beneficent, bore more the marks of sponsorship than those of equality. America, France, and all of Europe were aware of this pseudo-subordination. Adams determined to change that. He was also convinced that by the achievement of recognition on a basis of equality the thirteen states would cease to be a pawn of European politics. Then, once the peace was settled, England and the powers of Europe would "prefer our friendship to our enmity" and gladly refrain from drawing the new country into future wars. "This," Adams declared, "is the object of all my wishes and the end of all my politics. To this end and for this reason I look upon my success in Holland as the happiest event and the greatest action of my life past or future." To an old friend he confided:

Not the declaration of American independence, not the Massachusetts Constitution, not the alliance with France, ever gave me more satisfaction or more pleasing prospects for our country than this event. It is a pledge against friends and enemies. It is an eternal barrier against all dangers from the house of Bourbon as well as a present security against England. Perhaps every imagination does not rove into futurity as much as mine, nor care so much about it.

One of the qualifications which marked Adams as a statesman was his ability to "rove into futurity" rather than to fasten his efforts to temporary contingencies. Consequently, when Livingston directed that he work in
"closest connection" with the French minister and "advise with him on great leading objects," Adams flatly disagreed. Never niggardly with words, he devoted more than a thousand to the importance of insisting "upon seeing with our own eyes, using our own judgment, and acting an independent part." With true wisdom he concluded, "It is of the last importance that we do it now thus early, otherwise we should find it very difficult to do it hereafter." 

Having used his eyes, his judgment, and his independence in full measure according to his own prescription, he rejoiced in the result. "I think that no opportunity will present itself for a century to come, for striking a stroke so critical and of so extensive importance in the political system of America. . . . Its consequences will not be developed for centuries. . . . A future war in Europe will show the importance of the American negotiations in Holland." 

Some of his contemporaries began to observe the results without awaiting the clarifying experience of a future war. La Fayette dryly remarked that the Dutch were finally acknowledging American independence since the action would "neither cost them blood nor money." But he hastily drew Livingston's attention to the fact that considerable political advantage would accrue to the United States from the recognition. Franklin noted that the English stocks, which had been rising at the prospect of a separate peace with Holland, fell immediately upon hearing of the Dutch recognition. Even the news of Rodney's victory over de Grasse and the French fleet in the West Indies failed to revive the faltering English credit. Somewhat later Franklin cheerfully passed on the news that the reputation of the United States seemed to be rising in Europe. As proof of this he cited the interest of Sweden in forming
a treaty with the United States as soon as that between the Netherlands and America was concluded and her intention of incorporating into her treaty such improvements as the Dutch treaty might suggest. Before the Swedish treaty could be concluded, the war was over, but Adams was quick to note that the government of Gustavus III had been the first to "invite" the United States to an alliance—a considerable switch from the militia style conquest required in The Hague. Shortly Denmark and then Portugal requested treaties based on those between Congress and the States General.

The exaltation with which he immediately favorably compared the Dutch recognition to the Franco-American alliance bespoke not only a short term complacency. Nor was it solely a sigh of success at a long and tedious job happily concluded—a reaction which would normally diminish with the passage of time. Throughout his life, Adams, a man who had helped sculpture many of the landmarks of American history, never faltered in his estimate of this particular achievement. After years of public office were completed and he could look back upon a rich and varied life, he wrote to an old collaborator. "Whatever you may think; I know that, if ever my name deserved to be mentioned, from my birth, on the 19th of October, 1775 to this 29th of May, 1814; it ought to have been noted in Holland in 1780, or 1781, or 1782." Interrogated by a correspondent as to the part he acted in public service, Adams reiterated the policy which had led him to the Netherlands and which had served as the guiding principle of his activities there. He had, he wrote, pursued "an inflexible course of studies and labors, to promote, preserve, and secure that independence of my country, which I early saw to be inevitable, against all parties, factions, and nations that have shown themselves unfriendly to it."
If a small addition to American stature on the world scene or an increased probability that Europe would not so eagerly pull the new republic into the next European upheaval had been the only results of Adams' activities, his work would have merited acclaim. But there were other benefits—diplomatic and economic.

