

How John Quincy Adams Created the United States as a Continental Republic

**By Patrick Ruckert
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**John Quincy Adams
Painting by GPA Healy, 1858 (Photo: The White House Historical Association)**

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Introduction

“Her glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of mind. She has a spear and a shield; but the motto upon her shield is Freedom, Independence, Peace. This has been her declaration: this has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice.”

—John Quincy Adams, July 4, 1821

In the early decades following the first successful revolution by a colony of the British Empire, the young United States, sometimes under the direction of great men, but too often under that of mediocre men, or even traitors, presents us today with the often enjoyable opportunity to delve more deeply into the lives and accomplishments of some of those great men. One of those great men is John Quincy Adams, who must, I believe, be accorded the title “The Giant of American Foreign Policy.”

What the United States, and John Quincy Adams, were confronted with in the first half of the nineteenth century was a world dominated by empires; empires that, especially led by the rapacious British empire, not only saw the “upstart republic” as a threat and an insult to the world led by an oligarchy, but was also determined to stamp out of existence that republic, before the inspiration it provided to the empires' colonies all over the world could lead to more like it.

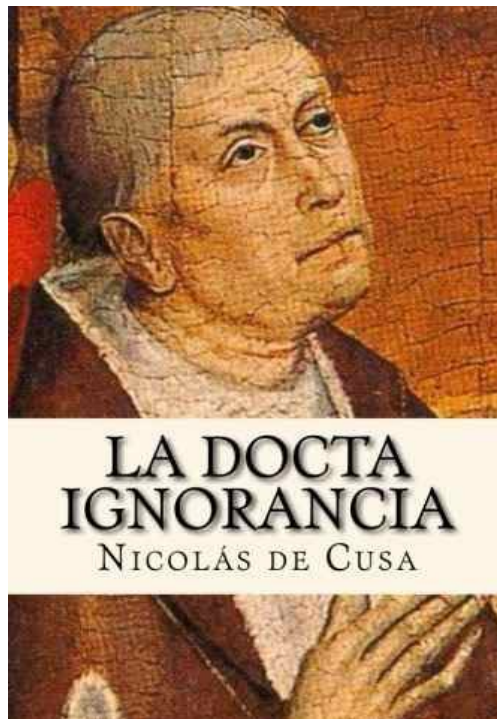
John Quincy Adams, for more than 70 years, was an actor on the world stage, as the United States, the first truly sovereign nation-state republic in human history, emerged from its revolution against the British Empire and became, in those 70 years, a major force in shaping a positive direction for human history. That that British Empire has never accepted even the existence of the United States is not a secret from anyone, except those who do not wish to know, and perhaps most Americans today can be excused for not understanding that fact. But, for the best of the American patriots of the Nineteenth Century, they knew it well, and acted to build the United States to become an unassailable bulwark for the idea that the only legitimate foundation of government is that it must represent all the people and ensure their general welfare.

The underlying topic of our presentation here is the sovereign nation-state republic, and how, unlike the empires that had dominated history for millennia, the coming into being of the United States realized an idea that had emerged centuries earlier.

Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa in the fifteenth century laid the foundation for true representative government in his book, *Concordancia Catholica* (Catholic Concordance). In this book, Book II, Chapter XIV, includes this excerpt:

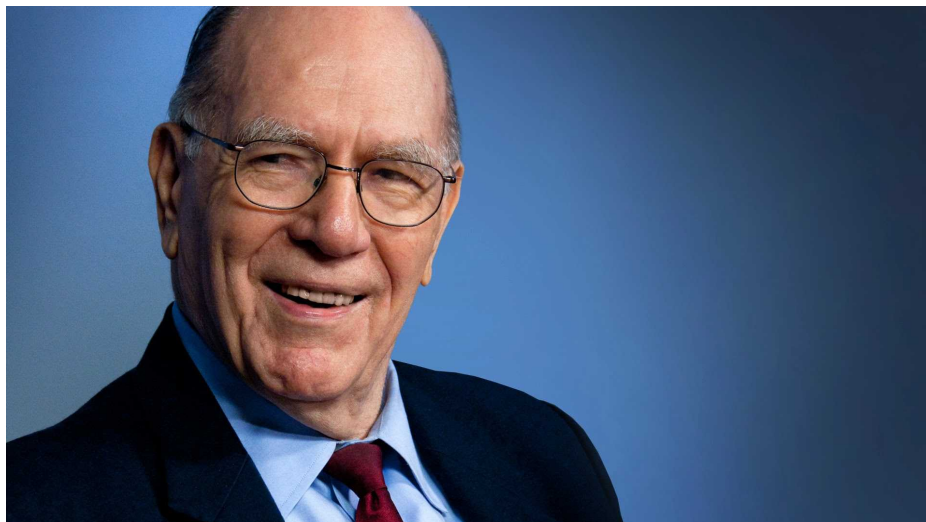
“All legislation is based on natural law and any law which contradicts it cannot be valid. Hence since natural law is naturally based on reason, all law is rooted by nature in the reason of man. The wiser and more outstanding men are chosen as rulers by the others to draw up just laws by the clear reason, wisdom and prudence given them by nature and to rule the others by these laws and to decide controversies for the maintenance of peace. From this we conclude that those better endowed with reason are the natural lords and masers of the others but not by any coercive law or judgment imposed on someone against his will. For since all are by nature free, every governance whether it consists in a written law or is living law in the person of a prince-- by which subjects are compelled to abstain from evil deeds and their freedom directed towards the good through fear of punishment can only come from

the agreement and consent of the subjects. For if by nature men are equal in power and equally free, the true properly ordered authority of one common ruler who is the equal in power cannot be naturally established except by the election and consent of the others and law is also established by consent.” [1]



Nicolas of Cusa

In the same spirit as Cusa, the idea of sovereignty, human reason, representative government and the additional idea, first enunciated by John Quincy Adams, a community of sovereign nation state republics, was expressed by Lyndon LaRouche in his book, *Science of Christian Economy* (1991):



Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. (1922-2019)

“Sovereign nation state republics are almost perfectly sovereign. This sovereignty is to be

subordinated to nothing but the universal role of what Christian humanists, such as St. Augustine, Nicholas of Cusa and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, have defined as the natural law fully intelligible to all who share a developed commitment to the faculty of creative reason.

