

LESSON ONE

∞ *John Adams in the Netherlands* ∞ 1781–1783

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∞*The Dutch Treaty*∞

After serving in the Continental Congress from 1774–1777, John Adams was elected by his fellow Patriots to serve his country in a new capacity. He was named a joint commissioner, and sailed for France accompanied by his son, John Quincy.

Adams returned to Boston in 1779, and served in the Massachusetts Convention, single-handedly drafting the Commonwealth's constitution of 1780. This constitution is the world's oldest written constitution still in effect. Adams then returned Europe to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain.

Soon after, following the machinations of the Comte de Vergennes, France's Foreign Minister, and American Minister and rival Ben Franklin, John Adams was stripped of his commission to negotiate peace. He is sent to the Netherlands to negotiate a loan, which would help finance the ongoing war against Great Britain.

While John Quincy was off to the Court of St. Petersburg (Russia) as the secretary to Francis Dana, the American Minister, John Adams moved to Amsterdam in hopes of negotiating the much needed loan. He quickly learned that Dutch merchants and bankers would not secure a loan for the United States unless the Netherlands' *Statholder*, Prince William of Orange, and the Assembly of the States General, the Dutch parliament, formally recognized the former British colonies as a newly created country.

Thus began John Adams's pursuit to obtain foreign governments' recognitions of America's independence. He also sought a formal treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. John Adams dedicated more than sixteen months to these two projects, and achieved success on both counts. In October 1782, he forwarded to the Continental Congress the Treaty of Amity that he successfully negotiated with the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

Memorial to William V, Prince of Orange, April 19, 1781

Papers of John Adams, vol. 11, p. 282–284

Leyden April 19. 1781

A Memorial To his most Serene Highness, the Prince of Orange and Nassau, Hereditary Statholder and Governor of the Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries.

The Subscriber has the Honour to inform your most Serene Highness, that the United States of America, in Congress assembled, impressed with a deep Sense of your Wisdom and Magnanimity, and being desirous of cultivating the Friendship of your Highness and of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, who have ever distinguished themselves by an inviolable Attachment to Freedom and the Rights of Nations, have appointed the Subscriber, to be their Minister Plenipotentiary at your Court, that he may give You more particular Assurances of the great Respect they entertain for your Highness, and for the People over whom You preside as Statholder, beseeching your Highness to give entire Credit to every thing, which their said Minister shall deliver on their Part, especially when he shall assure You of the Sincerity of their Friendship and Regard. The original Letter of Credence, under the Seal of Congress, he is desirous of the Honour of delivering whenever and in whatever manner your highness shall judge proper to receive it. He has the further Honour of informing your Highness, that the United States have honoured him with full Powers to form a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the State General, and also with Letters of Credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses. In Consequence of which he has done himself the Honour to present a Memorial, a Copy of which is here annexed.

The Subscriber in the discharge of these Trusts considers himself rather as proposing a Renovation of old Friendships that the Formation of new ones, as the Americans have ever been the good and faithfull Allies of this Nation, and have done nothing to forfeit its Esteem. On the contrary they are confident they have a better title to it, as they have adhered stedfastly through every Trial to those principles which formed and supported this Republick, while others have wantonly abandoned them.

The Subscriber thinks himself particularly fortunate to be thus accredited to a Nation, which has made such memorable Exertions in favour of the Rights of Men, and to a Prince, whose illustrious Line of Ancestors and Predecessors have so often supported in Holland and England those Liberties for which the United States of America now contend: and it will be the Completion of his Wishes if he should be so happy as to recommend the Cause of his Country to the favorable Attention of your most Serene Highness, and of this People.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. What kind of treaty does the United States wish to form with Holland?
2. In what ways does John Adams flatter the people and government of Holland?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do Holland and the United States share that made them potential allies?
2. Why would Adams choose such a public forum to present his credentials as ambassador?

John Adams's Enclosure to Edmund Jenings, April 23, 1781

Papers of John Adams, vol. 11, p. 291–293

Sir

April 23. 1781

It is often said in this Country, “We have nothing to gain by this war.” But who is to gain? If Holland has nothing to gain, it has much to loose, and the Question now is not what is to be gained, but was it to be Saved and defended. This Republick, may loose all her Possessions in the East and West Indies: she may loose her Navigation and Commerce: she may loose her Baltick Trade: her Greenland Fishery; her African Trade; her Manufactures, her Weight in the commercial and political scales of Europe; nay she may loose her Independance, and be conquered and divided among her Neighbours. The Question is whether these Objects are worth defending?

What would be the Consequence to this nation if America should return to the Domination and Monopoly of Great Britain? What would be the Consequence, if an ungenerous Treatment of America should oblige the Congress, to purchase Peace and Independance of Great Britain by Sacrifice of the Commerce of this Republick? What would be the Consequence if the Congress should propose to the K. of G.B. “Acknowledge our Independance, and We will enter into a Treaty with you, not to trade directly or indirectly with the Dutch.” It would be better for America to do this, for the sake of a speedy Peace, than to continue to be made a Spectacle like a Match at Cock fighting or Bull or Bear baiting, as they are to People who are almost as much interested in their Independance as they are them selves.

Notwithstanding our fond Attachment to England, her Rivalry has been a source of terrible Evils for this Country. While America was in Connection with the British Empire, it was an enormous Tree, by the side of a small shrub which extracted and exhausted the Nutrition of the soil, and prevented the Circulation of the Juices in the Bush, until one Sprig and branch of it after another died away, and it was in danger of perishing even to the Root.

What was the flourishing state of Manufactures forty years ago? And into what decay are they fallen now? What is the Cause of this?

Because the English, having such a vast demand for Manufactures in America, and being able to sell them there at what Price they pleased, and to get American Productions the Materials of Manufactures and Commerce, as cheap as they pleased, their Manufactures received such an Encouragement, that they were able to Undersell Us, at the foreign Marketts. Have not our Numbers of seamen been diminished too, by Similar Means and those of England increased.

What is the Cause of the Decay of our Possessions in the West Indies, Surinam Coracoa &c. Was it not because they received no Advantage from a Commerce with the Continent of America?

Was it not because the superiority of the English Possessions in that Country, obstructed their Trade and Growth.

What was the Effect of this Rivalry or superiority in the East Indies?

What the Effect in Africa?

What would be the Effect upon all these Interests if, America were to return again to the Obedience and Monopoly of G. Britain? What would be the Effect of it upon the

Baltic Trade, upon Manufactures, our Greenland Whale Fisheries, our African Trade, or East India and West India Possessions!

There is a current opinion here, that We should wait untill England has acknowledged American Independance, and then make a Treaty with the United States. But are We sure, that America will then make a Treaty with Us? By no Means. She will have no Motive to it. On the Contrary there is great danger, that England will sooner or later offer to acknowledge American Independance, on Condition that she will agree to Sacrifice the Dutch, and in such a Case America would be a Fool if she did not Accept it.

But We will then lend her Money. I answer then she would not Accept of Money from you. The American Debt if this war should continue 20 Years, will be part of it paid off, the very first Year of Peace. Instead of borrowing Money after Peace they will instantly set about paying off the Capital, of the Debt contracted during the War.

Suppose a Peace. England has acknowledged American Independance and made a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States, Similar to that between France and them. What motive will they have to make one with us? None. They will tell us you meanly neglected Us and despised Us in our distress, now take your own Course. We will trade with you as much as is for our Convenience, but We will bind ourselves to nothing. We can have Hemp Cordage Sail Cloth from Russia Sweden and Denmark, or we can take them of England. We don't want your Friendship now. And it is probable, that America, having by Treaty a Right to trade with France and England, that England and America would run away with all our Baltick Trade. Whereas, it is now in our Power, to turn this Trade into such a Channell, by making a Treaty with America, that We should continue in Possession of it, after a Peace. We shall continue to Supply France and Spain and America with those Articles. Whereas, if We refuse it We shall very soon see American ships supplying France and Spain with stores from the Baltick.

We are lending vast Sums of Money to England, and have lent them Ships to enable them to murder Americans. We have prohihed Supplies to Americans, with a partial Rigour. And We may depend upon it if this system is pursued, this Country is undone. We are preparing Vengeance for ourselves and Posterity, which both the English and the Americans will take in full Tale.

What will become of our Greenland Fishery, if America were again joined to England? This would be undermined by degrees, like our Manufactures.

Power and Wealth, like those of G.B. united with America, grow and multiply rapidly, at the Expence of all around them. Like an overgrown mercantile House in a particular City, they draw away the Business and Profit from all inferiour Merchants.

It is in England a recommendation to an Estate in the Country, that there is no lord with ten miles. The great Fish eat the little ones.

Review Questions

1. What does Holland risk losing in the war should Great Britain win?
2. Why does Dutch manufacturing suffer when America is a collection of British colonies?
3. What does Adams imagine will happen after the war if Holland does not sign a treaty with America?

Blog Prompt

In what ways are economics always part of war, peace, and alliances? Explain with a modern day example.

John Adams to the President of the Congress, May 7, 1781

Papers of John Adams, vol. 11, p. 305–307

Sir

Amsterdam May 7th. 1781

On the fourth of May I did myself the Honour to wait on Peter Van Bleiswick Esqr., Grand Pensionary of Holland, and presented him a Letter containing a Copy of my Memorial to the States General &c. His Excellency said that it was necessary for me to go to the President and Secretary of their High Mightinesses, and that it was not customary for foreign Ministers to communicate anything to the Pensionary of Holland. I told him that I had been advised by the French Ambassador to present Copies to him, and they were only Copies which I had the Honour to offer him. He said he could not receive them: that I must go to the President: but says he, it is proper for me to apprize You that the President will make a difficulty or rather will refuse to receive any Letter or Paper from You, because the State You say You represent is not yet acknowledged to be a Sovereign State by the Sovereign of this Nation. The President will hear what you have to say to him, make Report of it to their High Mightinesses, and they will transmit it to the several Provinces for the deliberation of the various Members of the Sovereignty. I thanked his Excellency for this Information and departed.

I then waited on the President of their high Mightinesses for the Week the Baron Linde de Hemmen, a Deputy of the Province of Guelderland, to whom I communicated, that I had lately recieved from my Sovereign, the United States of America in Congress assembled, a Commission with full Powers and Instructions to treat with the States General concerning a Treaty of Amity and Commerce: that I had also recieved a Letter of Credence as Minister Plenipotentiary to their High Mightinesses, and I prayed him to lay before their High Mightinesses either the Originals, or a Memorial in which I had done myself the Honour to state all these facts and to inclose Copies.

The President said that he could not undertake to recieve from me either the Originals nor any Memorial; because that America was not yet acknowledged as a Sovereign State by the Sovereign of this Country: but that he would make Report to their High Mightinesses of all that I had said to him, and that it would become the subject of deliberation in the several Provinces: that he thought it a matter of great Importance to the Republick. I answered that I was glad to hear him say that he thought it important: that I thought it was the interest of the two Republicks to become connected.

I thanked him for his politeness and retired, after having apprized him that I thought in the present Circumstances, it would be my duty to make public in print my Application to their High Mightinesses.

I had prepared copies of my Memorial &c. for the Secretary Mr. Fagel: but as the President had refused to receive the Originals, I thought it would be inconsistent for the Secretary to recieve Copies, so I omitted the Visit to his Office.

I then waited on the Baron de Ray, the Secretary of the Prince, with a Letter addressed to his most Serene Highness, containing a Memorial, informing him of my Credentials to his Court, and Copies of the Memorial to their High Mightinesses: the

Secretary received me politely, received the letter and promised to deliver it to the Stadholder. He asked me where I lodged: I answered at the Parliament of England, a public House of that Name.

Returning to my Lodgings, I heard about two Hours afterwards that the Prince had been to the Assembly of the States General for about half an hour; and in about another Hour, the Servant of the House where I lodged announced to me the Baron de Ray: I went down to the Door to receive him, and invited him to my Room. He entered and said that he was charged on the part of the Prince with his Compliments to me, and to inform me, that as the Independence of my Country was not yet acknowledged by the Sovereign of his, he could not receive any Letter from me and therefore requested that I would receive it back, which I did respectfully. The Secretary then politely said he was very much obliged to me for having given him an Opportunity to see my Person, and took his Leave.

The President made Report to their High Mightinesses as soon as they assembled, and his Report was ordered to be recorded: whereupon the Deputies of each of the seven Provinces demanded Copies of the Record to be transmitted to the respective Regencies for their deliberation and decision; on in the technical Language of this Country, it was taken ad referendum on the same day.