Diplomatically, the treaty with the Netherlands may have had some effect in bringing the war to a close, and perhaps—at least indirectly—in securing a remarkably favorable treaty. Of this Adams was convinced. He entertained no doubt that Holland would have succumbed to pressures from both home and abroad and formed a separate peace with England if he and the Patriots had not consistently prevented it. Early in 1781, when Dutch spirits were at their lowest, he had produced his memorial, "that well-hove harpoon iron thrown by a Cape Cod whaleman," and thereby furnished a badly-needed rallying point. In his eyes, only this memorial and other measures taken in consequence of it had prevented England from a separate peace. Forgiven the natural exaggeration to which he was prone, his statement bore a strong relation to truth. Later, when recognition was accorded and a treaty between the two republics undertaken, Adams informed Congress that a treaty with any country would have been as valuable to the American cause as a battle or siege but a treaty with the Netherlands at that time was "of as much weight in the war as the captivity of Burgoyne or Cornwallis." Forty years later he was still convinced that his negotiation with the Dutch was "the event which ultimately turned the scale of the American Revolutionary War and produced the Peace of 1783."

In the course of time his opinion has been seconded by others. Among
his colleagues, both La Vauguyon and Thulemeyer generally agreed. It was ob-
vious to them that The Hague's recognition of America would complicate any
program for reconciling the United Provinces with England, and La Vauguyon
added that England would be forced thereby to a general peace. 38 Catherine
of Russia, too, realized that chances of a separate mediation were seriously
injured by The Hague resolution. 39 To England the Dutch recognition of
American independence constituted a physical loss as it eliminated the last
hope of support from the continent. It was also a moral loss as it threat-
ened the commercial hegemony of Britain and forewarned that nation of an ap-
proaching realignment in the balance of power. 40

The American plenipotentiary thought himself deserving not only of a
generous share of the credit for bringing the war to an end but of additional
merit for preserving his country from a wretched peace. He reasoned that
"the House of Bourbon [would have been] so pressed for peace and we so de-
pendent on them that we should have lost the western country and the fisheries
and very probably been left in a truce, in a state of poverty and weakness,
which would have made us long the miserable satellites of some great European
planet." 41 His analysis of France's desperate straits was reasonably accu-
rate. France was so pressed for peace that she most certainly would have
accepted terms much less generous to America than those which were finally
approved. The favorable terms actually drawn cannot, however, be credited
chiefly to the Dutch negotiation. A number of other factors, centering
around England's need for peace, her choice of negotiators, and the firmness
and unity with which the American commissioners negotiated, deserve a major
portion of the credit for the treaty. 42 Perhaps the most that could be said
for Adams' point of view was that the Dutch negotiation had given America a firmer ground from which to bargain. A second belligerent had acknowledged independence and England would find it that much more difficult to grant less. Dutch recognition and the treaty of amity and commerce between the two republics gave moral strength to America even as they siphoned it away from England. To the degree that these factors supported the American negotiators and weakened the British position, the Dutch negotiation aided in securing a generous treaty.

Economically speaking, Adams' success has never been challenged. Throughout his mission he was constantly reminded of the need to secure money "which is almost the only thing wanting to render our affairs respectable at home and abroad." The news of his reception brought an enjoinder to accomplish with all due haste the "one great object of your mission--the procuring a loan--which neither the probability or the conclusion of a peace will render unnecessary." When the loan contract arrived for congressional ratification, Livingston couched his congratulations in a plea that Adams "extend every nerve to get it filled; for if the war continues it will be essential to our exertions; if it should terminate, it will not be less necessary." Robert Morris, Secretary of Finance, also congratulated Adams on successfully inaugurating a loan "equally splendid and useful." And he, too, remarked on the great importance the loan would be to the country.

Unfortunately, after a very auspicious beginning, the loan gradually lost momentum through the latter part of 1782 and much of 1783. Adams had expected this as he was all too aware that nearly every power in Europe, as well as the local governments and the Indies Companies, were busily floating
loans and literally every available guilder was already destined for one loan or the other. 47 In spite of the competition, Congress obtained a desperately-needed $720,000 from the Netherlands in 1782 and an additional $584,000 in 1783. Although this equalled several times the entire financial support granted by Spain, it amounted to less than one-half of the French aid for the same two years. 48 Under the circumstances, however, the sum was of consequence. Toward the end of 1782, as French funds for the year were running low, Franklin requested Adams to pay the interest on the ten million livres raised in Holland on behalf of America by the French government. 49 M. Grand, the French banker handling American funds, desired to transfer American funds from Holland to pay drafts on Franklin. Adams and his bankers rejected that proposal but assumed the obligation to pay those notes which Franklin could not. 50