“What we must establish soon on this planet is not a utopia, but a Concordia Catholica, a family of nation-state republics, each and all tolerating only one supranational authority, natural law, as the classical Christian humanists recognized it. Yet it is not sufficient that each, as a sovereign republic, to be subject passively to natural law. A right reading of that natural law reveals our obligation to co-sponsor certain regional and global cooperative ventures, in addition to our national affairs.” [2]

John Quincy Adams States the Principles of Natural Law As the Foundation of U.S. Foreign Policy

John Quincy Adams lived his life dedicated to the idea that the principles stated by the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were derived from Christianity and the Natural Law as expressed by Cusa and LaRouche. And as representing the United States as an ambassador, a diplomat, Secretary of State, as the President of the United States and then for nearly 20 years as a member of U.S. Congress, Adams worked to protect and to spread those principles to the larger world, while fighting the internal U.S. enemies who would act to destroy those principles. He believed and acted on the idea that no nation that did not at least attempt to embrace those same principles, was not a nation that the United States could join with in a “community of principle.”

As we proceed, we shall see how Adams actually applied those principles in the dynamic, dangerous, yet hopeful, world in which he lived and helped to shape. But, first, let us allow Adams to speak to us from two centuries ago, and give a lesson to us, and to those who are the architects of the domestic, economic and foreign policies of the United States today.

The Fourth-of-July speech of 1821 by Adams in Washington, D.C. must rank as one of the most profound enunciation of the principles of the American republic. And, to understand Adams as the leader and diplomat he was, an extended excerpt from that oration is required.

Speech on Independence Day, by John Quincy Adams to the United States House of Representatives, July 4, 1821 (excerpt):

“...The interest, which in this paper has survived the occasion upon which it was issued; the interest which is of every age and every clime; the interest which quickens with the lapse of years, spreads as it grows old, and brightens as it recedes, is in the principles which it proclaims. It was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only legitimate foundation of civil government. It was the corner stone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe. It demolished at a stroke the lawfulness of all governments founded upon conquest. It swept away all the rubbish of accumulated centuries of servitude. It announced in practical form to the world the transcendent truth of the unalienable sovereignty of the people....

“The Declaration of Independence pronounced the irrevocable decree of political separation, between

the United States and their people on the one part, and the British king, government, and nation on the other. It proclaimed the first principles on which civil government is founded, and derived from them the justification before earth and heaven of this act of sovereignty....

“And now, friends and countrymen, if the wise and learned philosophers of the older world, the first observers of mutation and aberration, the discoverers of maddening ether and invisible planets, the inventors of Congreve rockets and shrapnel shells, should find their hearts disposed to inquire, what has America done for the benefit of mankind? Let our answer be this—America, with the same voice which spoke herself into existence as a nation, proclaimed to mankind the inextinguishable rights of human nature, and the only lawful foundations of government. America, in the assembly of nations, since her admission among them, has invariably, though often fruitlessly, held forth to them the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, of generous reciprocity. She has uniformly spoken among them, though often to heedless and often to disdainful ears, the language of equal liberty, equal justice, and equal rights. She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations, while asserting and maintaining her own. She has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart. She has seen that probably for centuries to come, all the contests of that Aceldama, the European World, will be contests between inveterate power, and emerging right. Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause, by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself, beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. The frontlet upon her brows would no longer beam with the ineffable splendor of freedom and independence; but in its stead would soon be substituted an imperial diadem, flashing in false and tarnished lustre the murky radiance of dominion and power. She might become the dictatress of the world: she would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit....

“Her glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of mind. She has a spear and a shield; but the motto upon her shield is Freedom, Independence, Peace. This has been her declaration: this has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice.” [3]

In a letter to Edward Everett, dated January 31, 1822, Adams wrote, continuing his theme of what the United States had contributed to the world and his condemnation of colonialism:

“1. It places on a new and solid ground the right of our struggle for independence, considering the intolerable oppression which provoked our fathers to the revolt only as its proximate causes, themselves proof of the viciousness of the system from which they resulted.

“2. It settles the justice of the present struggle of South America for independence, and prepares for an acknowledgment upon the principle of public law of that independence, whenever it shall be sufficiently established by the fact.

“3. It looks forward prospectively to the downfall of the British Empire in India as an event which must

necessarily ensue at no very distant period of time.

“4. It anticipates a great question in the national policy of this Union which may be nearer at hand than most of our countrymen are aware of: Whether we too shall annex to our federative government a great system of colonial establishments.

“5. It points to a principle proving that such establishments are incompatible with the essential character of our political institutions.

“It leads to the conclusion that great colonial establishments are but mighty engines of wrong, and that in the progress of social improvement it will be the duty of the human family to abolish them, as they are now endeavoring to abolish the slave-trade.” [4]

A Son of the American Revolution

John Quincy Adams was a son of the American Revolution. His father, John Adams, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a leading figure of the Revolution, a champion of the new Constitution, the first Vice-President and second President of the United States.

As accomplished as was the father, the son accomplished even more. John Quincy Adams shaped the foundations of American foreign policy and the future of the United States as a continental republic. For more than seven decades, he played a leading role in the development of the young nation.

It was Adams who was most responsible for extending the United States beyond the Mississippi River, over the Rocky Mountains and to the Pacific Ocean. In 1803, he urged President Thomas Jefferson to proceed with the Louisiana Purchase from France, and he was the only U.S. Senator from the Northeastern states who voted for it. Adams was one of the negotiators with the British in 1814 to end the War of 1812, which importantly accomplished the return of Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River in the Oregon Territory, to the United States, which had been taken by the British during that war. As Secretary of State in 1818, he negotiated the purchase of Florida and a large chunk of territory, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, from Spain and brought about Spain's recognition that U.S. territory extended all the way to the Pacific Ocean, being the first country to do so.

Most importantly, during the period of 1817 to 1829, Adams as Secretary of State and then the U.S. President, ensured that most of the Pacific Coast of North America would become a part of the United States. Each of these accomplishments were, for Adams, battles in a larger war-- a war between the forces of republicanism in the Americas versus the colonial powers of Great Britain, Russia, and Spain.

As President from 1825-1829, Adams put the United States on the pathway of industrial development and began building the railroads. Following his presidency, Adams continued to serve the republic as a member of the U.S. Congress, dying in his seat in that chamber in 1848. In Congress, Adams was the nation's conscience with his unceasing actions in opposition to slavery. That story is best told by William Lee Miller in his book, *“Arguing about Slavery: John Quincy Adams and the Great Battle in the United States Congress.”*

Adams' Formative Years

John Quincy Adams was born in 1767. At the age of eight, he read his father's letters written from the Continental Congress in Philadelphia about the newly issued Declaration of Independence. In 1774, young John Quincy had joined the local militia in musket drill. A year later, in 1775, he witnessed the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The Adamses were descendants of New England Puritans, the first of whom settled in Massachusetts in 1640. John Quincy's mother, Abigail Adams, was one of the most important women of the Revolutionary period, and probably the best educated woman in America at the time.

By the age of ten, John Quincy Adams was irrevocably dedicated to learning; and especially dedicated to the classics of literature, history, languages and geometry. Ancient history, Greek heroic poetry and drama, Shakespeare and Milton-- all were his daily fare before the age of twelve.