The next morning I waited on the French Ambassador, the Duke de la Vauguion, and acquainted him with all the Steps I had taken. He said he still persisted in his Opinion that the Time was not the most favourable, but as the Measure was taken, I might depend upon it he would, as an Individual, support and promote it to the utmost of his Power.

It would take a large Space to explain all the Reasons and Motives which I had for choosing the present Time in preference to a later: but I think I can demonstrate, that every Moments delay would have been attended with danger and inconvenience. All Europe is in a Crisis, and this Ingredient thrown in at this Time will have more Effect than at any other. At a future Time I may enlarge upon this Subject.

I have the Honour to be with the greatest Respect, Sir your most obedient and most humble Servant.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why will the President of the Netherlands not receive John Adams as ambassador of the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

2. Why does the French ambassador not officially support Adams's public appeal for recognition?
3. What might be some of the reasons for Adams going forward with his plan against the advice of others?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, February 27, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 274–277

No. 3

Duplicate

Sir

Amsterdam Feby. 27th 1782

Friesland has at last taken the Provincial Resolution to acknowledge the Independence, of which United America is in full possession.

It is thought that several Cities of Holland will soon follow their Example, and some say it will be followed forthwith by the whole Republick. The first Burgomaster of this City has said within a few days past, that in six Weeks at furthest, the Independence of America would be acknowledged by all Seven of the United Provinces: but I have no Expectation of such Haste. This Government does nothing with such Celerity.

By what I hear and read of their Speculations, it seems to me that the general Sense is at present not to shackle themselves with any Treaties either with France or Spain, nor to make any Treaty of Alliance, nor to make even a Treaty of Commerce with America as yet for a considerable Time, but for the several Members of the Sovereignty one after another to acknowledge the Independence of America in the manner that Friesland has done; and for the States, the Prince and the Admiralties to exert themselves in preparing a Fleet to command the North Sea, and wash out some of the Stains in their Character, which the English have so unjustly thrown upon it, in their Blood. There is a loud Cry for Vengeance, a stern demand of a Fleet and a Battle with the English, and if the Court contrive to elude it, the Stadholder will run a great Risque of his Power.

Sensible and candid Men tell me, We wait for Spain and We wait for Russia. We wont make any treaty with You. It is of no importance to Us or to You. We see there is a tremendous Power arising in the West. We cant meddle much: but We will at all Events be your good Friends. Whoever quarrels with You, We will not.

In short I expect no Treaty. I dont expect that our Independence will be acknowledged by all the Provinces for a long Time. Nevertheless, it appears to me of indispensable Importance that a Minister should reside constantly here vested with the same Powers from Congress, with which they have honoured me [...]

Review Questions

1. Which is the first province of the Netherlands to acknowledge the independence of the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

2. What reasons would prevent the Netherlands from forming a treaty of commerce with the United States?

Blog Prompt

What are the risks of remaining neutral in a major conflict? Cite a modern example of this difficulty.

John Adams to James Searle, April 11, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 405

Dear Sir

Amsterdam April 11th. 1782

I am long in your debt, and therefore must beg your Patience on Account of bad health and many Occupations. The rapid Revolution in the Minds of this Nation, and the unaccountable Ardor and Unanimity, which has at last seized upon them for connecting themselves with America have occasioned me so many Visits to recieve and return, and so many complimentary Letters to answer, as added to other more important Affairs have been more than I could perform. Five Provinces, Firesland, Holland, Zealand, Overyssell and Utrecht, have already decided with an Unanimity that is astonishing, and the two others, Guelderland and Groningen, it is supposed will determine as soon as they meet, which will be the 16. current: so that I suppose We shall have one Ally more in a short time.

I know not of how much Importance this Acquisition may be thought by others, but I have ever considered it as a leading Step, and hope it may be followed by other Nations; at least it will be a refutation of the many frivolous Arguments with which some People have been long employed in doing mischief [...]

If the whole Body of Dutch Merchants do not understand their own Interest and the Nature and Connections of Commerce, it will not be easy to find any body who is Master of it. Their Requetes [petitions] are a compleat Refutation of all the Anglomany in Europe, if sound Reason can refute it.

With great Esteem and Regard, I have the honor to be, Sir, &c

Review Questions

1. What five provinces have recognized the independence of the US?
2. What has changed in Adams's assessment of the situation in the Netherlands?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What group of individuals seems to be animating this support of the US?
2. Why might this group support the recognition of the US?

John Adams to Jacobus Nolet, April 20, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 431

Sir

The Hague 20 April 1782

I received, to day the Letter you did me the honor to write to me yesterday, and am exceedingly obliged to you for your cordial congratulations, on the great Event which was yesterday finally concluded by their High Mightinesses. The Favour of Providence, has been remarkably manifested in the progress of this Negociation , hitherto, that I very sincerely join with you in imploring its continuance, to the mutual prosperity, and the permanent establishment of the liberties of both Nations.

I have small pretensions to an accurate Knowledge of the Commerce of either Country; but such general notions of it as have fallen to my share, I shall ever esteem it a pleasure and an honour to communicate.

[...]

With great Respect, I have the honour to be Sir your most obedt and most humble. Servt.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the “great event” to which Adams refers?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, April 22, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 441–443

No. 7

Sir

The Hague 22d April 1782

On the twenty second day of April I was introduced by the Chamberlain to his most Serene Highness the Prince of Orange.

Knowing that his Highness spoke English, I asked his Permission to speak to him in that Language, to which he answered smiling, “if You please Sir.” Altho’ French is the Language of the Court, he seemed to be pleased and to recieve as a Compliment my Request to speak to him in English.

I told him, “I was happy to have the Honor of presenting the Respects of the United States of America and a Letter of Credence from them to his most Serene Highness, and to assure him of the profound Veneration in which the House of Orange had been held in America even from its first settlement; and that I should be happier still, to be the Instrument of further cementing the new Connections between two nations professing the same Religion, animated by the same Spirit of Liberty, and having reciprocal Interests both political and commercial so extensive and important; and that in the faithful and diligent Discharge of the Duties of my Mission, I flattered myself with Hopes of the Approbation of his most serene Highness.”

His Highness recieved the Letter of Credence which he opened and read. The Answer that he made to me was in a Voice so low and so indistinctly pronounced, that I comprehended only the Conclusion of it, which was that “he had made no Difficulty against my Reception.” He then fell into familiar Conversation with me and asked me many Questions about indifferent things, as is the Custom of Princes and Princesses upon such Occasions. “How long I had been in Europe? How long I had been in this Country? Whether I had purchased an House at the Hague? Whether I had not lived sometime at Leyden? How long I had lived at Amsterdam? How I liked this Country &ca.?”

[...]

I have the Honor to be, with great Esteem and Respect, sir your most obedient and most humble servant

J Adams

Review Questions

1. In what language does Adams address the Prince of Orange? Why is this extraordinary?
2. According to Adams, what common traits connect the Netherlands and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is recognition of American independence by the Netherlands so important to the United States?

Blog Prompt

In what ways does recognition by foreign countries grant legitimacy to a newly formed government? What are the benefits for both countries? Cite a modern example.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, April 22, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 443–445

My dear Sir

The Hague April 22. 1782

Mr Peter Paulus, is seized with an enthusiasm to go to Philadelphia, with his Journeymen.

I Should be much obliged to you, for any advice or Civility you may Show him.

The Batavian Spirit is at last arroused , and has uttered its Voice, with Majesty, for the Souverignty if the United States of America. The 19 of April, was the memorable day, when their High Mightinesses took, the Resolution. You will see in the Gazettes, the Petitions and Maneuvres, which ushered in this Event with Such Solemnity, as to make it the most Signal Epocha, in the History of a Century. We shall have in this Nation, if I am not infinitely mistaken a faithfull and affectionate and most usefull ally.

In order to be Steady and persevering in my known Character for Vanity which however I have acquired Since I came to Europe, by the Help of Friends I must tell you that Don Liano, the Spanish Minister has this Moment gone out of my appartment, after having Said to me, “You have made Sir, the grandest Step that has ever yet been taken. It is you, who have filled this Nation with Enthusiasm for your Cause and turned their Heads. It is a most important, and a most decisive Measure, and it is due, to you.”

Voila! a flour of diplomatick Rhetorick, enough to turn my Head, whether I have turned those of the Dutchmen or not.

Yours affectionately,

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. On what day does the Netherlands recognize the independence of the United States?
2. According to the Spanish ambassador, how does Adams convince the people of the Netherlands to recognize the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams believe the Netherlands will be such a “usefull ally”?

John Adams to James Warren, September 6, 1782Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 439–440

Dear Sir

The Hague Sepr. 6th. 1782

[...]

One thing, thank God, is certain. I have planted the American Standard at the Hague. There let it wave and fly! in Triumph over Sir Joseph York and British Pride. I shall look down upon the Flagg Staff with pleasure from the other World.

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 [...]

My best respects to Mrs. Warren and the Family, and believe me your Friend

John Adams

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams mention the Declaration of Independence and the Massachusetts Constitution when referring to Dutch recognition of the United States?
2. How does the Netherlands' recognition of the United States offer "an eternal Barrier against all Dangers from the House of Bourbon, as well as a security against England?"

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, September 17, 1782Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol.13, p. 473–475

Sir

The Hague. Septemr: 17th. 1782

[...] It is now nearly five Months since I was publicly recd: and proposed a project of a Treaty. All this time it has taken the several Provinces and Cities, to examine, make their Remarks and fresh Propositions and bring the matter to a Conclusion. It would not have been so long however, if the Court had been delighted with the business. But, in a Case where Unanimity was requisite and the Court not pleased, it was necessary to proceed with all the Softness, Caution and Prudence, possible, that no ill humours might be stirred. Yet in a Case, where the Nations heart is so engaged, in which, its Commerce and Love of Money, is so interested, what wretched Policy is it, in this Court, to shew even a lukewarmness, much more an aversion. Yet such is the Policy, and such it will be. The Prince of Orange is, to all appearance, as incurable as George the third, his Cousin. [...]

Congress may hear of some further plans for a separate Peace, between Holland and England, but they will not succeed. The Republick will stand firm, tho' it will not be so active as we could wish, and the Concert of operations will be renewed.

I have the honor, to be, Sir, Your humble servt.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. For how long does Adams work on the treaty between the United States and the Netherlands?
2. How is the Prince of Orange related to the King of England?
3. What apprehension does Adams have about the new relationship between the United States and the Netherlands?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would England want to make a separate peace with Holland?
2. How might the relationship between the Prince of Orange and the King of England have complicated forming a treaty between Holland and the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, October 8, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 389–393

Sir

The Hague. October 8th. 1782

At 12. oClock today I proceeded, according to appointment, to the State-House, where I was received, with the usual formalities, at the head of the Stairs, by Mr: Van Santheuvel, a Deputy from the Province of Holland, and Mr: Van Linden, the first Noble of Zealand and a Deputy from that Province; and by them conducted into the Chamber of Business (Chambre de besogne,) an apartment adjoining to the Truce-Chamber (Chambre de Treve) where were executed the Treaty of Commerce, and the Convention concerning Re-captures, after an Exchange of Full Powers.

The Treaty and Convention are both enclosed, or at least, an authentic Copy of each. If the Copy should arrive before the Original, which I shall reserve to be sent by the safest opportunity I can find, it will be a sufficient foundation for the Ratification of Congress.

I hope the Treaty will be satisfactory to Congress. It has taken up much time to obtain the Remarks and the Consent of all the Members of this complicated Sovereignty. Very little of this time has been taken up by me, as Congress will see by the Resolution of their High-Mightinesses containing the power to the Deputies to conclude and sign the Treaty: for, altho' all Communications were made to me in Dutch, a language in which I was not sufficiently skilled to depend upon my own knowledge, Mr. Dumas was ever at hand and ever ready to interpret to me every thing in french, by which means I was always able to give my answers without loss of time.

The Papers, in which the whole progress of this Negotiation is contained in Dutch, French and English; make a large bundle, and, after all, they contain nothing worth transmitting to Congress. To copy them would be an immense labor to, no purpose, and to send the Originals, at once, would expose them to loss.

Several Propositions were made to me, which I could not agree to, and several were made on my part, which could not be admitted by the States. The final result,

contained in the Treaty, is as near the Spirit of my Instructions as I could obtain, and I think it is, in nothing, materially variant from them.