After 1783 the French withdrew their assistance and only the Netherlands continued to lend to the Confederation government during the ensuing years, the "critical period,"—a time of serious financial strains for the new republic. Dutch loans to the United States totaled $1,304,000 in 1782 and 1783. During 1784 that sum was supplemented by an additional $1,395,000—the importance of which to America can hardly be overestimated. After 1784 the yearly amounts dropped appreciably before again climbing upward. In 1785, $53,600 was borrowed; 1786, $47,200; in 1787, $129,000; in 1788, $270,800, and by 1789, $400,000 a year was procured in the Netherlands from loans contracted by John Adams. In all, the loans negotiated by Adams in the Netherlands, once he had secured the friendship of that nation, amounted to $3,600,000 or roughly a sum equal to one-half of the total funds lent by France. 51
It should be remarked that there was a difference in the spirit behind the loans of the two countries. France lent her money for political reasons; the Netherlands lent hers only when American credit appeared to justify it. The Dutch loans are significant in evidencing the beginning of a national credit. 52 A number of factors and a number of individuals contributed--some of them more than Adams--to the founding of a solid American financial system. But in the Netherlands, where the loans were raised, no one did so much to make the foundations of American credit known and understood as Adams. To him, therefore, must go not only the primary gratitude of his compatriots for the money received from the Netherlands, but, since the Dutch were noted for their financial acumen, the concomitantly enhanced credit rating throughout Europe. That the loans he secured in the United Provinces were not greater and that the credit of America was insufficient to overcome other factors and thereby secure loans from other European countries were facts to be deplored, but they could not in any way be laid to Adams' charge.

Obviously, therefore, America gained significantly in both the financial and the diplomatic spheres from her changed relations with the Dutch republic. Nevertheless, Adams frequently failed to receive full credit for the part he played in promoting these improved relations. He himself tersely explained this phenomena as a design of the French and the English, and of their friends in America, to ignore the importance of the Dutch negotiation and, thereby, cause it to fall into oblivion. 53 A more accurate analysis could well be that negotiations for the all-important treaty of peace followed so closely upon the Dutch negotiations that the latter tended to be lost in the shadows. Furthermore, the Netherlands was a small country which failed
to come off a victor in the treaty of 1783, and this failure prevented its war diplomacy from receiving wide attention.

On the other hand, room existed for skepticism regarding the primacy of Adams in securing the friendship of The Hague. He certainly had no share in the breaking of diplomatic ties between The Hague and London, nor in the English declaration of war on the Dutch. These transpired before he was well established in the Low Countries. It should also be noted that the Dutch were very loathe to have any communication with him until the spring of 1782. By that time England apparently was not going to achieve an unqualified success, and daily it was becoming more clear that the Court of St. James would be forced to seek a negotiated peace. Aware of this and acutely mindful of their dependence on trade for their very existence, the Dutch revised their former cool attitude toward the American. Francis Dana quickly spotted the Achilles heel. He opined that the basis of sudden Dutch zeal for American independence lay in the merchants' anxiety to form intimate commercial relations with America before England had the opportunity to readjust her commercial connections. Dana was so convinced of the importance of commerce to the Dutch that he believed the Netherlands, by the spring of 1782, would have made serious efforts to establish good commercial relations with America even if they had been "in profound peace with Britain, even at the hazard of a war."54

There was a considerable amount of truth to Dana's reflections. This was evidenced by the flurry of petitions from the merchant and commercial classes which immediately preceded Adams' reception. On the other hand, the Dutch had little reason to doubt the commercial advantages of a renewed
alliance with England and the disadvantages of antagonizing the Mistress of the Seas. If there were powerful interests working for alignment with America, there were powerful interests opposed to it. In any event, The Hague left to itself could have sought and perhaps found a means either to wait out a war that seemed nearly over in order to re-establish her commerce or to contract some form of trade relations with America short of acknowledgment and treaty.

That it did not was largely because The Hague was not left to itself. A capable, energetic, pertinacious minister, whose presence had been neither desired nor requested, had taken up residence in the country. This unwelcome minister was John Adams, the militia diplomat. His presence made a world of difference. Where circumstances may well have led the Dutch slowly along a path of good will toward America, the goading of Adams propelled them rapidly toward the extremity of that path. To this effect he posted his own claim: "In Holland, I had driven the English party and the stadholder's party before me like clouds before the wind, and had brought that party to unite cordially with America, France, and Spain against England."