The Bible was his constant companion. Every day, through his entire life, he would study it for at least one hour. He believed in the existence of one God, Creator and Governor of the universe, particularly of mankind. He believed that man was essentially good, like God, and not depraved.

Abigail Adams wrote to her eleven year old son, as he left with his father to go to France as an envoy of the U.S. Continental Congress:

"The most amiable and most useful disposition in a young mind is diffidence of itself; and this should lead you to seek advice and instruction from him, who is your natural guardian, and will always counsel and direct you in the best manner, both for your present and future happiness.

"Improve your understanding by acquiring useful knowledge and virtue, such as will render you an ornament to society, an honor to your country, and a blessing to your parents.

"Great learning and superior abilities, should you ever possess them, will be of little value and small estimation, unless virtue, honor, truth, and integrity are added to them.

"Adhere to those religious sentiments and principles which were early instilled into your mind, and remember, that you are accountable to your Maker for all your words and actions." [5]

In another letter, his mother reminded him that he was destined to be a "guardian of his country's laws and liberties." As he and his father left for their second trip to Europe in 1780, she wrote:

"These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed....Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities, which would otherwise lie dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.

"The Habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All History will convince you of this, and that wisdom and penetration are the fruits of experience, not the Lessons of retirement and leisure." [6]

During John Quincy's first trip to Europe in 1778, he spent the first year in school. While his father and Benjamin Franklin negotiated for French aid to the Revolution, John Quincy immersed himself in Greek and Roman history, geometry, algebra, differential calculus, music, drama and art. By the age of 16, he was fluent in Dutch, German and Spanish.

At the age of 14, Adams was given his first official diplomatic assignment. He went to Russia as a translator and aide to Francis Dana, the first U.S. envoy to the Czar. Rounding out his first years in Europe, he acted as secretary to his father, who was the ambassador to Holland and, later, to England.

The more he saw of court life, whether in Paris, St. Petersburg, Versailles, London or the Netherlands, the more ardent a republican he became. Very important for the future of the United States, and the role Adams was to play in its history, was his experience in Russia, first as the aide to Francis Dana, and later, his five years in St. Petersburg as U.S. Ambassador, from 1809-1814.

Adams, during the George Washington administration, was appointed as the Ambassador to the Netherlands and then to Portugal. In 1797, with his father now the U.S. President, he was the Ambassador to Prussia (Germany) for four years.

While he was the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, Adams intensely studied the German language and literature, amassing the largest collection of German language books possessed by any American for at least the rest of that century. He translated to English some of the classics of the German literature, including the first complete translation of Wieland's *Oberon* and often expressed his love for the works of Lessing, Goethe, Kotzebue and Schiller. [7] Adams' promotion of German literature and language contributed to a rising interests in the U.S. for Germany and German literature, such that he is accorded the title of, father of German studies' in America. [8]



John Quincy Adams was the first United States Minister to Russia from 1809-1814.

Adams vs “Manifest Destiny”

Appointed by President James Madison as the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, serving from 1809-1814, he was there when Napoleon invaded in 1812, and he watched with fascination as Russia's entrapment strategy unfolded, destroying Napoleon's army. His comments on Napoleon:

“It may well be doubted whether in the compass of human history since the creation of the world a greater, more sudden and total reverse of fortune was ever experienced by man, than is now exhibiting in the person of a man whom fortune for a previous course of nearly twenty years had favored with a steadiness and a prodigality equally unexampled in the annals of mankind.... It has pleased heaven for many years to preserve this man and to make him prosper as an instrument of divine wrath to scourge mankind. His race is now run, and his own turn of punishment has commenced.” [9]

To Create a Nation “Co-extensive With the North American Continent”

It was also in Russia that Adams first formulated the idea that the United States must become a continental nation, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In June of 1811, he wrote to his mother:

“....It is my attachment to the Union, which makes me especially anxious for the result of the Massachusetts Elections—They are a contest of life and death for the Union—If that Party are not ultimately put down in Massachusetts as completely as they already are in New-York and Pennsylvania, and all the Southern and Western States, the Union is gone—Instead of a nation coextensive with the North-American Continent, destined by God and Nature to be the most populous and most powerful People, ever combined under one social compact; we shall have an endless multitude of little insignificant clans and tribes, at eternal War with one another, for a rock or a fish-pond, the sport and fable of European Masters and oppressors.” [10]

In that same year, Adams, in a letter to his father, wrote:

“The whole continent of North America appears to be destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one nation, speaking one language, professing one general system of religious and political principles, and accustomed to one general tenor of social usages and customs. For the common happiness of them all, for their peace and prosperity, I believe it is indispensable that they should be associated in one federal Union.” [11]

For the next 35 years, that project of creating a nation “coextensive with the North American continent,” would be a major focus of the life of John Quincy Adams. When Adams wrote those words, the United States had barely moved east of the Mississippi River. Just six years earlier the Lewis and Clark Expedition had returned from its exploration of a land route to the Pacific Ocean, a project initiated by President Thomas Jefferson and supported by Adams, then a member of the U.S. Senate. As we shall see, there was only one U.S. settlement on the Pacific coast at that time-- at the mouth of the Columbia River-- Astoria, established in 1811.

The reader must imagine, in his or her mind, what the world was like in the period after the American Revolution. For the next few decades, as empires competed in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to establish colonies, or prevent colonies from asserting their independence, the young United States, even with its own internal divisions, steadily moved west across the continent of North America. This westward movement, the opening up of territories and adding new states to the Union, has, in recent decades, been described by some as an “imperialist expansion under the slogan of manifest destiny.” Described as a racist, genocidal lust for territory, that stole the land of the Native Americans, while extinguishing whole tribes, such a characterization, like all such characterizations, leaves no room for real history, and completely leaves out the principled intent of the U.S. policy as especially argued by John Quincy Adams.

While this presentation will not delve into this question in detail, what will be presented is a summary distinction between the vision of John Quincy Adams, on one side, and what has become generally thought of as “Manifest Destiny” on the other. Above, the reader has been presented with Adams' idea of what the republic must be. What remains, is to briefly present the two conflicting versions of that phrase, “Manifest Destiny.” While Adams never used that phrase, and in the 1840s completely rejected it and what it had come to mean, he did use the phrase “Continentalism” to describe his own policy.

The phrase “Manifest Destiny” itself was not enunciated until 1845, but what came to be understood by the phrase had emerged two decades earlier, especially as promoted and practiced by President Andrew Jackson. This Jacksonian Manifest Destiny was simply an intention to spread slavery to more and more of the territory of North America.