The Lords the Deputies proposed to me to make the Convention a part of the Treaty. My answer was, that I thought the Convention, which is nearly conformable with that lately made with France, would be advantageous on both sides; but as I had no special Instructions concerning it, and as Congress might have objections that I could not foresee, it would be more agreeable to have the Convention separate, so that Congress, if they should find any difficulty, might ratify the Treaty without it—This was accordingly agreed to.

It seemed at first to be insisted on, that we should be confined to the Dutch Ports in Europe, but my friend Mr: Van Berckel and the Merchants of Amsterdam came in aid of me, in convincing all that it was their interest to treat us upon the footing *Gentis amicissima* in all parts of the world.

Friesland proposed that a Right should be stipulated, for the Subjects of their Republic to purchase lands in any of our States: But such Reasons were urged as convinced them that this was too extensive an object for me to agree to—1st. It was not even stipulated for France—2d. If it should be now introduced into this Treaty, all other nations would expect the same, and altho', at present, it might not be impolitic to admit of this, yet nobody would think it wise to bind ourselves to it forever—3d. What rendered all other Considerations unnecessary was, that Congress had not Authority to do this, it being a matter of the interior policy of the Separate States—This was given up.

A more extensive Liberty of engaging Seamen in this Country, was a favorite Object; but it could not be obtained.

The Refraction, as they call it, upon Tobacco in the Weighhouses, is a thing that enters so deeply into their commercial Policy, that I could not obtain any thing, more particular or more explicit, than what is found in the Treaty.

Upon the whole, I think the Treaty is conformable to the Principles of perfect Reciprocity, and contains nothing that can possibly be hurtfull to America, or offensive to our Allies, or to any other Nation, except Great-Britain, to whom it is indeed, without a speedy peace, a mortal blow.

The Rights of France and Spain are sufficiently secured by the 22d. Article, altho' it is not in the very words of the Project, transmitted me by Congress: It is the same in substance and effect. The Duc de la Vauguyon was very well contented with it, and the States were so jealous of unforeseen Consequences from the words of the Article, as sent me by Congress and as first proposed by me, that I saw it would delay the Conclusion, without end. After several Conferences, and many Proposals, we finally agreed upon the Article, as it stands, to the satisfaction of all Parties.

The Clause, reserving to the Dutch their Rights in the East and West-Indies, is unnecessary, and I was averse to it, as implying a Jealousy of us. But as it implies too a Compliment to our Power and Importance; was much insisted on; and amounted to no more than we should have been bound to, without it, I withdrew my Objection.

The Proviso of conforming to the Laws of the Country, respecting the external shew of public worship, I wished to have excluded; because I am an Enemy to every appearance of restraint in a matter so delicate and sacred as the Liberty of Conscience; but the Laws here do not permit Roman Catholics to have Steeples to their Churches, and these Laws could not be altered.

I shall be impatient to receive the Ratification of Congress, which I hope may be transmitted within the time limited.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Most Obedt. humble. Servt.

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What two languages are used for the treaty negotiations?
2. What right does the province of Friesland want included in the treaty?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does the distance between the United States and the Netherlands and the speed of communications make negotiations more difficult for Adams?
2. Why is it important to reference both France and Spain in the United States-Netherlands treaty?

∞The Dutch Loan∞

The difficulty John Adams discovered was rooted in Dutch economic difficulties. The Netherlands suffered economically due to its refusal to join Great Britain and by remaining a part of the armed neutrality. Not only was the Netherlands' trade with Great Britain greatly reduced, much of the Dutch fleet was not able to pursue its money-making enterprises for fear of being drawn into the war. Dutch bankers were not willing to make loans to the United States until the States-General officially recognized the new republic.

Adams found himself caught between Congress and the French government. Congress continued to spend money as if the loan were already a reality, while the French government wished to control the Americans by holding the only purse strings. Adams sought advice from everyone, and settled on approaching private merchant bankers one after another until finding one willing to make the necessary loan.

After negotiating Dutch recognition of the United States and a Treaty of Amity with the Netherlands, John Adams moved forward with his plan to negotiate a loan from the Dutch merchant bankers. Without a Dutch loan the war against Great Britain—and with it, American Independence—would be short lived.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, April 27, 1781*Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 288–289

Amsterdam April 27. 1781

[...] From the time I received from Congress, their orders to borrow Money here, I have constantly, in my Letters, requested that no draughts might be made upon me, until there should be News from me that I had Money to discharge them. This Request I shall repeat. But the Cries of the Army for Cloaths, induce Congress to venture upon Measures, which appear hazardous to Us. However, by the Intelligence I have, they had grounds to expect, that the Draughts hitherto made would be honoured.

I sometimes think, paradoxical as it may Seem, that one set of Bills protested would immediately procure Congress, a large Loan. No Bills are in better Credit than these. There is an Appetite here, for American Trade, as ravenous as that of a shark for his Prey. And if they Saw danger of having this Trade broke up, they would do much to save it. [...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams sent to Amsterdam?
2. What is Adams's complaint about Congress?
3. What solution does Adams suggest to secure better credit?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Congress need the Dutch?

John Adams to the President of the Congress, May 16, 1781Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 317–319

Sir

Amsterdam May 16th. 1781

[...] The British Ministry are exhausting all the Resources of their Subtilty, if not of their Treasures, to excite Jealousies and Divisions among the neutral as well as belligerent Powers. The same Arts precisely that they have practiced so many Years to subdue, decieve and divide America, they are now exerting among the Powers of Europe: but the Voice of God and Man are too decidedly against them to permit them much Success.

As to a Loan of Money in this Republick, after having tried every expedient and made every proposition, that I could be justified or excused for making, I am in absolute despair of obtaining any, until the States General shall have acknowledged our Independence. The Bills already accepted by me are paying off as they become due, by the Orders of His Excellency Mr. Franklin: but he desires me to represent to Congress the danger and inconvenience of drawing before Congress have information that their Bills can be honoured. I must intreat Congress not to draw upon me, until they know I have money. At present I have none, not even for my Subsistance, but what I derive from Paris.

The true Cause of the Obstruction of our Credit here is Fear, which can never be removed but by the States General acknowledging our Independence, which, perhaps in the Course of twelve months they may do, but I don't expect it sooner. [...]

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Sir, your most obedient and most humble Servant.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. How are the British trying to separate the neutral and belligerent powers?
2. How are Congress' bills being paid before Adams obtained a Dutch loan?

Blog Prompt

How does deficit spending by the United States government affect the country's credit rating?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, January 25, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 214–215

Sir

Amsterdam 25. Jan. 1782

Your letter of the 11. with the Copy of that from M. Le Comte de Vergennes of 31. of Decr. I had the Honour to receive by the last post. By, your leaving it to me to judge how far it is proper for me to accept further Draughts on Mr Laurens, with any Expectation of your enabling me to pay them, I am Somewhat embarrassed. If I accept any Bill at all it must be in full Confidence of your paying it, for there is not a Possibility, of my getting any Money here.

I lately applied to one of the first Houses, an old Dutch House, which has traded to america an hundred years, and whose Credit is as clear and Solid as any one in the Republick. I asked him, frankly if he would undertake a Loan for me. His answer was, sir I thank you for the Honour you do me. I know the Honour and the Profit that would accrue to any house, from such a Trust. I have particular Reasons of my own, of Several sorts, to be willing to undertake it, and I will tell you frankly, I will make the necessary Enquiries and give you an answer, in two days. And if I find it possible to Succeed, I will undertake it. But there are four Persons, who have the whole affair of Loans through the Republick under their Thumbs, these Persons are united, if you gain one you gain all, and the Business is easy, but without them there is not one house in this Republick can Succeed in any Loan.

After the two days, he called on me, to give me an account of his Proceedings. He Said he first waited upon one of the Regency, and asked him if it was proper for him to put in a Requete and ask leave, to open Such a Loan. He was answered he had better Say nothing to the Regency, about it, for they would either give him no answer at all, which was most probable, or say, it was improper for them to interfere, either of which answers

would do more hurt than good. It was an affair of Credit, which he might undertake, without asking Leave, for the Regency, never interfered to prevent Merchants from getting Money. With this answer he went to one of the undertakers, whose answer was, that at least until there was a Treaty, it would be impossible to get the Money. As soon as that Event should happen he was ready to undertake it.

I have been uniformly told that these four or five Persons had such a despotick Influence over the Loans, I have heretofore sounded them in various Ways, and the Result is that I firmly believe they receive ample Salaries, upon the express Condition that they resist an american Loan. There is a Phalanx, formed by the British Ministry Dutch Court, Proprietors of English stocks and great mercantile Houses in the Interest of the British Ministry, that Support these undertakers and are supported by them.

We may therefore reckon boldly that We shall get nothing here, unless in the form of the last five millions, lent to the King of France and warranted by the Republick, until there is a Treaty.

I believe however I shall venture to accept the Bills, of which I have given you notice in hopes of your Succeeding better than your fears.

Yesterday was brought me, one more Bill drawn on Mr Laurens on the 6. July 1780 for 550 Guilders, No. 145. I have asked time to write to your Excellency about this too, and shall wait your answer before I accept it.

I have the Honour to be

Review Questions

1. What British incentive prevents the approval of a loan to the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would Dutch bankers run a high risk by loaning money to the United States, particularly in the absence of a treaty?

Blog Prompt

What risks do foreign investors assume in making loans to new governments? Where are the riskiest foreign places to invest in the world today and why are they such a risk?

John Adams to Fizeaux, Grand & Co. and Others, April 30, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 12, p. 471–472

April 30 1782

1. If the Houses of Fizeaux Grand & Co. John Hodshon & Son Mess. Crommelin, Mess. Van Staphorst, Mess. De la Lande & Fynje and Mr John de Neufville & Son, will all join together in an American Loan, Mr. Adams will open it without demanding any Stipulations for any certain Sum.

2d. If the first Proposition is not agreed to, Mr. Adams will open a Loan with as many of these Houses as will agree together, and enter into a Stipulation with him to furnish the sum of Five Millions by the Month of August.

3d. If no Number of Houses will join, Mr. Adams will open the Loan with any One that will first undertake and contract to furnish the Sum.

4d. Mr. Adams proposes that all those Gentlemen should meet and consult upon the Matter and propose their Thoughts.

Review Questions

1. How much time has elapsed since Adams's letter to Benjamin Franklin about the loan?
2. What changes so that Adams again pursues the loan?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. What is Adams's advantage in approaching several merchant bankers for the new loan?

Blog Prompt

What are the rewards of foreign investment? What are the emerging markets that investors seek out today?

John Adams to Wilhem & Jan Willink, Nicolaas & Jacob van Staphorst, and De la Lande & Fynje, May 13, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 22–23

Gentlemen

The Hague May 13th. 1782

I have recieved the Letter which You did me the honor to write me on the 11th, of this Month in which You agree to accept the Terms of four and one quarter per Cent for the Remedium and other Charges.

To this I answer, that I understand your meaning to be, to accept of 4 1/4 per Cent for recieving and paying the Money at first, for recieving and paying off the annual Interest, and for finally recieving and paying off the Capital, for Brokerage, for the Remedium for the Undertakers and for all other Charges of the Loan. In this Sense I agree, in my Capacity as Agent for negotiating a Loan for the United States that You shall be allowed four and a Quarter per Cent.

As to the other Point, if You will open the Loan for three Millions only at first it would be perhaps better, but whether You open it for three or five, no other Loan in behalf of the United States shall be opened by me without your Consent, or at least

without the Consent of two of the three Houses, until it is full, excepting one Case, which is that the Loan in your Hands should linger a long time without filling up, and I should obtain the Warranty of the States General, or of the States of Holland, or of the Regency of Amsterdam, for opening a new Loan, in which Case I should submit the Choice of an House to their H. Mightinesses, to their Noble and Grand Mightinesses, or to the Venerable Magistrates of the City, and in either of these Cases your three Houses will stand as fair to be employed as any other. You may therefore I think confidently affirm in your Prospectus that no other Loan will be opened, until this is full, by me.

You will please to inform Mr. Van Vlooten that I have agreed with You, and that I shall be very glad if he will forthwith engage in the Business with You upon such Terms as You and He shall agree on.

I have the honor to be with great Respect, Gentlemen, your most obedient & most H. Servant.

Review Questions

1. Which three merchant bankers are considering making a loan to the United States?
2. What are the terms of the loan that Adams is negotiating?