Evidence has supported Adams. La Vauguyon directly applauded Adams and remarked, "Monsieur, your firmness has had a great effect here." It certainly was not French diplomacy that secured American recognition. Vergennes, who directed that diplomacy, firmly maintained almost to the eve of recognition that the Provinces would never turn toward the United States until the war was ended in order not to complicate their own quarrel with England. Van der Capellen observed that the Dutch people forced their government to grant recognition and form treaties of amity and commerce. Since the people encompassed the merchant and commercial classes, this was true, but the strong
propaganda war Adams waged to enlighten these people concerning America underlay their demands. In the meantime a determined opposition concentrated on thwarting Adams' efforts. A reasonable conclusion was that drawn by Phillip Mazzei who decided that success should be attributed at least as much to Adams' "prudent, wise, and indefatigable endeavors" as to favorable circumstances. 60

The minister's triumph marked the one great success of militia diplomacy. In no other theater of Europe were the militia statesmen able to achieve their goal. To Adams alone was given the strategic combination of personality, political acumen, and opportunity to overcome all the obstacles in his path and to do so within the bounds of his instructions. Militia diplomats might practice a fine disregard of the wishes of the government to which they were sent. They did not advocate a disregard for the wishes of their own government in so far as these could be observed. Fortunately for Adams, his actions had been circumscribed with very few limitations. The only one which seriously conflicted with his procedure was the directive not to act without French approval, and that restriction arrived only after he had done that which was prohibited.

As usual, his own words best portrayed his attitude toward the mission. Although he had frequently extolled his own patience, 61 he was anxious that the militia aspect of his work be preserved for posterity. Upon learning that a close friend, Mercy Warren, was authoring a history, he begged her to celebrate his militia tactics rather than his patience.

I had rather you should immortalize my impudence, for I rather think it was this quality, than the other which produced the effect in Holland. I entered into the Seven United Provinces with as much impudence
as I should have appeared in the 13 United States of America. . . . If the word shocks you, Madam, call it modest assurance, or honest boldness, or almost what you will except patience.
Franklin to Adams, Apr. 20, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 474.

Jay to Adams, Aug. 2, 1782, Wharton, V, 639; Adams to Jay, August 10, 1782, p. 654.

Adams to Jenings, July 17, 1782, Adams Papers.


Jay to Adams, Sept. 1, 1782, Adams Papers.

Jay to Adams, Sept. 28, 1782, Wharton, V, 778.


Adams to Dana, Oct. 10, 1782, ibid., p. 808; Willink and others to Adams, Oct. 10 and Oct. 15, 1782; Adams to Abigail Adams, Oct. 12, 1782, Adams Papers.


Morris (p. 357) attributed Franklin's willingness to proceed without communicating the negotiations to the French court to the combination of Adams' outburst and Jay's current pursuit of an independent course. Franklin realized as fully as Adams the dangers of a divided front. Adams' arrival made the odds two to one and Franklin capitulated.

Adams to Livingston, Nov. 11, 1782, Wharton, V, 875.

Nov. 9, 1781, John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, III, 47.

Vergennes to Luzerne, Mar. 9, 1781, Durand, pp. 236-37. Vergennes had not changed this view appreciably as evidenced by his letter to La Vauguyon (Mar. 7, 1782, Doniol, V, 57n) wherein he discussed Adams' rigidity and arrogance which would make him unfit as a negotiator and lead him only to embroil matters.

Vergennes to Luzerne, Sept. 7, 1783, Doniol, V, 296.

Nov. 12, 1782, John Adams, Diary and Autobiography, III, 49-50.

Ibid.

Nov. 12, 1782, ibid., p. 53.

Adams to Jenings, June 1, 1782, Adams Papers.
Adams to Abigail Adams, June 16, 1782, *ibid*.


Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, Wharton, IV, 850.

Adams to Livingston, Sept. 6, 1782, *ibid.*, V, 704.


La Fayette to Livingston, Mar. 30, 1782, Wharton, V, 283.

Franklin to Adams, Apr. 22, 1782, Smyth, VIII, 432.

Franklin to Livingston, Aug. 12, 1782, Wharton, V, 655.