Jackson as President from 1829-1837, is notorious for the expulsion of the Native Americans from their homes in the Southeast part of the U.S. to west of the Mississippi River. Known as “The Trail of Tears,” it began with the “Indian Removal Act” in 1830. Doubly evil was that this forced relocation, in which thousands died, obliterated the policy of the George Washington administration that had created a process of cultural integration for what was called the “Five Civilized Tribes” (the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee and Seminole tribes).

Thus, President Andrew Jackson and then President Martin Van Buren had, by 1838, produced the largest expansion of slave territory in the nation's history, as slavery quickly spread to the areas from which the Native Americans had been expelled. At about that time, the slavocracy of the South, through the Democratic Party, began promoting the annexation of Texas because it would become a slave state, and, they hoped, ensure the continued control of Congress by the slave states.

In contrast to Jackson, John Quincy Adams, during his Presidency, expressed his desire for the gradual assimilation of Native Americans via consensual agreements:

“Throughout his presidency, Adams wrestled with the question of whether to give Indians land west of the Mississippi or incorporate them into the Union, he wrote in his personal diary in December 1825....

“By the beginning of his third year in office, Adams' personal writings began to reflect a deep disillusionment with Indian policy.

“‘We have talked of benevolence and humanity, and preached them into civilization,’ he wrote in his diary in January 1828. ‘But none of this benevolence is felt where the right of the Indian comes in collision with the interest of the white man.’” [12]

And this: *“While Adams was ineffective in halting the march towards the calamitous Indian Removal of the 1830s, he became a strong and active critic of US Indian affairs for the rest of his life.” [13]*

And one more: *“John Quincy Adams' public dedication to unpopular principles helped assure his defeat in the presidential election of 1828. They also led him to take on causes that today seem impressive. For example, Adams overturned a treaty signed by the Creek nation in 1825 that ceded its remaining land to the state of Georgia because he believed that it had been fraudulently obtained through coercive methods. Georgia's governor was outraged, but Adams believed that the matter clearly fell under federal jurisdiction. Although Adams' support of the Creeks didn't prevent their*

removal to the west, he lost political backing from Americans who widely believed that whites deserved access to all Indian lands.” [14]

The same Andrew Jackson had destroyed the Hamiltonian *Second National Bank of the United States*, which directly caused the economic and financial crisis of 1837, the worst, up to that time, in the nation's history. By doing so, Jackson unleashed such economic chaos in the country that for more than three decades the U.S. had no national currency and no national credit system. [15]

Combined, Jackson's expulsion of the Native Americans and his destruction of the national bank, evoked from John Quincy Adams, now a member of the U.S. Congress, a warning that Jackson's policy will lead to Civil War:

....However in one portion of the union, the independent farmers or planters, cultivating the soil by their slaves, may be considered, by one of themselves, as the basis of society, and the best part of the population [Adams here is paraphrasing statements made by Andrew Jackson], the assumption of such a principle as a foundation of a system of national policy for the future government of these United States, is an occurrence of the most dangerous and alarming tendency; as threatening, at no remote period, not only the prosperity, but the peace of the country, and as directly leading to the most fatal of catastrophes-- the dissolution of the union by a complicated, civil and servile war. [16]

This was something that John Quincy Adams, and other patriots such as Abraham Lincoln, dedicated their lives to prevent. Politically, in contrast to the Democratic Party, known then as the party of slavery, the Whig Party (forerunner of the Republican Party, founded in 1856) tended to oppose “manifest destiny” for that very reason.

By the early 1840s, two potential conflicts were facing the nation, which would make the phrase “manifest destiny” one known by virtually all Americans. The first of these was the final resolution of the conflict with the British Empire in the Pacific Northwest (the Oregon Territory), still focused on where the border between the U.S. and the British colony of Canada would lie. The second conflict was with Mexico over the issue of Texas. Would Texas remain part of Mexico or would it become part of the U.S? That conflict led to the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. In the Congress at that time, two members loudly and aggressively argued against that war: John Quincy Adams and the future President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.

By 1846, the perversion of U.S. policy under Presidents Jackson and Martin Van Buren, and then President James Polk, which promoted the spread slavery to new territories while stealing Texas from Mexico, provoked John Quincy Adams to repudiate all expansionism because it meant the expansion of slavery. [17]

The Origin of the Phrase “Manifest Destiny”

In 1845, John O'Sullivan wrote an essay titled “Annexation” in the *Democratic Review* [18] in which he used the phrase “manifest destiny” [19]. In this article he urged the U.S. to annex the Republic of Texas, [20] not only because the Americans in Texas desired this, but because it was “our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” [21]

Later that same year, O'Sullivan again used the phrase in his column in the newspaper the *New York Morning News*, arguing that the U.S. should claim all of the Oregon Territory:

“And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.” [22]

Interestingly, O'Sullivan made the argument that any British claim to Oregon had no legitimacy because Britain was a monarchy and not a democracy, asserting that manifest destiny- the spread of American republicanism- was a higher law, superior to the British system. [23]

O'Sullivan simply gave a “republican” cover to his idea, and exactly what his views and state of mind may have been, in the end, simply facilitated the intention of those promoting the expansion of slavery.

We shall return to the Oregon Territory conflict with the British below, since it is a central part of this chapter. What can be said here is that some of the proponents of “manifest destiny” during the campaign for President by James Polk in 1844, used the idea to promote a fight with the British over the boundary between the U.S. and Canada, calling for the border to be as far north as the 54'40” degree parallel, which would have completely excluded the British from the Pacific coast. Those with that intention may or may not have also been part of the “manifest destiny” crowd promoting the spread of slavery.

The Democrats did annex Texas in 1845, and the war with Mexico began the following year.

Congressmen John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln led the opposition to the Mexican War. Adams referred to the conflict with Mexico as, “a most unrighteous war.”