Blog Prompt

How does the United States government obtain money today?

John Adams to Robert Livingston, May 16, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 48–52

No. 11

Sir

The Hague May 16th. 1782

The American Cause has gained a signal Triumph in this Country. It has not persuaded an ancient Rival and an avowed natural hereditary Enemy to take a Part against Great Britain; but it has torn from her Bosom an intimate affectionate Friend and a faithful Ally of an hundred Years Continuance. It has not persuaded an absolute Monarchy to follow the Dictates of its own Glory and Interest and the unanimous Wish of the People, by favouring it; but availing itself only of the still small Voice of Reason, urging general Motives and national Interests, without Money, without Intrigue, without imposing Pomp, or more imposing Fame, it has prevailed against the utmost Efforts of Intrigue and Corruption, against the almost universal Inclination of Persons in Government, against a formidable Band of Capitalists, and the most powerful mercantile Houses in the Republick, interested in English Funds and too deeply leagued in English Affairs.

Altho' these Obstacles are overcome so far, as to have obtained an Acknowledgment of our Independence, yet it is easy to see, that they are not annihilated and therefore We cannot expect to receive such cordial and zealous assistance, as We might receive if the Government and People had but one Heart.

I wish it were in my Power to give Congress upon this Occasion Assurances of a Loan of Money, but I cannot. I have taken every Measure in my Power to accomplish it,

but I have met with so many Difficulties that I almost despair of obtaining any thing. I have found the Avidity of Friends as great an Obstacle as the ill Will of Enemies. I can represent my Situation in this Affair of a Loan, by no other Figure than that of a Man in the midst of the Ocean negotiating for his Life among a School of Sharks. I am sorry to use Expressions which must appear severe to You: but the Truth demands them.

The Title of American Banker, for the sake of the Distinction of it, the Profit of it, and the Introduction to American Trade, is solicited with an Eagerness past Description. In order to obtain it, a House will give out great Words and boast of what it can do: but not one will contract to furnish any considerable Sum of Money; and I certainly know, let them decieve themselves as they will, and decieve as many others as they may by their confident Affirmations, that none of them can obtain any considerable Sum. The Factions, that are raised here about it between the French Interest, the Republican Interest, the Stadthouderian Interests and the Anglomane Interests, have been conducted with an indecent Ardor, thwarting, contradicting, caluminating each other, until it is easy to fore see the Effect will be to prevent Us from obtaining even the small Sums, that otherwise might have been found. But the true and the decisive Secret is, there is very little Money to be had: The Profits of their Trade have been annihilated by the English for several Years. There is therefore no Money but the Interest of their Capitalists, and all this is promised for Months and Years beforehand to Bookkeepers, Brokers and Undertakers, who have in Hand Loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweeden Denmark, for the States General, the States of Holland, the States of Friesland, the East and West India Companies &c. &c. &c.

[...]

The Treaty of Commerce is under Consideration, and will not that I foresee meet with any Obstacle.

I have the Honor to be, with great Esteem and Respect, Sir your most obedient and most humble servant

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams feel that gaining the Dutch as an ally is an important victory for the United States?
2. What different groups are interested in a Dutch loan to the United States?
3. To which other countries have the Dutch given loans?

John Adams to Wilhem & Jan Willink, Nicolaas & Jacob van Staphorst, and De la Lande & Fynje, May 18, 1782

Papers of Adams Papers, vol. 13, p. 63

Gentlemen

The Hague May 18 1782

I have just received your Favour of the Seventeenth of May, in answer to mine of the Same day by Mr Fynje and it is with great Pleasure that I perceive, We are now agreed upon the Terms.

I hope the Loan, will, in Consequence of this Agreement by opened without Loss of Time, and I wish you all the Success and Pleasure in the Prosecution of the Business that you can possibly wish your Selves.

I have the Honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble Servant.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does Adams hope the Dutch loan will improve things for the American war effort?

**“Correspondence of the Late President Adams (Continued).” April 20, 1811.
Excerpted from the *Boston Patriot*.**

Saturday, April 20, 1811

3. The loan! When the prospect of my public reception and a treaty of friendship began to dawn and brighten, the loan of money began to be seriously meditated. I had tried the house of De Neufville and found it wanting. I had learned enough of its real circumstances and distresses to know that if I opened a new loan with them alone, I should ruin the credit of the U. States. Though the house had money, many friends, and many instruments, among Americans as well as others, to raise a clamor, I was determined at all risques, not to commit myself entirely to them. I received offers and solicitations which I need not name. But the house of Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, and the house of De la Lande and Fynje, were most importunate, next to the De Neufvilles. Both as far as I had been then informed, were respectable, but neither was considered as a great house, neither was an ancient house, and antiquity among mercantile houses and houses of capitalists, is in Amsterdam a distinction as much regarded as it is among princes and nobles in France or England. In the midst of all these solicitations, I received a letter from Dr. Franklin, at Passy, and another from the Duke de la Vauguion, at the Hague, most earnestly recommending to me the house of Fizeau and Grand. Sir George Grand as we called him, because he was a knight of St. Louis, was a brother of Mr Ferdinand Grand of Paris, our American banker, both of them gentleman from Switzerland. Sir George had lived in Sweden, and kept a public house in Stockholm, at which the compte De Vergenes had met the leaders of the revolution in 1770, and had acquired the friendship of that minister to such degree as to obtain the cross of St. Louis, and favor as a banker. I knew very well that Dr Franklin’s letter and

the duke de la Vauguion's, originated in the same source, the compte de Vergennes' recommendation. What should I do? Disoblige Dr Franklin? Disoblige the duke de la Vauguion? Disoblige the comte de Vergennes? Disoblige the two Grands? Disoblige the De Neufvilles, the Van Staphorsts and de la Lands & Fynje, as well as several other houses? After long deliberation, I wrote a letter to four houses, Fizeau & Grand, De Neufville, Van Staphorsts, and de la Lande & Fynje, offering to associate all of them in a joint company. Every one of them refused to unite with Mr. De Neufville.

(To be continued)

JOHN

ADAMS

Quincy, September 24, 1810

Review Questions

1. What banker does Benjamin Franklin recommend to Adams?
2. With whom does this recommendation originate?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. Why might Adams be suspicious of the banker recommended by Franklin?

“Correspondence of the Late President Adams (Continued).” April 24, 1811. Excerpted from the *Boston Patriot*.

To open a loan in the French house of Fizeau & Grand, though it was very respectable, and had always behaved towards me and all Americans with unexceptionable civility; I knew would furnish Versailles and Passy with information of every guilder I might from time to time obtain; and I had seen enough of the intrigues and waste from that quarter, to be determined at all risques not to open a loan in that house singly. Moreover all my most faithful and intelligent Dutch friends had uniformly warned me against opening my loan in a French house. They said it would lessen my reputation and materially injure the credit of the United States. If I wished a solid and lasting credit for my country, in Holland, I must select a house, or houses, purely Dutch.

In the midst of all my anxiety and uncertainty an American captain of a ship by the name of Grinnel happened to dine with me, and conversing on our want of a loan, he asked me if I had consulted Mr John Hodshon? The answer was in the negative. I had not supposed that Mr Hodshon, so easy as he was, and such a millionaire, would be willing to accept it, or even advise me in it. [...] In several interviews, he [Hodshon] entered very freely and candidly into conversation; said that as our Independence was now acknowledged, a loan was an object of importance and might be of utility to both countries. He doubted not that the most substantial houses in the republic might be induced to favor it, even the house of Hope. [...] I thought Mr. Hodshon knew less than I did concerning Mr. Hope's sentiments of American affairs. However, I have reason think he did sound Mr. Hope and received from him only such observations as I had heard reported from him several times before, viz: That America was too young to expect to borrow money at any ordinary interest, or at any interest less than the Batavian republic had been obliged in her infancy to give: i.e. ten or twelve per cent. However this might

be, Mr Hodshon said no more about Mr Hope's assistance or countenance. He undertook the loan himself, and after adjusting all the terms, we mutually executed a contract in form, and the plan was made public. The next day upon change, he received the customary congratulations from the principal merchants and capitalists, and I thought I was very happy in so solid a connection. [...]

[...]

Not many days passed however, before a clamour arose upon change in the city and pretty extensively in various parts of the republic. Mr Van Berckel told me Mr Hodshon was envied. There seemed to be a conspiracy of English and French emissaries, of Stadtholderians and patriots, of the friends and connections of Mr De Neufville, Fizeau & Grand, Van Staphorts, De la Lande & Fynje and many others, to raise a cry against Mr Hodshon. He was "anglomane;" he "was a Stadtholderian;" he "was an enemy to America," &c. &c.—not one word of which was sufficiently well founded to make any reasonable objections against his employment in this service. However, I saw that there was a settled plan to make it a party affair, if not an engine of faction. I said nothing, but determined to let the bubble burst of itself. When I was attacked, as I sometimes was, pretty severely, in company, for the choice I had made of an house for my loan. I justified every step of my conduct in it, by such facts and reasons as not one man ever attempted to contradict or confute.

Nevertheless, in a few days Mr Hodshon came to me and said, "You cannot be ignorant sir, that an uneasiness has been excited in the city and country against yourself and me, on account of the American loan." I answered, that I had heard and felt enough of it, but that having experienced much more formidable popular clamours in my own country, and seen that they soon subsided, I had not laid this much to heart. It had not shaken my confidence in him or in his contract. Mr Hodshon said "the opposition that was made, could not prevent him from obtaining a considerable sum of money; but it might prevent so large a loan as he and I wished, and as congress expected, and that it might expose me to reflections and misrepresentations in America, as well as in Holland, and even in England as well as France;" and added, "if you have the least inclination to be disengaged, or if you have the smallest probability of doing better for your constituents, I will readily release you from your contract." I thanked him for his generosity, and added, that I was very willing to risqué all the consequences of perseverance, and had no doubt we should succeed as well at least as I could hope to do, in any other connection I could form. But if he pleased, I would make some further enquiries. He wished I would---he was advanced in years, was infirm in his health, easy in his circumstances, perfectly clear and unembarrassed in his business and wished for repose rather than to engage in squabbles: but he would not forsake me. If I could not do better, he would proceed. We agreed to consider and enquire. In the course of my enquiries, I was informed of a new house---that is, new to me; for I had never seen either of the gentlemen nor heard their names. The house of Wilhelm & Jean Willink, two young merchants of large capital, amiable characters, much esteemed and beloved, of very rich connections, obnoxious to no party, was suggested to me as willing to engage in this business. I made every enquiry in my power and received the most ample satisfaction and assurance of their characters, circumstances and connections. They were willing to engage with the Vanstaphorsts and De la Lande & Fynjee. I informed Mr Hodshon of

this, and he cheerfully resigned his contract, gave me his account, received his balance and my thanks. [...]

I then completed a new contract with the three houses, Wilhelm and Jean Willink, Nicholas and Jacob Vanstaphorst, and De La Lande and Fynjee. In the two former houses, the Willinks and Vanstaphorsts, I was not disappointed. De La Lande and Fynjee, in a few years failed [...] The Willinks and Vanstaphorsts continue, for any thing I know, to this day, 1810, bankers of the United States. I found them men of honor, and they borrowed for me, before I left Europe, nine millions of guilders, which enabled me to send, through the house of Le Couteuæ in Paris, by the way of the Havana, very large sums in dollars, to Mr. Robert Morris, the financier of congress; which enabled me not only to maintain myself in Holland, France and England, but to maintain Dr Franklin and Mr Jefferson in France. Not a livre could Dr. Franklin obtain from the French court, not even for his daily bread, after it was known I had money in Holland.
[...]

John Adams

Quincy, September 24, 1810

Review Questions

1. Who does Adams first approach to loan money to the United States?
2. Why does this first loan not work out?
3. How much money is Adams able to borrow in the Netherlands prior to his departure?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would France cut off their loan to the United States after Adams obtained the Dutch loan?

☞*The Peace of Paris*☞

In 1779, the Continental Congress commissioned John Adams to negotiate treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain. That commission was revoked after the Comte de Vergennes, the French Foreign Minister, recommended to Congress that Adams not be entrusted with the task. Instead, Congress appointed a five-member commission to carry out the negotiations. John Adams, who is named first in the new commission, will share the responsibilities with Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson never made the journey to France to join the commission, which left the other four to carry out the negotiations.