For more detailed discussion of these projected treaties see Edmund C. Burnett, "Notes on American Negotiations for Commercial Treaties, 1776-1786," *AHR*, XVI (1911), 579-587.

Adams to Van der Kemp, May 29, 1814, Fairchild, p. 74 note.

Adams to Skelton Jones, Mar. 11, 1809, C. F. Adams, *Works*, IX, 612. Time has not destroyed the analysis Adams made of the principal value of his negotiation. In the mid-nineteenth century, William Henry Trescot (Diplomacy of the Revolution: An Historical Study, New York: Appleton, 1857, pp. 90-91) found in the treaty a "higher importance than the money with which it replenished a shallow treasury." This higher importance he described as the moral boost given to American self-respect and the enhancement of American prestige in the eyes of the world. In the only full length English work on the Dutch in the American Revolution, Friedrich Edler (pp. 231-32) came to the same conclusion. The recognition of independence and the conclusion of the treaties between the two republics "established the value of the United States in the eyes of the world, thereby marking a step forward in the independent national life of the new commonwealth."

Adams to Livingston, Sept. 4, 1782, Wharton, V, 689.

Trescot, p. 80.

Adams to Livingston, Aug. 13, 1783, Wharton, VI, 649.
37 Adams to Van der Kemp, Jan. 3, 1823, Fairchild, p. 78.

38 La Vauguyon to Vergennes, Apr. 19, 1782, Stevens, Catalogue Index to Foreign Archives MSS, LXXXV; Thulemeyer to Frederick II, Apr. 16, 1782 Fruin, Dépêches van Thulemeyer, p. 310.

39 Dana to Franklin, Apr. 29, 1782, Wharton, V, 575.

40 Trescot, p. 90.


42 Morris, Chapters XIV and XV.

43 Livingston to Adams, Nov. 20, 1781, Wharton, IV, 850.

44 Livingston to Adams, Aug. 29, 1782, ibid., V, 678.

45 Ibid.

46 Robert Morris to Adams, Jan. 19, 1783, Adams Papers.


48 The sum acquired from Holland during the two year period was $1,304,000; from France, $2,981,237. The entire Spanish monetary contribution was $174,000. All figures used in this section are taken from Davis Rich Dewey, Financial History of the United States (9th ed. New York: Longmans, Green, 1924), pp. 45-58.


50 Staphorst to Adams, Sept. 5-6, 1782, Adams Papers; Adams to R. Morris, Nov. 6, 1782, C. F. Adams, Works, VII, 657.

51 Dewey recorded the French loans from 1777 to 1783 as totaling $6,352,500 but pointed out that this sum probably did not include French gifts approximating $1,996,500 (Dewey, p. 47).

52 Dewey, p. 48.

53 Adams to Van der Kemp, Jan. 3, 1823, Fairchild, p. 78.

54 Dana to Adams, Apr. 23, 1782, Wharton, V, 322.

55 Only the French historian, Doniol (V, 51), has given anyone but Adams the credit for securing the extra speed and distance. He attributed to "le sens de M. de Vergennes et l'art de M. de la Vauguyon" the new spirit in The Hague which led not only to a military concert with France but also to a diplomatic and commercial union with the United States.
Philip Mazzei to Adams, May 21, 1782, Adams Papers. More recent authors have tended to give Adams unqualified credit. The most recent, Richard Morris (p. 204), called it a "brilliant chapter in America's diplomatic history." Edler (p. 231) labelled it a "signal success" for the United States. Bemis, an acknowledged authority in diplomatic history, skirted the negotiations as such but wrote of Adams in these years as deserving "better of his country than many historians have been ready to admit" (p. 176). Earlier writers enumerated the many counteracting influences with which Adams had to contend and acknowledged this diplomatic foray into Dutch territory the "most interesting of its time" (Trescot, p. 89), and the basis for reckoning Adams in "the first class of diplomatists" (C. F. Adams, Works, I, 352).

Adams to Livingston, Sept. 6, 1782, Wharton, V, 704; Adams to Abigail Adams, Oct. 12, 1782, Adams Papers. In this instance he wrote to his wife that he no longer thought Job should be accounted the patient man since her husband felt he had undergone more trials than Job.

Adams to Mercy Warren, Jan. 29, 1783, Adams-Warren Letters, p. 188.
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The dissertation submitted by Sister Mary Briant Foley, SSND has been read and approved by members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

October 15, 1967
Date

Signature of Adviser