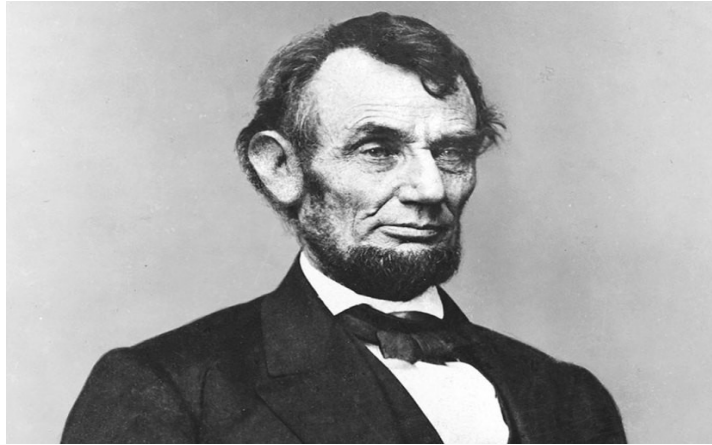
Earlier, President John Tyler, whose term would end in March 1845, had again submitted an annexation treaty to Congress. Adams strongly attacked the treaty, arguing that the annexation of Texas would involve the United States in “a war for slavery.” Despite Adams's opposition, both houses of Congress approved the treaty, with most Democrats voting for annexation and most Whigs voting against it. Texas thus joined the United States as a slave state in 1845. [24]

Once the war had been initiated, Adams continued to attack the war against Mexico:

“The Mexican-American war lasted twenty-one months. For that entire period it was Quincy Adams who led the opposition, and who was the most courageous in speaking 'truth to evil.' Others joined him or acted on their own, but it was Adams, on the floor of Congress, who took the point. On May 25, 1846, Adams delivered a speech to the House of Representatives pro-claiming that the War was a pre-arranged plot to extend slavery, and charging that the sending of U.S. troops to Mexico was a 'southern expedition to find bigger pens to cram with slaves.’” [25]

Abraham Lincoln, as a Whig member of Congress, challenged President James Polk directly, calling him out and demanding that he tell the American people the truth that Mexican troops did not cross over into U.S. territory and spill American blood there. Referred to as Lincoln's “Spot Resolutions” these were a direct attack on the Democrats “manifest destiny” as a policy centered on conquest. [26]

In 1862 and 1863, Abraham Lincoln, then the U.S. President, revived the principled idea of what America and its foreign policy must be, echoing what Adams had enunciated 40 years earlier. Underling the uniqueness of the U.S. republic, Lincoln in his December 1, 1862 message to Congress, described the United States as “the last, best hope on Earth.” [27]



Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln addressed this idea again in his Gettysburg address of November 19, 1863:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure."

Lincoln then drove home the idea in his concluding sentences:

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." [28]

Yet, even with the victory of the Union in the Civil War, the theme of “manifest destiny” never died. Below is a painting from 1872 titled *American Progress*, by John Gast. Here is an interesting commentary on the painting by Tim Talbott:

"The figure floating above the scene is not an angel, but rather Lady Columbia, a symbol for The United States. She is moving over an allegorical map of America, from east to west. On her forehead she wears the star of empire. In her right arm she carries not the Bible, but a school book, bringing education to the uncivilized West. In her left hand she strings telegraph wire, connecting the reunited United States. Railroads run behind her as well as stagecoaches and westward pioneers.

"Uncivilized Indians and wild animals such as bears, wolves, and buffalo flee before her enlightening atmosphere. The Indians have left their teepees and the bones of the buffalo behind. To the East the skies are clear, representing the influence of civilization and technology, but to the west, over the Rocky

Mountains, where the white man has barely reached, it is dark and unsettled.

“Just behind Lady Columbia settlers have built a cabin and are plowing the ground to raise crops. Just under her are frontiersmen, miners, and hunters, on foot and on horseback reaching the border between civilization and wilderness.”



American Progress by John Gast (1872)

Adams Leads the U.S. to the Pacific

We return again to the world of the early 1800s, as the empires of Europe were engaged in wars against one another while attempting to expand and protect their colonies in the Americas as well as Africa and Asia.

Our focus here shall be on the conflict as it occurred on the Pacific Coast of North America. Although very little was known about the Oregon Territory in the early 1800s, three empires had staked their claims on various parts of it. Mexico, as a colony of Spain, extended as far up the Pacific coast as San Francisco, and its explorers had sailed as far north as Alaska. Russia had fur trapping and trading colonies in Alaska, and the British were exploring overland across Canada.

Spain had no interest in extending its boundaries further north, so its role is relatively marginal to our story. The real dynamic then, is the contesting interests and claims by the Russians, the British, and “the new kid on the block,” the Americans. John Quincy Adams, as we shall see, will shape much of this story, and will ensure that his 1811 concept of America as “*a nation, coextensive with the North American continent*” shall come into being.

The Russians

The Russian Empire (or at least some Russians in the early 1800s) expressed, shall we say, imperial overreach. Having extended their empire to the Pacific Ocean, over a distance of more than 4,000 miles, the idea arose among some that the entire North Pacific Ocean should become a “Russian Lake.” But, a more limited ambition dominated Russian policy at this time. It was to simply expand “Russia-

America,” which already extended, by 1812, from the Aleutian Islands to an isolated colony north of San Francisco, to the complete control over the entire western shore of the Americas. The idea of the North Pacific Ocean as a “Russian Lake” led some Russian “rogues” in an attempt to seize Hawaii in the second decade of that new century. More on that later in this report.

A contrary idea did exist in Russia, especially in the early years of the 19th Century, as Adams discovered during his role as Ambassador to Russia (1809-1814).

A fascinating study by Rene Sigerson, published by the *LaRouche Political Action Committee* in 2016, reports on how, during John Quincy Adams ambassadorship in Russia, from 1809-1814, a pro-American grouping within the Russian intelligencia, not only acted to make America an ally against Napoleon, and wanted the United States to become a continental republic, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. Russia's interests, they believed, were best served if the British empire were excluded from the Pacific Ocean. This also was part of these Russian's intent to develop the interior zones of Russia, an idea that was first expressed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz a century earlier in his writings on China. [29]

As the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Adams had frequent access to Tsar Alexander, but in particular, he communicated with the head of Alexander's cabinet, Count Nikolay Rumyantsev. To quote Sigerson:

“At a point when he still hoped to prevent the War of 1812 from erupting between the United States and Britain—as war would then exclude commercial ties and deeper cooperation between the United States and Britain's temporary ally Russia—Adams wrote to Rumyantsev: ‘I lament the war, particularly as occurring at a period when, from my good wishes for Russia and for the Russian cause, I should rejoice to see friendship and harmony taking place between America and England, rather than discord... I know the war will affect unfavorably the interest of Russia.’” [30]

For now, we shall take a few steps back in time to set the stage for the events to be reported on.

It was in 1715 that Peter the Great (1672-1725), on a visit to Paris, learned about the general ignorance in Europe in regard to the North Pacific. He decided to send out an expedition from Siberia to learn whether it was connected by land with North America. He chose the Dane, Vitus Bering, a captain in the Russian Navy, as his commander. Peter died in 1725. Later, it was under the leadership of Czarina Catherine I (1729-1796) that the exploration and colonization of Alaska began. After many false starts and delays, Bering finally made a serious voyage in 1741. This voyage discovered the Aleutians and the Alaska mainland. Bering did not return to Russia, as he died while exploring Alaska, but we do have the Bering Strait and an Aleutian island named in his honor. [31]

As the Russians began establishing settlements in the Aleutians and on the Alaska mainland midway through the 18th century, official Russian policy toward the American west coast in the late 1700s was, generally, one of neglect. Fur traders, drawn by the enormously rich trapping areas of Alaska, established one settlement after another. Kodiak and Fort Alexander were established in 1784 and 1787 by Gregory Ivanovich Shelikov (1747-1795). Shelikov was running a very large fur business, and in 1789 pleaded with the Empress Catherine to send a large ecclesiastical mission to the Alaska settlements. He also outlined plans for establishing trading relations with the entire American and Asiatic seacoast, and outlined the plan for moving into the Amur Valley of China, which was finally realized with the founding of Vladivostok sixty years later.