Much of the diplomacy happened while John Adams was still in the Netherlands, but he took the lead in the negotiations nonetheless. Adams refused to join his fellow commissioners in France until the British commissioners—and thus King George III—recognized the United States as a sovereign and independent state rather than former colonies in rebellion. Adams believed that peace would follow Britain's recognition of the United States.

Adams convinced his fellow commissioners to ignore their instructions from Congress and break with French advice. Adams believed that the French would negotiate a treaty that best served France and not the United States. Hence, he convinced Jay and Franklin to negotiate separately with Great Britain, although the plan had always been to negotiate a single treaty with all parties participating under French leadership.

Though the United States was at war with Great Britain and maintained the Treaty of Amity with France, John Adams realized that the future of the United States depended on both amity and commerce with Great Britain rather than with France. Adams negotiated with his former king; he fought for the rights of New England fishermen to have access to the Grand Banks fisheries off the coast of Canada. This right would again be contested and negotiated by John Adams's son John Quincy at the conclusion of the War of 1812.

John Adams to the Comte de Vergennes, July 13, 1781

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 413–417

Paris July 13. 1781

[...] The Idea of a Truce, is not Suggested, in these Articles; but, as it is mentioned in Some observations Shewn me, by His Excellency the Comte de Vergennes it may be necessary for me to add, that the United States, are So deeply impressed, with an Apprehension, that any Truce whatsoever, would not fail to be productive of another long and bloody War, at the Termination of it, and that a Short Truce, would be, in many Ways, highly dangerous to them, that it would be with great Reluctance that they Should enter into any discussion, at all, upon Such a Subject. Two express Conditions, would be, indispensable Preliminaries to their taking into consideration, the Subject of a Truce at all. The first is, that their Allies agree, that the Treaties now Subsisting remain in full Force, during and after the Truce, untill the final Acknowledgment of their Independance by Great Britain. The Second is, the antecedent Removal of the British Land and naval Armaments, from every Part of the United States. Upon these two express Conditions as Preliminaries, if a Truce Should be proposed, for so long a Period, or for an indeffinite Period requiring So long notice, previous to renewal of Hostilities, as to evince that it is, on the Part of Great Britain a virtual Relinquishment of the Object of the War, and an Expedient only to avoid the mortification of an express Acknowledgment of the Independance and Sovereignty of the United States, they, with the concurrence of their Allies might accede to it.

It is requisite however to add. 1. That the United States cannot consider themselves bound by this declaration, unless it Should be agreed to before, the opening of another Campain. 2. That it is not in the Power of the Crown of Great Britain, by the constitution of that Kingdom, to establish any Truce, or even Armistice, with the United States, which would not be illusory without the Intervention of an Act of Parliament, repealing or Suspending all their Statutes, which have any Relation to the United States or any of them. Without this, every officer of the Navy, would be bound by the Laws, according to the Maxims of their Constitution, to Seize every American Vessel, that he should find, whose Papers and destination Should not be found conformable to those Statutes, and every French, Spanish, Dutch or foreign Vessel, which he Should find going to or coming from America; notwithstanding any Convention, that it is in the Power of the Crown to make.

After all: the greatest difficulty does not lie in any Thing as yet mentioned. The greatest question is, in what Character are the United States to be considered?

They know themselves to be a free, Sovereign and independent State, of right and in Fact. They are considered and acknowledged, as Such, by France. They cannot be represented in a Congress of Ministers, from the Several Powers of Europe, whether their Representative is called Ambassador, Minister or Agent, without Acknowledgment of their Independance, of which the very Admission of a Representative from them, is an Avowal. Great Britain, cannot agree with their Representative, upon a Truce, or even an Armistice, without Admitting their Freedom and Independance.

As their is upon Earth, no Judge of a Sovereign State, but the Nation that composes it, the United States can never consent, that their Independance, Shall be

discussed or called in question, by any Sovereign or Sovereigns, however respectable, nor can their Interests be made a question, in any Congress, in which their Character is not acknowledged, and their Minister admitted. If therefore, the two Imperial Courts, would acknowledge, and lay down as a Preliminary, the Sovereignty of the United States, and admit their Minister to a Congress: after this, a Treaty might be commenced, between the Minister of Great Britain, and the Minister of the United States, relative to a Truce, or Peace and Commerce, in the manner proposed, without any express Acknowledgment of their Sovereignty by Great Britain, untill the Treaty should be concluded.

The Sovereigns of Europe have a right to negotiate, concerning their own Interests and to deliberate concerning the Question whether it is consistent with their Dignity and Interests, to acknowledge expressly the Sovereignty of the United States, and to make Treaties with them, by their Ministers in a Congress or other wise; and America could make no Objection to it. But neither the United State nor France can ever consent, that the Existence of their Sovereignty, Shall be made a question in Such Congress: because, let that Congress determine as it might, their Sovereignty with Submission only to divine Providence never can, and never will be given up [...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams reject the idea of a truce with the British?
2. Under what two conditions would a truce have been acceptable?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams insist that Great Britain must recognize the sovereignty of the United States before negotiations can take place?

John Adams to the Comte de Vergennes, July 19, 1781

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 11, p. 425–430

Paris July 19. 1781

The Commission, from the United States, for making Peace, which has been in Europe, almost two Years, is that of a Minister Plenipotentiary, and it authorises him to treat only with Ministers vested with equal Powers. If he were to appear in Vienna, he certainly would assume, the Title and Character of a Minister Plenipotentiary and could enter into no Treaty or Conference, with any Minister from Great Britain, untill they had mutually exchanged, authentick Copies of their full Powers. This, it is true, would be an implied Acknowledgment of his Character and Title, and those of the United States too: but Such an Acknowledgment, is indispensable, because without it, there can be no Treaty at all. In Consequence, he would expect to enjoy all the Prerogatives of that Character, and the moment they Should be refused him, he must quit the Congress, let the Consequences be, what they might.

And I rely upon it, this is the Intention of the two Imperial Courts: because otherwise, they would have proposed the Congress, upon the Basis of the two British Preliminaries, a Rupture of the Treaty, with France, and a Return of the Americans to their Submission

to Great Britain, and because I cannot Suppose it possible, that those Courts, could believe the Americans capable of Such infinite Baseness, as to appear upon the Stage of the Universe, to acknowledge themselves guilty of Rebellion, and Supplicate for Grace. Nor can I Suppose, that they meant to fix a Brand of disgrace, upon the Americans, in the Sight of all Nations, or to pronounce Judgment against them: one, or all of which Suppositions must be made, before it can be believed that those Courts did not mean to protect the American Minister, in the Enjoyment of the Priviledges attached to the Character which he must assume. And because, otherwise, all their Propositions would be to no Effect; for no Congress at Vienna can make either one or the other of the two proposed Peace's, without the United States.

But, upon looking over again, the Words of the first Article, there Seems to be room for dispute, which a British minister, in the present State of his Country, would be capable of taking Advantage of. The Terms used, Seem to be justly exceptionable. There are no "American Colonies" at War with Great Britain. The Power at War, is The United States of America. No American Colonies, have any representative in Europe, unless Nova Scotia or Quebeck, or Some of the West India Islands may have an Agent in London. The Word Colony in its usual Acceptation, implies a Metropolis, a Mother Country, a Superiour Political Governor, Ideas, which the United States, have long Since renounced for ever.

[...]

All that I can Say, to this Case, at present, is this. The United States have assumed their equal Station among the nations: they have assumed a Sovereignty, which they acknowledge to hold only from God and their own Swords. They can be represented only as a Sovereign and therefore, although they might not be able to prevent it, they can never consent that any of these Things Shall be made questions. To give their Consent, would make the Surrender of their Sovereignty their own Act. France has acknowledged all these things, and bound her Honour and Faith to the Support of them, and therefore, although She might not be able to prevent it, She cannot consent that they should be disputed. Her Consent would make the Surrender of the American Sovereignty her Act. And what End can it answer to dispute them, unless it be, to extend the Flames of War? If Great Britain had a Colour of Reason, for pretending that France's Acknowledgment of American Independance, was an Hostility against her the United States would have a Stronger Reason to contend that a denial of their Sovereignty was a declaration of War against them. And as France is bound to Support their Sovereignty, She would have Reason to Say that a denial of it, is an Hostility against her, if any Power of Europe has an Inclination to join England, and make War against France and the United States, there is no need of a previous Congress to enable her to do it, with more Solemnity, or to furnish her with plausible Pretexs. But, on the other Hand, if the Powers of Europe are persuaded of the Justice of the American Pretensions, and think [*it the*] duty of Humanity to endeavor to bring about Peace, they may easily propose that the Character of the United States shall be acknowledged, and their minister admitted.[...]

John Adams

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams object to the use of the word "colony" in describing the United States?
2. Why would acknowledgment of the United States ambassador by Great Britain change the nature of negotiations?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, April 16, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 12, p. 410–412

Sir

Amsterdam April 16. 1782

Yesterday noon, Mr William Vaughan of London, came to my House, with Mr Laurens, the son of the President, and brought me a Line from the latter, and told me, that the President was at Harlem, and desired to see me. I went to Haerlem and found, my old Friend at the golden Lyon.

[...]

He Said that Lord shelbourne and others of the new Ministers, were anxious to know whether, there was any authority to treat of a Seperate Peace, and whether there could be an accommodation, upon any Terms short of Independance. That he had ever answr'd them, that nothing short of an express or tacit Acknowledgement of our Independance, in his opinion would ever be accepted, and that no Treaty ever would or could be made Seperate from France. He asked me if his answers had been right? I told him I was fully of that opinion.

[...]

I desired him, between him and me to consider, without Saying any thing of it to the Ministry whether We could ever have a real Peace with Canada or Nova Scotia in the Hands of the English? And whether, We ought not to insist, at least upon a Stipulation that they should keep no standing army or regular Troops, nor erect any fortifications, upon the frontiers of either. That at present I saw no Motive that We had to be anxious for a Peace, and if this nation was not ripe for it, upon proper terms, We might wait patiently till they should be so.

[...]

These are all but Artifices to raise the Stocks, and if you think of any Method to put a stop to them, I will chearfully concur with you. They now know sufficiently, that our Commission is to treat of a general Peace, and with Persons vested with equal Powers. And if you agree to it, I will never to see another Messenger that is not a Plenipotentiary.

It is expected that the Seventh Province, Guelderland will this day Acknowledge American Independence. I think, We are in such a Situation now that We ought not, upon any Consideration to think of a Truce, or any Thing short of an express Acknowledgement of the Souverignty of the United States. I should be glad however to know your sentiments upon this Point.

I have the Honour to be

Review Questions

1. What two questions does the British government ask Laurens regarding a possible peace treaty?
2. What is Adams's concern about Canada and the final peace?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams refuse to communicate with any representative of Great Britain who is not a plenipotentiary?

Blog Prompt

Under what circumstances is a truce less than beneficial to a country at war? Cite a modern example of such an occurrence.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, May 2, 1782Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 2–4

Sir

Amsterdam May 2d. 1782

[...]

Mr Laurens and Mr Jay will, I hope be able to meet at Paris, but when it will be in my Power to go, I know not. Your present Negotiation about Peace falls in, very well to aid a Proposition which I am instructed to make, as soon as the Court of Versailles shall judge proper of a tripple or quadruple alliance. This matter, the Treaty of Commerce which is now under deliberation, and the Loan will render it improper for me to quit this station, unless in Case of Necessity. If there is a real Dissposition to permit Canada to accede to the american association I should think there could be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and america, provided our allies are contented too. In a former Letter I hinted that I thought an express Acknowledgment of our Independence might now be insisted on: but I did not mean that we should insist upon such an Article in the Treaty. If they make a Treaty of Peace with the United States of America, this is Acknowledgment enough for me. The affair of a Loan gives me much anxiety and Fatigue. It is true I may open a Loan for five millions, but I confess I have no hopes of obtaining so much. The Money is not to be had. Cash is not infinite in this Country. Their Profits by Trade have been ruined for two or three Years: and there are Loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweeden, Denmark and Several other Powers as well as their own national, provincial and collegiate Loans. The Under takers are already loaded with Burthens greater than they can bear, and all the Brokers in the Republick are so engaged, that there is Scarcely a Ducat to be lent but what is promised.