Flag of the Russian-American Company

Nicholas Petrovich Rezanov (1764-1806), a noble at the St. Petersburg court, was to become the spokesman for the implementation of Shelikov's program. Rezanov convinced Czar Paul (1796-1801) in 1799 to found the *Russia-America Company*. The company was authorized to make "new discoveries not only north of the 55 degree parallel, but also further to the south and to accept the lands which it discovered under the Russian government." This was a clear statement of intent to exclude the British and the Americans from the Pacific area. The Russia-America Company was to be the official arm of St. Petersburg in the North Pacific.



Nicholas Rezanov's portrait from the Russian State Historical Museum

Czar Paul was assassinated in 1801, bringing Alexander I to the throne. Alexander was more aware of and favorable to the plans of Shelikov and the new czar took the company under his protection.

Earlier, in 1790, Shelikov appointed Alexander Andreyevich Baranov (1747-1819) to run the Kodiak colony. Baranov became the outstanding man in Russian America. Soon, an ecclesiastical mission arrived in Kodiak and began converting the natives to the Russian Orthodox Church. By 1805, Baranov, now the official governor in Alaska, had established a Russian colony in Sitka, more than 600 miles south of Kodiak.

In 1805, Rezanov visited Baranov in Alaska. After assessing that the miserable existence of the small colonies would never realize their plans, Rezanov determined to transfer the entire colony to the region of the Columbia River and to the San Francisco Bay Area. An exploratory party was sent out the next year, but were unable to enter the Columbia River due to the dangerous conditions at its mouth. The ship then proceeded to San Francisco in an effort to buy supplies and then later sailed to the mouth of the Russian River, 30 miles north of San Francisco at Bodega Bay, later establishing Fort Ross on the now named Russian River in 1812.

Two Views of the Russian-American Company's Fort Ross in California



Rezanov and Barzanov also conceived of the plan to take the Hawaiian Islands (more on that below).

Rezanov's ever expanding plans were dispatched to Petersburg. In one letter, urging settlement of the Columbia River area, he claimed that if he was given the means to do so, the Russians could take control of northern California and the Columbia River.



Alexandr Andreyevich Baranov (Portrait by Mikhail Tikhonovich Tikhanov, 1818)
First Governor of Russian America

It was while the Russians were building up their California settlement at Fort Ross that Baranov made an attempt to take over Hawaii. Hawaii was already a strategic choke point in world politics and an important stopping point for ships of many nations cruising the Pacific Ocean. In the days of sailing ships, even those going to American ports after rounding Cape Horn would stop at Hawaii for supplies and rest.

Since no manpower or military backup would be forthcoming from St. Petersburg, Baranov decided on a plan of gradual infiltration into the islands. All went well until he sent a German, Dr. George Anton Schaefer, who had been in Alaska for some time, to Hawaii to negotiate with the Hawaiian King. Schaefer, after ingratiating himself by his services to the king, then moved too fast. A gift of land from the king to Schaefer in 1816 was immediately turned into a fort and the Russian flag was raised. This was too much for the king and his American friends on the islands. The Americans attacked the fort, captured Schaefer and his crew, and put them on a leaky ship. Schaefer barely made it to China. The Russian government, distrusting Schaefer, then broke all ties with him. This ended the Russian threat to Hawaii. [32]

So, we shall leave the Russians in Alaska and at Fort Ross in California for now, but they shall return to our story a little later.

The British and the Americans

In 1776 the British sent James Cook (1728-1779) on his Pacific voyage. Cook discovered the Hawaiian Islands (then called the Sandwich Islands) and explored the American coast as far as Point Barrow, even further north than Vitus Bering had gone.

Britain and the United States were, by 1800, not only engaged in heavy maritime trade in the Pacific,

but were inching overland toward the Pacific coast. British explorer Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820) had reached the Pacific in 1792. American President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) and William Clark (1770-1838) to explore the newly purchased Louisiana Territory and they reached the Pacific, at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1806.



The modern United States, with Louisiana Purchase overlay

British-chartered private companies dominated much of what is today Canada in this period. These included the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company as the two largest and the most active arms of the empire on the continent. Their business was the fur trade and they were very vigilant and jealous of any competition, so when the Americans began moving into the northwest and the Oregon Territory, their officers alerted London of the threat to their dominance. That threat was soon a reality.

In 1809, John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) incorporated the American Fur Company in New York. With encouragement from President Jefferson and Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin (1761-1849), Astor planned to open up the Pacific Northwest by establishing a line of trading posts up the Missouri River, then across the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. With the goal of building a permanent trading post and port at the mouth of the Columbia, Astor foresaw tapping into the western fur trade and being able to ship to China, or to New York, or to Europe. The post at the mouth of the Columbia was to be founded by the two parties he will send, and was to be named Astoria. [33]

In January of 1808, in a letter to New York mayor De Witt Clinton, and in subsequent letters to President Thomas Jefferson and to Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, Astor elaborated on his scheme. He “proposed a vast trade network extending from Western Europe and the American Great Lakes to the Pacific Northwest and on to Russian America and China.” It was to be a “complete land and sea transportation system shifting goods, pelts, information, and employees around a global marketplace. The agent for this enterprise would be the Pacific Fur Company, a private venture with close ties to the federal government.” Astor proposed that his company control the entire fur trade of North America and extend it to the Pacific, and although he included the words “close ties to the federal government” there is no evidence to support the claim that this was ever his true intention, and

it definitely was not accepted by Jefferson. [34]

Some needed words on Astor and Gallatin

John Jacob Astor and James Gallatin are two men who play an interesting role in the history of the United States, for both good and for evil. Both were European migrants to the U.S. in the period just after the American Revolution, with Astor coming from Germany and Gallatin from an aristocratic Swiss family. Astor was a man driven to succeed in business, and he did, becoming America's first millionaire. Gallatin went from the U.S. Congress to Secretary of Treasury under Presidents Jefferson and Madison (serving longer than any other individual in that post in American history-- nearly 12 years), and then to various diplomatic posts. In the book *Treason in America*, historian Anton Chaitkin has nothing good to say about either of them, and his rebuke of them is well deserved. [35]

Here however, I shall present an under-appreciated irony of history that both men were central to. In spite of their treasonous acts during the early years of the republic, both men went on to play important roles, directly and indirectly working with, or at least in parallel to, John Quincy Adams, whose intent was to ensure that the Pacific Coast became part of the United States rather than of the British or Russian empires. A fuller account of the anomalous change which both men underwent remains a tale for other historians to unveil in full, but due to the importance of their roles in Adams' grand strategy some words must be said of them here and now.



John Jacob Astor portrait by John Wesley Jarvis, circa 1825

Astor went from providing escape money for Aaron Burr after his assassination of Alexander Hamilton in 1804, to creating an American outpost at the mouth of the Columbia River that gave the U.S. the

foothold in the Pacific Northwest crucial to ensuring that what is Washington State today is part of the U.S. and not part of British colony of Canada. In addition, since the final border between the U.S. and Canada was drawn on the 49th parallel, and thus cut-off the British from access to the Columbia River, and ensured that Canada would have no river that could access its interior from the Pacific Ocean. After his Astoria project was destroyed by the British seizing the post during the War of 1812, Astor for a short time went into the opium trade to China. Later, Astor began buying up New York City real estate and is credited with creating the slum system in that city. [36] Perhaps the fact that some of his descendants gave up their U.S. citizenship and moved to Britain, buying titles and becoming Lord and Lady Astor, is as it should have been, since Astor's life and identity were more in tune with British monetarism than with the American System. [37]

Gallatin's role in American history is an odd mixture of defacto sabotage of the young nation on the one hand, while performing useful duties for the country, on the other. During the early years of the Jefferson presidency when Gallatin acted as Secretary of Treasury, he insisted that the budget be cut in order to pay off the debt of the country, thus virtually dismantling the U.S. Navy and Army in the years leading up to the War of 1812. In spite of that, Gallatin transitioned to become a man who served the interests of the nation in a series of diplomatic posts, most of those under the authority of John Quincy Adams. In this story Gallatin appears frequently, and will be mentioned when necessary.

All through the years that Astor was pursuing his Astoria project Albert Gallatin became Astor's "most reliable and trusted friend in the government." [38]



Albert Gallatin. painting by Matthew Wilson
Oil on canvas 1879

Then, during the *War of 1812*, Gallatin was sent by President Madison to St. Petersburg, Russia in 1813 in an attempt to enlist the Czar as an intermediary to end that U.S.--British War. It was there that for the first time he worked with John Quincy Adams, then the U.S. Ambassador to Russia. When the Czar declined to be such an intermediary, Gallatin and Adams headed to the city of Ghent, Belgium, where direct negotiations with the British to end the war began in 1814. They were joined by three other Americans, including Congressman Henry Clay. The negotiations lasted four months and the peace treaty was signed in December, 1814. Since the British had taken Astoria from the Americans during the war, Astor had communicated to Gallatin the importance of returning Astoria to American possession. [39] The return of territory, places and possessions was also communicated to the negotiators by President James Monroe, and that demand became Article I of the treaty. [40]

Following his work in negotiating the Ghent treaty, President James Madison appointed Adams as the U.S. Ambassador to Britain, and he served in that position until 1817, when the new President, James Monroe, appointed him as Secretary of State.



The Signing of the Treaty of Ghent, Christmas Eve, 1814. Oil on canvas by Sir Amédée Forestier, 1914. John Quincy Adams is the center figure in the painting.

Gallatin, following the completion of the work at Ghent, then accompanied Adams to Britain and helped him to negotiate a new commercial treaty between the British government and the U.S. Gallatin was then appointed the U.S. Ambassador to France (1816-1823). Beginning in 1817, his new boss was Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. While serving as ambassador to Britain (1826-1827), Gallatin negotiated an extension of the Anglo-American Oregon Country treaty that Adams had first negotiated in 1818.

Anton Chaitkin, author of *Treason in America-- From Aaron Burr to Averell Harriman*, in a message to me on April 8, 2019, commenting on Gallatin, said: "From what I could see, in the early days he is part of the Imperial effort to sabotage the development of a strong independent USA. Later on, I see him as working to define oligarchical control of the new country, rather than its destruction." [41]

Astoria, the Brits and the Russians

Now we return to our story of Astor and Astoria, and bring in the Brits and the Russians.

In the few decades before Astor's proposed venture, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, both private companies sponsored by the British Empire in Canada, had extended their fur trapping businesses all the way to the Rocky Mountains and had made forays to the Pacific Coast in what is today British Columbia, Canada. In the 1790s, Astor had been a partner and done business with the Hudson Bay Company, wherein he became a very rich fur trader.

Returning from the expedition to the Pacific, Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition filled President Jefferson's ears in 1806 with the idea of a major development on the Columbia River-- a trading house that would collect furs from the interior that would then be shipped directly to China. Due to his fur trading interests, Astor was much attuned to the results of the Lewis and Clark expedition, and he may have believed that such a project would only be possible with U.S. government support.



The Lewis and Clark Expedition
William Clark is on the left, and Meriwether Lewis on the right.
Paintings by Charles Willson Peale, 1807

His first step, even as he was writing to President Jefferson of his plans, was to incorporate the American Fur Company in New York State, which was accomplished on April 6, 1808. Jefferson responded to Astor's petition by encouraging Astor to proceed, but not to expect any help from the government.

Astor began making preparations for his Columbia River project in 1809, planning two expeditions to go the mouth of the river-- one overland and one by sea. He had by now become friends with Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin and kept him informed of the progress of the project. Gallatin, in turn, kept the new President, James Madison, informed of Astor's project.

His project early on raised alarms in Canada which were communicated to London. The Canadians warned that Astor was about to "invade" the west, and asked for government assistance, including a naval deployment to stop him.[42] In March, 1810, Astor incorporated a new company, the Pacific Fur Company, to be the vehicle for his Columbia project.

Throughout this period, tensions between the British Empire and the United States were becoming very serious as the British were impressing American sailors into the British navy by the thousands--literally kidnapping them off American commercial ships.

By 1810 Astor was ready to launch his project. The expeditions were ready to go, one by sea and the second overland that would follow the route pioneered by Lewis and Clark. On March 1, 1811 the ship with the men, and their supplies, who would build the Astoria post anchored at the mouth of the Columbia River. Over the next months they built a fort, opened relations with the native tribes and began to trap beavers for the pelts. The overland expedition, diverging from the route of Lewis and Clark due to the danger of attack by hostile tribes, after much difficulty, suffering and some deaths, arrived at the Astoria fort in February, 1812.