This is the true Cause why We shall not Succeed; yet they will Seek an hundred other Pretences. It is considered Such an honour and Such an Introduction to american Trade to be the House, that the Eagerness to obtain the Title of american Banker is prodigious. Various Houses have Pretensions, which they set up very high, and let me choose which I will, I am Sure of a Cry and a Clamour. I have taken some measures to endeavour to callm the Heat and give general Satisfaction, but have as yet Small hopes of success. I would Strike with any House that would insure the Money, but none will undertake it, now it is offered although Several were very ready to affirm that they could, when it began to be talked of. Upon Enquiry they dont find, the Money easy to obtain which I could have told them before. It is to me personally perfectly indifferent which is the House, and the only Question is, which will be able to do best for the Interest of the United States. This question however Simple is not easy to answer. But I think it clear, after very painfull and laborious Enquiris for a Year and an half, that no House whatever, will be able to do much. Enthusiasm, at Some times and in Some Countries, may do a great deal: but there has as yet been no Enthusiasm in this Country, for america, Strong enough to untie many Purses. Another Year, if the War should continue, perhaps We may do better.

I have the Honour to be, Sir your most obedient and most humble sert

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams unable to travel immediately to Paris?
2. Why does Adams fear that the Dutch loan will not be as beneficial as desired?

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, May 24, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 76–78

Sir

The Hague May 24. 1782

Your Favour of April 22d and that of May 8th. are recd. I will Examine, Mr Fizeaus accounts as soon as my Friend Mr Thaxter, is a little better, who is now sick of a Fever. I have attempted it alone, but I find a few little Variations from my accounts, of no great Consequence, which however perhaps Mr Thaxter may clear up.

The arrangements of Time and Place, mentioned in Lord Shelburne's Letter, cannot be a Work of any difficulty: because that People whose dispositions for Peace, are Sincere, would be willing to go at any time to almost any Place, provided the Work was not to meet obstructions there. But the Question is, whether his Lordship and his Royal Master, have lowered their Ideas of British omnipotence, and cleared their Breasts of the old Leaven of Contempt for their Enemies Sufficiently to agree to the Terms which will probably be expected.

You know his Lordship personally, and therefore I can tell you no News of him: but, I have taken some Pains for fifteen or Sixteen Years, to inform myself of his Character and Sentiments, and from all I could ever learn, it seems to me, that his Ideas of Great Britain and her Enemies are at this hour as wild, as those of my Lord North were Seven Years ago. The Changes in his Sentiments have not kept Pace with the alterations in Things. Mr Fox appears to have much juster Notions and Sincerer dispositions, tho God knows he is no Idol to me.

If his Lordships Sense was Spoken by Mr Oswald, viz to allow of our Independance, on Condition of Britains being put into the State, she was left in, by the Peace of 1763. This is a matter of Negotiation with France and Spain, and We have nothing to Say or do in it. But France and Spain must have more Moderation than ever Britain had, if they agree to it. But perhaps he means also that Britain shall remain in Possession of Nova Scotia, Canada and the Floridas as ceded to them by the Peace of 1763. If this is any part of his meaning it is a very Serious affair for Us, and for G. Britain too, for the foundation would be laid by it for her final Ruin. She will be forever at War with the United States must expend immense Sums, in maintaining innumerable Posts and fortifications, and garrisons, and at last can no more hold it, then her Navy can rule the Moon. We shall be in perpetual hot Water, it is true: but it will keep up a military Spirit, which it is Britains Interest if she could but see it, to lay asleep.

For my own Part, I dont feel so much anxiety, about the Part We have to Act in the Negotiations for Peace, as I commonly have done, in matters even of less Consequence because, I see that France, Spain and Holland have so many just Pretensions upon England, and the Ministry in England so divided, as well as the Nation, and the greater and more powerful Part, so extravagant in their Notions and so afraid of

making Concessions, that I dont expect, the Negotiation will advance so far, as that We shall have to enter very Seriously into our Claims, for sometime yet. The new Ministers, and New Admirals must try their Hands first, to see if they can turn the Fortune of the War. At least this appears to me to be the Earl of Shelburnes design with which he flatters the King.

The King hates them all. But perhaps Shelburne the least. And the Nation dont appear, notwithstanding the Addrsses to have much Confidence in the new set. In short I dont believe that any one Man or set of Men, have so much of the Confidence of King and Nation, as to be able to make with Safty to themselves the Sacrifices, which will be found indispensable, at a Peace.

I have &c

Review Questions

1. What reason does Adams give for not using the Peace of 1763 as a framework for the current peace negotiations?
2. Who are America's allies that would participate in the peace negotiations?
3. What does Adams think the new British government would do prior to the beginning of peace negotiations?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might a change in the British government affect the course of the war with America?

Blog Prompt

What must a government do in order to make peace with an enemy? Give a prescription for a modern day war.

John Adams to Benjamin Franklin, June 13, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 116–118

Sir

The Hague June 13. 1782

I had Yesterday, at Amsterdam, the Honour of receiving your Excellencys Letter of June 2.

The Discovery that Mr Grenvilles Power, was only to treat with France does not Surprise me, at all. The British Ministry, are too much divided among themselves, and have too formidable an opposition against them, in the King and the old Ministers, and are possessed of too little of the Confidence of the Nation, to have the Courage to make Concessions, of any Sort, especially Since the News of their Successes in the East and West Indies.

What their Pride will end in, God only knows. For my own Part, I cannot See, a Probability, that they will ever make Peace, untill their Financies are ruined and such Distresses brought upon them as will work up their Parties into a civil War.

I wish their Ennemies could by any means be perswaded to carry on the War against them in Places where they might be sure of Tryumphs, instead of insitsing upon pursuing it, where they are Sure of Defeats. But We must take Patience, and wait for Time to do, what Wisdom might easily and Soon do.

I have not as yet taken any Engagements with the Dutch not to make a Peace without them, but I will take such Engagements, in a moment if the Dutch will take them, and I believe they will cheerfully. I shall not propose it however until I have the Concurrence of the Duke de la Vauguion who will do nothing without the Instructions of his Court. I would not delay it, a moment from any Expectation that the English, will acknowledge our Independence and make Peace with Us, because I have no such Expectations. I confess, it would be with infinite Reluctance that I should see a Peace made between England and any of her Enemies, unless it is made with all. If France, Spain and America should make Peace with England, and leave Holland alone at War, she would be at Mercy, and she would find the tenderest of it, Cruelty.

The permanent and lasting Friendship of the Dutch, may be easily obtained by the United States; that of England never. It is gone with the days before the Flood. If we ever enjoy the Smallest degree of Sincere Friendship again from England I am totally incapable of Seeing the Character of a Nation or the Connections of Things, which however may be the Case, for what I know. They have brought themselves by their Frenzy into Such a Situation. Spain has such Pretensions, Holland has Such Pretensions, America has Such Pretensions, the Armed Neutrality has Such Pretensions, that where is the English Minister, or Member of Parliament that dares to vote for the Concession to them? The Pretensions of France I believe would be so moderate that possibly, they might be acceded to. But I fear that Spain who deserves the least will demand the most. In Short the Work of Peace appears So impracticable, that I am happy in being restrained to this Country by my Duty and by this means excused from troubling my Head much about it. I have a Letter from America which informed me that Mr Jay had refused to Act in the Commission for Peace: but if he is on his Way to Paris, as you suppose I presume, my Information must be a Mistake, which I am very glad of. Mr Laurens, did me the Honour of a very short Visit, in his Way to France, but I was very Sorry to learn from him, that in a Letter to your Excellency he had declined Serving in the Commission for Peace. I had vast Pleasure in his Conversation, for I found him possessed of the most exact Judgment respecting our Enemies, and of the Same noble Sentiments in all things, which I Saw in him in Congress.

What is the System of Russia? Does she Suppose that England has too many Enemies upon her, and that their demands and Pretensions are too high? Does she Seek to embroil affairs and to light up a general War in Europe? Is Denmark in Concert with her, or any other Power? Her Conduct is a Phenomenon. Is there any Secret Negotiation or Intrigue on Foot, to form a Party for England among the Powers of Europe, and to make a Ballance, against the Power of the Enemies of England?

The States of Holland and several other Provinces have taken the Resolutions, against the Mediation for a Seperate Peace, and this nation seems to be well fixed in its System and in the common Cause.

My best Respects and Affections to my old Frind Mr Jay, if you please.

Review Questions

1. With whom does the British government propose negotiating peace?
2. What is Adams's concern about making a separate peace with Great Britain?
3. What does Adams suspect is happening with Russia and other European powers?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Adams believe that a friendship with Great Britain is not possible?

A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, ca. July 5–8, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 160–164

Sir

The Hague [*ca.* 5–8] July 1782

This War has already continued so many Years, been extended to so many Nations, and been attended with so many unnatural and disagreeable Circumstances that Every Man, who is not deficient in the Sentiments of Philanthropy, must wish to see Peace, restored upon just Principles, to Mankind: I shall therefore make no other Apology, for the Liberty I take in Writing this Letter, not in a public ministerial Character, but in a private and confidential Manner So that it is not expected or desired that you should make any further Use of it, then for your private amusement, unless you should judge it proper, to take any publick steps in Consequence of it, in which Case you are at Liberty to make what Use of it you think proper.

All the World professes to wish for Peace: England professes Such a Desire, France, Spain, Holland and America, profess it. The neutral Powers, profess it, and Some of them are giving themselves much Trouble, by Negotiations and offers of Mediation to accomplish it, either generally or at least partially. All the Nations at War with England seem to be very well agreed in the Sentiment, that any partial or Seperate Peace, would only retard a general Peace, and therefore do more harm than good, and this Sentiment, is past all doubt perfectly just.

What Measures than can be taken, with any plausible appearance of Probability, to bring about a General Peace?

Great Britain, is in a Situation as critical as any Nation was ever known to Stand in. Ireland and all her foreign Dominions discontented, and almost ripe to follow the Example of the United states of America in throwing off, all their Connections with her. The Nation at home, nearly equally divided between the old Ministry and the New, and between the old System and the new, So that no Party, has an Influence sufficiently clear to take any decided Step. A Sentiment of Compassion for England *<and a Jealousy of the growing Commerce and naval Power of their Ennemies>*, may take Place in Some of the neutral Powers, and after sometime induce them, especially if any new Motive should turn up, to become Parties to the War, and thus involve all Nations in a flame.

America has perhaps the least to dread, perhaps the most to gain by Such an Event of any of the Nations of the World. She would wish however to avoid it. But the Question is, in what manner?

If England could be unanimous, in the only Plan of Wisdom she might easily resolve this Question, by instantly declaring the United states of America, A sovereign and independent state—and by inviting them as Such to a Congress, for a general Pacification, under the Mediation of the two Imperial Courts as was proposed last Year. But the present british Ministers are not Sufficiently Seated in the Confidence of the King or the Nation to venture upon so Striking a Measure. The King would be displeased, the Nation allarmed, and the old Ministry and their Partisans, would raise a popular Cry against them, that they had Sacraficed the Honour and Dignity of the Crown and the essential Interests of the Nation.

Something is therefore wanting, to enable the Government in England to do what is absolutely necessary for the Safety of the Nation. In order to discover what that is, it is necessary to recollect, a Resolution of Congress of the 5th. of October 1780, in these

Words “Her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, attentive to the Freedom of Commerce, and the Rights of Nations, in her Declaration to the belligerent and neutral Powers, having proposed Regulations founded on Principles of Justice, Equity and Moderation, of which their most Christian and Catholic Majestys, and most of the neutral maritime Powers of Europe, have declared their Approbation, Congress willing to testify their Regard to the Rights of Commerce, and their Respect for the Sovereign, who hath proposed, and the Powers who have approved the said Regulations.

Resolve, that the Board of Admiralty prepare and Report Instructions for the Commanders of armed Vessells, commissioned by the United States, conformable to the Principles contained in the Declaration of the Empress of all the Russias, on the Rights of neutral Vessells.

That the Ministers Plenipotentiary, from the United States, if invited thereto, be, and hereby are, respectively impowred to accede to Such Regulations, conformable to the Spirit of the Said Declaration, as may be agreed upon, by the Congress expected to assemble in pursuance of the Invitation of her imperial Majesty.”

This Resolution, I had the Honour on the 8th of March 1781 of communicating to their High Mightinesses, and to the Ministers of Russia, Sweeden and Denmark residing at the Hague, and to inform them, that I was ready and desirous of pledging the Faith of the United states, to the Observances of the Principles of the armed Neutrality, according to that Resolution of Congress.

Now I Submit it to your Consideration sir, whether the Simplest and most natural Method of bringing this War to a General Conclusion is not, for the neutral Powers to admit a Minister from Congress to accede to the Principles of the marine Treaty of Neutrality in the Same manner as France and Spain have done.

But it will be Said this is Acknowledging the Souverignty of the United States of America. Very true—and for this very Reason it is desirable, because it settles the main question of the Controversy, it immediately reconciles, all the illdisposed Part of the English Nation to the Measure, it prepares the Way to the two Imperial Courts to invite the Ministers of the United states of America to a Congress, for making Peace under their Mediation, and enables the British Ministry to reconcile the King and the present opposition to an Act of Parliament declaring America independent, and most probably is the only Method of Saving Great Britain herself from all the Horrors of an internal civil war.

This great Point once decided, the Moderation of the belligerent Powers and the impartial Equity of the two imperial mediating Courts, would leave no room to doubt of a Speedy general Peace.

Without Some such Interposition of the Neutral Powers, the War will probably be prolonged untill a civil War breaks out in England, for which the Parties there appear to be nearly ripe. The Vanity of that Nation will always enable artfull Men to flatter it, with illusive hopes of Divisions among their Ennemies, of Reconciliation with America, and of Seperate Peace with some that they make take vengeance on others. But these are all Delusions—America will never be unfaithfull to their Allies nor to herself.

I wish therefore, Sir, for your Advice, whether it would not be prudent for the States General to take Some Steps. To propose this matter to the Considerations of the Empress of Russia, the Emperor of Germany and all the other Neutral Courts—or at least

to instruct their Ambassadors at all those Courts, to promote, the Admission of the United states of America to become Parties to the late Marine Treaty.

Review Questions

1. What difficulties does Great Britain face because of the war?
2. According to the resolution passed by Congress, what does the United States desire of the powers of Europe?
3. What two imperial courts offer to mediate the peace between Great Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the former British government ministers not support the new British government with respect to the war with America?

John Adams to Edmund Jenings, July 20, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 188–190

Sir

The Hague 20. July 1782

The more I reflect upon the late Revolution in the British Ministry the more I am Struck, with the Conduct of Mr Fox. I am become, upon certain Conditions his Admirer, *<and almost wish to be his Friend!>*. The Conditions are two

1. That his Conduct has been the Result of Deliberation and Judgment, not of mere Jealousy Ambition, or Resentment.

2. That he has Patience and Fortitude enough to persevere, to the End.

His Conduct, appears to me Such, as that of a Man whose large Mind embraced, the whole Scheme of the Affairs and Relations of his Country, and capable of Seizing the only Clue which remained for extricating her out of that Entanglement in which the old Ministry had left her, ought to have been. If he stands fast upon the Ground he has taken, he will Shew himself worthy to be the Man of the People, and must finally prevail, if his Idea had been adopted and America declared a Sovereign State by Act of Parliament, the Way would have been clear, for the King to consent, that the two Imperial Courts Should immediately acknowledge American Independence by Admitting Mr Dana to Sign the Treaty of armed Neutrality, or otherwise as they pleased and invite Dr Franklin and Mr Jay to a Congress, for a general Peace, under their Mediation. These Combinations of Objects, are easy and natural although one of the Objects is unweildy, I mean the Armed Neutrality. As it is in the Power of this body So easily to pacify the World, it is their Duty to do it, by acknowledging the United states. Peace would soon follow.

Pray has not Parliament Separated without agreeing to the Taxes for Paying the Interest of the last Loan? Is not this unprecedented? and what will be the Consequence? Will it not wound public Credit?

Lord Shelburne, had it in his Power to have pacified the World, and has failed. Mr Fox saw how to do it, but shelburnes opposition took away from him the Power. But shelburne would not have opposed, if Franklin had not piddled. If Vergennes and Franklin had decidedly refused to see any Agent about Peace, who had not a Commission and full Powers to treat with the United states of America the British stocks and Spirits

would have fallen so low that shelburne and all the rest would have been compelled to have adopted Mr Fox's present Idea. But F. must make himself a Man of Consequence by piddling with Men who had no Title. But thus it is, that Men of great Reputations may do as many Weak Things as they please, and to remark their Mistakes is to envy them. I neither envy him however, nor his confidential Agent Mr Alexander. His base Jealousy of me and his Sordid Envy of my Commission for making Peace, and especially of my Commission for making a Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain have Stimulated him to attempt to commit an assassination upon my Character at Philidelphia, of which the World has not Yet heard, and of which it cannot hear untill the Time shall come when many voluminous state Papers may be laid before the Publick, which ought not to be, untill We are all dead. But this I Swear, I will affirm when and where I please that he has been actuated and is still by a low Jealousy and a meaner Envy of me, let the C. Vergennes or F. himself complain of it again to congress if they please, it would be my Joy to answer there in Person or by Letter. The anonymous scribbler charged me with clandestinely hurting Franklin. I have done nothing clandestinely. I have complained of Franklins Behaviour, in Company with Americans so I have in Company with the French and Spanish Ambassadors, without any Injunctions or desires of Secrecy. This is an odd Sort of Clandestinity. That I have no Friendship for Franklin I avow. That I am incapable of having any with a Man of his moral Sentiments, I avow. As Far as cruel Fate shall compell me to act with him in publick affairs, I shall treat him with decency and perfect Impartiality, further than that I can feel for him no other sentiments than Contempt or Abhorrence. In my Soul I believe of him all that Burke says of shelburne. Yet to undertake to lay before the public all the Reasons I have for believing so would do more hurt at present than his Neck and mine too are both worth, and therefore I have Said and shall say as little about it, as is consistent with my Honour. Will you give my affectionate Regards to Mr Laurens and tell him, that all that is said by the anonymous scribbler is a Lye. That if he will accept of this Mission I will resign it in a Moment. That I love and esteem him, and ever did, and have ever openly publickly and privately avowed it.

Adieu, my dear sir Adieu

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What were the conditions under which Adams proclaims himself an admirer of British Prime Minister Fox?
2. According to Adams, how do Benjamin Franklin and the Comte de Vergennes inadvertently help the British and extend the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Adams come to dislike Benjamin Franklin?

John Adams to John Jay, August 10, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 227–228

Sir

Hague. Augst. 10th. 1782

It was with very great pleasure that I recd. this morning your kind favor of the 2d. inst. I am surprized to learn that your and Mrs: Jay's health have been disordered in France where the air is so fine.

That your anxieties have been very great I doubt not—that most of them were such as you ought not to have met with, I can easily conceive. I can sincerely say, that all mine, but my Fever, were such as I ought not to have had. Thank God, they are past, and never shall return, for nothing that can happen shall ever make me so anxious again. I have assumed the felicis animi immota Tranquillitas.

Nothing would give me more satisfaction than a free conversation between you and me, upon the subjects you mention, and all others, directly or indirectly connected with it, or with any of our affairs, but I don't see a possibility of taking such a journey. The march of this People is so slow, that it will be sometime before the Treaty of Commerce can be finished and after that I have other orders to execute, and must be here in person to attend every step. But besides this, I think I ought not go to Paris while there is any messenger there from England, unless, he has full powers to treat with the Ministers of the United States of America. If the three American Ministers should appear at Paris, at the same time with a real or pretended Minister from London, all the world would instantly conclude a Peace certain, and would fill at once another years Loan for the English. In Lord Shelburne's sincerity, I have not the least confidence and I think that we ought to take up Fox's idea, and insist upon full powers to treat with us in character, before we have a word more to say upon the subject. They are only amusing us. I would rather invite you to come here. This Country is worth seeing and you would lay me under great obligations by taking your residence, during your stay, in the *Hotell des Etats-Unis*—many People would be glad to see you.

I should be very glad however to be informed, fm. step to step, how things proceed, which may be done with safety by Expresses to me; or by those from the Court of Versailles to the Duke de la Vauguion, in whom I have great confidence, or it may be done even by Post, under cover to Messrs. Wilhem & Jean Willink, at Amsterdam; or Mr. Dumas, at the Hague; or to Mr. Charles Storer, chez Madame la Veuve Loder at the Hague.

As you justly observe, further accessions of power to the House of Bourbon may excite jealousies in some Powers of Europe, but who is to blame but themselves? Why are they so short sighted, or so indolent, as to neglect to acknowledge the United States and make Treaties with them! Why do they leave the House of Bourbon to contend so long, and spend so much? Why do they leave America and Holland under so many obligations. France has, and deserves and ought to have a great weight with America and Holland, but other powers might have proportionable weight, if they would have proportional merit.

If the Powers of the Neutral Maritime Confederation, would admit the United States to accede to that Treaty, and declare America Independent, they would contribute to prevent America at least, fm. being too much under the direction of France. But if any

Powers should take the part of England, they will compell America and Holland too, to unite themselves ten times more firmly than ever to the House of Bourbon.

I don't know, however, that America, or Holland are too much under the direction of France, and I don't believe they will be—but they must be dead to every generous feeling as Men, and to every wise view as Statesmen, if they were not much attached to France in the circumstances of the Times.

I have received two letters from you in the Spring—one I answered, but have not the dates at present, the other kindly informed me of the arrival of my Son in America, for which I thank you.

With great regard and esteem, I am, dear Sir, Your Most obedt: humle. Servt.

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is the misperception of an impending peace treaty problematic for Adams?
2. How might other European countries improve their relationship with the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is Adams's tone in this letter? What does this reveal about Adams's relationship with John Jay?

John Adams to John Jay, August 13, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 236–238

Dear Sir

The Hague August 13. 1782

The public Papers announce Fitzherbert's Comission to be, to treat "With the four Powers at War with Great-Britain" But whether they mean Hyder Aly, or the Marattas, is uncertain.

I have obtained Intelligence of a Paper addressed lately from the Court of St. James's to the Courts of Vienna and Petersbourg, as well as that of Paris, in which are the following words, vizt.

Sa Majesté Britannique dit, "Qu'Elle ne préjuge, ni ne veut préjuger aucune question quelconque, et qu'Elle ne prétend exclure personne de la Négociation qu'on a en vue, qui pourroit s'y croire intéressé, soit qu'il soit question des Etats-Généraux, soit qu'on y veuille faire entrer les Colonies Américaines"—You perhaps may have seen the whole. If you have, I beg a Copy.

For my own part, I am not the Minister of any "fourth State" at war with Great-Britain, nor of any "American Colonies." And therefore I should think it out of Character for us to have any thing to say to Fitzherbert, or in the Congress at Vienna, untill more decently and consistently called to it. It is my duty to be explicit with you, and to tell you sincerely my sentiments. I think we ought not to treat at all, untill we see a Minister authorised to treat with "The United States of America" or with their Ministers. Our Country will feel the miserable consequence of a different conduct. If we are betrayed into Negotiations, in or out of a Congress, before this Point is settled, if Gold and Diamonds, and every insidious Intrigue and wicked Falshood, can induce any Body to embarrass us, and betray us into Truces and bad Conditions, we may depend upon having

them played off against us. We are and can be no Match for them at this Game. We shall have nothing to negotiate with but Integrity, Perspicuity and Firmness.

There is but one way to Negotiate with Englishmen. That is clearly and decidedly. Their Fears only govern them. If we entertain an Idea of their Generosity, or Benevolence towards us, we are undone. They hate us, universally from the Throne to the Footstool, and would annihilate us, if in their Power, before they would treat with us in any way. We must let them Know, that we are not to be moved from our Purpose; or all is undone. The Pride and Vanity of that Nation is a Disease; it is a Delirium. It has been flattered and enflamed so long by themselves, and by others, that it perverts every Thing. The moment you depart one Iota from your Character, and the distinct Line of Sovereignty, they interpret it to spring from fear or Love of them, and to a Desire to go back.

Fox saw we were aware of this, and calculated his system accordingly. We must finally come to that Idea; and so must Great-Britain. The latter will soon come to it, if we don't flinch. If we discover the least weakness or Wavering, the Blood and Treasures of our Countrymen will suffer for it in a great Degree.

Firmness, Firmness and Patience for a few Months, will carry us triumphantly to that Point, where it is the Interest of our Allies, of Neutral Nations, nay even of our Enemies, that we should arrive: I mean a Sovereignty, universally acknowledged by all the World. Whereas the least Oscillation will in my opinion leave us to dispute with the world, and with one another, these fifty Years.

With great Respect and Regard I have the Honour to be, Sir your most obedient and most humble Servant

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the major condition that Adams requires to negotiate with the new British minister?
2. What is Adams's complaint about the instructions given Fitzherbert?
3. How is the United States to convince the British of the necessity of negotiating for peace?

John Adams to James Warren, August 19, 1782

Papers of John Adams, vol. 13, p. 255–256

My dear sir

The Hague August 19 1782

There is now an Harmony so entire between France America and Holland, that I think Affairs must come to a good Conclusion, if they do not it will I am perswaded be our Fault. But I am determind it shall not be mine, and I dont believe it will be Mr Jays. Spain is now inclined to make a Treaty with us, as I am informed, and the Comte d'Aranda is authorised to treat with him at Paris, this however, must not be made publick tho it may be communicated in Confidence. Mr Dana Seems weary, and I dont wonder. You have no Conception of the Torments that Mr Jay and he and I have endured. However the Foundations of great Things are never laid without Patience and long suffering.

Shelburne and Fox have Split upon a nice Point and the latter has shewn himself I think a profound Statesman: the later a Selfish, and equivocal Character. He must come finally and with an ill Grace to the Idea of the other, or he will put the last hand to the ruin of that Country.

The Plan Seems to be now to agree if they can upon Some, Preliminaries at Paris and then have a Congress to settle the Treaty, after discussing every Thing.

If Gibraltar falls and the English have no signal Success the national Discouragement, will increase, So as to force a Peace perhaps. If they relieve Gibraltar, which will be very hazardous, if they have good News from the East Indies, and especially if they have any naval Advantages they will Struggle for another Campaign or two. Naval Victories intoxicate them to Frenzy—But these are but Drams to a Man in an Hectick.

If there Should be serious Negotiations for Peace, We shall have many Ugly Questions to debate. I dont intend to be answerable for any bad decision of them—but I cannot answer that they will not be badly decided. Canada, Nova scotia, Boundaries, Tories, Fisheries are Bones to pick. But the Pretensions of France, Spain and Holland will not be more easily adjusted, nor the Pretentions of Neutrals, in short the Field is so vast, and the objects of such Magnitude, that the first Glance of the Eye affrightens one, but I have looked at it so long that it has lost its Terror to me. Why should one be anxious—it is easy for a Man to do his Duty. He always has this in his Power and this is as much as he ought to have.

I hope Mrs Warren will give my Dutch Negotiation a Place in her History. It is one of the most extraordinary, in all the diplomatic Records, But it has succeeded to a Marvel.

Adieu

Review Questions

1. Which country is ready to secretly form a treaty with the United States?
2. How does the possibility of military success, no matter how minor, affect the possibility of a peace treaty?
3. What are the issues that need to be discussed before a peace treaty can be finalized?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Describe Adams's tone. How is it different from the letters to John Jay?

John Adams to Arthur Lee, October 10, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 523–525

Duplicate

Dear Sir

The Hague October 10th. 1782

[...]

The Instruction, which You say subjects Us to the French Ministers, has never been communicated to me. I cannot believe that any such one has passed. I suspect that You

have put too strong a Construction upon it. Congress must have a very modest Inconsciousness of their own Abilities to subject themselves or their Ministers to any body. There is not, in my Opinion, a Sovereign in Europe more enlightened than Congress, nor a Minister in Europe superior to three of theirs, I mean Mr. Jay, Mr. Laurens and Mr. Dana, at least, if there is such a Minister, I have not yet had the honor to find him. The Qualities of Ministers, which produce Events, do not consist in dress, Horses, Balls nor Cards.

I was never in my life clearer in any opinion, than I am in this, that it would serve our Cause, for Mr Dana to communicate his Mission to the Minister of the Empress of Russia, and to the Ministers of every one of the Neutral Courts at Petersbourg. I think he would not be refused. The Matter would be taken into Consideration, [and] might be long delayed: but if he were refused, it would be upon the Principle of Neutrality, and even this Refusal would be infinitely less hurtful to our Reputation, than to have a Minister in Europe, with such a Commission in his Pocket, prohibited to make any Use of it. It is now known, that he has such a Commission, as much as it would be, if he communicated it, as he might, in Confidence.

Dr. Franklin, whose System has ever been [to] sweep Europe clear of every Minister but himself, that he might have a clear unrivalled Stage, was consistent when he wrote to Mr: Dana, that Congress were wrong in sending a Minister to Spain, Holland, Vienna, Berlin, Tuscany, and every where else: but it is not consistent in Congress, as I humbly apprehend, 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. Those Chains I will never wear. They would be so galling to me that I could not bear them. I will never however be wanting in Respect or Complaisance to these Ministers knowingly.

[...]

John Adams

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams reject the idea of making the American commissioners subject to the French?
2. Why does Adams believe that Francis Dana should present his credentials as American minister to the Court of Saint Petersburg?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would France want to prevent the American ministers from negotiating on their own?

Blog Prompt

What are the pitfalls of relying too heavily on an ally? Cite a modern example of allies who have caused difficulties for one another.

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, October 12, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 13, p. 528–529

The Hague October 12. 1782

Sir

[...]

The Cause of my being pressed, for Time is, that I am preparing to set off for Paris, and have not only all my Dispatches to make up, to send the Treaty, but have Obligations to sign respecting the Loan, that So essential a Business may not Stand still in my absence.

Mr. Jay writes me that Mr oswald has recd a Commission to treat of Peace with the Commissioners of the United States of America. I Shall set off for Paris next Week.

I have the Honour to be, &c

J. Adams

Review Questions

1. Why is Adams finally willing to go to Paris?

John Adams to Abigail Adams, November 8, 1782

Excerpted from *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 28–29

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society: <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

My dearest Friend

Paris November 8. 1782

The King of Great Britain, by a Commission under the great Seal of his Kingdom, has constituted Richard Oswald Esqr. his Commissioner to treat with the Ministers Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, and has given him full Powers which have been mutually exchanged. Thus G.B. has Shifted Suddenly about, and from persecuting Us with unrelenting Bowells, has unconditionally and unequivocally acknowledged Us a Sovereign State and independent Nation. It is surprizing that she should be the third Power to make this Acknowledgment. She has been negotiated into it, for Jay and I peremptorily refused to Speak or hear, before We were put upon an equal Foot. Franklin as usual would have taken the Advice of the C[omte] de V[ergennes] and treated, without, but nobody would join him.

Review Questions

1. What change takes place in British policy toward the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What takes place to cause the British to change policy toward the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, July 31, 1783

Transcribed by Jason Raia. Excerpted from "Letterbook." Available on microfilm: *Adams Family Papers*, reel 106, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Sir
31, 1783

The Hague July

Last evening, at Court in the House in the Grove, where all the foreign Ministers supped, the Comte Montagnini de Mirabel, the Minister Plenipotentiary from the King of Sardinia, took an opportunity to enter into largely into Conversation with me. As he and I were at a Party of Politicks while the greatest Part of the Company were at Cards, for two or three hours, We ran over all the World, but nothing occurred worth repeating, except what follows.

The Comte said, that his advice to Congress would be to write a Circular Letter to every Power in Europe, as soon as the definitive Treaty should be Signed, and transmit with it, a printed Copy of the Treaty. In the Letter Congress should announce that on the 2 of July 1776 the United States, had declared themselves a Sovereign State, under the Staple and Title of the United States of America, that France on the 6 of Feb. 1778 had acknowledged them, that the States General, had done the same on the 19 of April 1782, that Great Britain, on the 30 of Nov 1782 had signed with them a Treaty of Peace, in which the[y] had fully acknowledged their Sovereignty, that Sweden had entered into a Treaty with them on the 5. Feb 1783, and that Great Britain had concluded the definitive Treaty, under the Mediations of the two Empires, if that should be the fact &c. Such a Notification to all the other Powers would be a regular Procedure, a Piece of Politeness which would be very well received, and the Letter would be respectfully answered by every Power in the World, and their written Answers would be explicit and undeniable acknowledgement of our sovereignty: [...]

[...] The Comte, then proceeded to commence, and said that all the Cabinets of Europe had lately turned their views to Commerce, so that we should be attended to and respected by all of them.— [...]

Review Questions

1. What does the Sardinian ambassador recommend the Congress do to encourage other European countries to recognize the United States?
2. What reason does the ambassador believe will encourage the European powers to recognize the United States?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, August 15, 1783

Transcribed by Jason Raia. Excerpted from "Letterbook." Available on microfilm: *Adams Family Papers*, reel 106, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Sir

Paris August

15. 1783

France, England, Spain and America are all agreed, but Mr Hartley is Sanguine that the Treaty will not be Signed, because he says, the C. de Vergennes don't mean to Sign it. His Reasons for this opinion I know not. and I think he is mistaken. It is very certain however, that the French Minister is embarrassed, and would not perhaps be Sorry to find good Reasons for postponing the Signature for some time. [...]

[...] To sign without Holland, would raise a terrible Storm in Holland against the Comte, and no small one in France, and even if the States authorise him to Sign, a Shameful Peace, this would raise no less Clamour in Holland & France against the Comte. He will therefore not know what to do, and will seek to postpone, for the Parties of the Marquis de Castries and of Mr de Bruteuil, will take advantage of every clamour against the Comte, and these Parties, wish Mr Bruteuil in his place. I am persuaded therefore, that the Comte himself looks upon his own Situation as very hazardous. it has been so a long Time. It was his Instability in his Place that made him Sign the Preliminaries, for Money to carry on the War could not be obtained without Mr Necker, and Mr Necker would not come in with the Comte, as they were and are Sworn enemies against each other. [...]

Review Questions

1. Why does Adams fear that the peace treaty might not be signed?
2. What would be the result if Holland is not a party to the treaty?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Holland be left out of the treaty negotiations?

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, November 6, 1782

Excerpted from *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 14. Publication forthcoming.

No. 2

Sir

Paris November 6, 1782

[...]

As to the Negotiations for Peace, we have been, night & day, employed in them, ever since my arrival on the 26th: October. Dr. Franklin, without saying any thing to me, obtained of Mr. Jay a promise of his vote for Mr. W.T. Franklin to be Secretary of the Commission for Peace, and as the Dr. & his Secretary are in the same house, & there are other Clerks enough, I suppose he will transmit to Congress details of the Negotiations. I shall be ready to lend them any assistance in my power, and I will endeavor, as Soon as I can, to transmit them myself. But, after spending forenoon and afternoon & Evening in

discussions, it is impossible to transmitt all the particulars. No man's Constitution is equal to it -

[...] These Gentlemen are very profuse in their professions of national friendship; of earnest desires to obliterate the remembrance of all unkindness, & to restore Peace, Harmony, Friendship, and make them perpetual, by removing every seed of discord. All this, on the part of Mr. Oswald personally, is very sincere—on the part of the nation it may be so, in some sense at present: but I have my doubt whether it is a national disposition, upon wh: we can have much dependence, and still more, whether it is the sincere intention of the Earl of Shelbourne. He has been compelled to acknowledge American Independence, because the Rockingham Administration had resolved upon it, &, by Carlton & Digby's Letter to Gen. Washington, had made known that Resolution to the world – because the nation demanded that Negotiations shd. be opened with the American Ministers, & they refused to speak or hear, untill their Independence was acknowledged, unequivocally & without Conditions – because Messrs: Fox and Burke had resigned their Offices, pointedly on account of the refusal of the K. and My Ld. Shelburne, to make such an acknowledgement & these eloquent Senators were waiting only for the Session of Parliament to attack his Ld. ship on this point – it was therefore inevitable to acknowledge our Independence & no Minister cod. have stood his ground without it –

But still I doubt whether his Ld. ship means to make a general Peace. To express myself more clearly, I fully believe he intends to try another Campaign, & that he will finally refuse to come to any definitive agreement with us upon articles to be inserted in the general Peace.

We have gone the utmost length in our power to favor the Negotiations.— We have at last agreed to Boundaries with the greatest moderation. We have offered 'em the choice of a line thro' the middle of the great lakes, or the line of 45 of N. latitude, the Mississippi, with a free navigation of it, at one end, and the River St. Croix, at the other—We have agreed that the Courts of Justice be open for the recovery of British Debts due before the war – To a general amnesty for all the Royalists, agst. Wm. there is no judgement rendered, or prosecution commenced. We have agreed that all the Royalists, wh. may remain at the evacuation of the States shall have six mo. to sell their Effects & to remove with them.

Review Questions

1. Why do Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke resign their positions in the British government?
2. What concessions do the American ministers offer the British as part of the peace treaty?