Fort Astoria in 1813

Now we backtrack a little and bring the Russians into the picture once again. By the early 1800s, competition from British, and especially American fur traders, was undercutting the Russian-American company's profits. And worse, from the Russian point of view, American captains were selling arms to the natives, creating a very dangerous environment for everyone. Yet, the Russians were dependent upon the American ships for supplies to their very isolated outposts. In addition, the best market for furs was Canton, China, which was a port closed to the Russians. So, beginning in 1806, the Russians began proposing to the American government a commercial treaty that would involve American ships supplying the Russian settlements and taking Russian furs to Canton. A third element would be to outlaw all selling of arms to the natives.

By 1808, receiving no positive response from the U.S. government, the Russians began looking for an American merchant who could be a partner for the first two proposals. The Russian Consul-general at Philadelphia and the Charge d'affaires to the U.S. Congress, Andrei Dashkov (1775-1831), heard of the Astor project and made contact with him.

Astor and Dashkov hit it off immediately. Astor suggested a partnership between his Pacific Fur Company and the Russian-American Company, and that the Russians should move south from Alaska and the American company would move north from the Columbia River and squeeze out the British from the American Pacific coast. Astor's ships would supply the Russian settlements and take the Russian's furs to Canton, and as Astor assumed, he would soon have a monopoly on the Pacific fur trade, as other American ships would be squeezed out and the arms trade to the natives would collapse.

This was a deal that not only pleased the Russians, but pleased greatly Astor. By the end of 1809, Astor's ship the *Enterprise* set sail to Alaska. [43]

Just as Astor's nascent fur and trading empire was getting off the ground in June, 1812, the U.S. Congress declared war on Britain-- the *War of 1812* had begun. By the spring of 1813, the British were ready to send a naval group to Astoria and seize the settlement from the Americans. Understanding that this would probably be the result, the Americans at Astoria sold the fort and all their furs to the Canadian Northwest Company and began making the trek back across the continent. With no postal system in place and communications by either ship or transit across the continent taking a year or longer, Astor knew nothing of these developments. Finally, when he was informed of the sale of the fort he was furious, correctly concluding that he had been betrayed by his own employees.

In the mid-1830s, Astor commissioned one of America's most prominent authors, *Washington Irving*, to write a history of the Astoria project. Enthusiastically, Irving threw himself into the project and the resulting book, *Astoria*, became a best seller. Today, the book still provides the reader with an exciting adventure story and an excellent lesson in history. *Edgar Allan Poe* wrote a review of *Astoria* in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for January, 1837. Poe's review is a lengthy summary of, and recommendation to read, the book. [44]

As reported above, the *Treaty of Ghent* ending the War of 1812 included as its first article, the return of all possessions captured by either side during the war. Now, with the new Monroe administration in office, and with John Quincy Adams as Secretary of State, a more aggressive assertion of U.S. interests on the Pacific coast began. The first push by Adams was the return of Astoria to American hands and after some tense exchanges with the British ambassador to the U.S., the British agreed. In August, 1818, an American naval vessel arrived at Astoria and took formal possession of the fort for the United States. Although this was the end of Astor's dream of a global trading empire, America's foothold in the Oregon territory was now secured. And it was the beginning of one of the most remarkable, and far reaching, diplomatic actions in American history, orchestrated by John Quincy Adams, first as Secretary of State, then as President, as he began to construct the creation of the continental republic he had foreseen seven years earlier. Adams served as Secretary of State for the two terms of President James Monroe and then was elected President for one term in 1824.

John Quincy Adams: America's Greatest Secretary of State

Adams initiated further discussions with the British on the Oregon question at this time, resulting in the *Anglo-American Convention of 1818*, or, alternately called the *Treaty of 1818*. That treaty was negotiated for Adams by Albert Gallatin, who was then serving as U.S. Ambassador to France. The treaty fixed the boundary between the United States and Canada at the 49th parallel from *The Lake of the Woods* to the Rocky Mountains. This secured for the United States the northwestern part of Minnesota and most of North Dakota and Montana. This treaty also established the joint occupancy of the Oregon Territory, north of the Columbia River, without conceding to the British their claims of possession of this area. The joint occupancy agreement was to run for ten years and would be renewed once in 1827. The fight with the British on the Oregon question ensured a direction for American policy that consistently pushed the British north of the 49th parallel, all the way to the Pacific.

The Oregon question between the U.S. and Britain was not settled until the 1846 *Oregon Treaty* that permanently established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the U.S. and British North America (Canada) all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The battle for control of the Oregon Country would last almost three decades (1818-1846). During that interval of nearly 30 years, the British-chartered *Hudson's Bay Company*, from its base at Fort Vancouver on the north side of the Columbia River, directly across from today's city of Portland, Oregon, ran fur trapping operations up and down the Columbia River and its tributaries. The Hudson Bay Company attempted to keep American fur trappers and settlers out of the area, but by the 1830s, Americans began pouring in, especially to the area south of the Columbia River in the very fertile Willamette Valley. The Hudson Bay Company's hold on the area was further undermined by what the many managers of the company must have considered a traitor in their midst, the Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, John McLoughlin (1784-1857), who helped the American settlers with supplies and other aid through this period. McLoughlin eventually abandoned the company and settled in the Willamette Valley, becoming an American citizen. [45]

Adams-Onis Treaty, 1819 (AKA: "The Transcontinental Treaty")

While negotiating with the British on the northern boundaries of the nation, Adams was also negotiating with the Spanish on the southern boundaries. The result was the *Transcontinental Treaty* of 1819, also called the *Adams-Onis Treaty* (for Luis de Onis, the Spanish minister to the U.S.), which gave Florida to the United States and fixed a boundary line west of the Mississippi between the United States and Mexico, essentially following the lines of the Louisiana Purchase, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In the far west the line was the 42nd parallel, which is today the border between Oregon and California. Adams himself called the successful completion of this treaty his greatest diplomatic accomplishment. Now the United States had not only secured the entire Atlantic Ocean-Gulf of Mexico area, but had also received formal acknowledgment by Spain that the Oregon Territory belonged to the United States.



The boundaries of the 1819 *Transcontinental Treaty*

With the joint occupancy treaty with Britain and the *Adams-Onis Treaty* with Spain completed, Adams began giving increased attention to both the Russian claims to the Pacific Coast of America and the

British insistence that the border in Oregon be the Columbia River. Adams' intent was to extend the boundary established in the 1818 treaty with the British at the 49th parallel up to the Rocky Mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean. More than 20 years later, some in Washington, D.C. raised the slogan "54'40" or Fight," as a demand, but that was never seriously considered by Adams. Fifty-four degrees forty minutes is what is today the border of Alaska with British Columbia.

Adams began playing off the British against the Russians, attempting to convince both that it was in their interest to agree to the U.S. position. Since the Russian claims in the northwest included all of the Oregon Territory, at least as far south as the Columbia River, which also happened to be the same territory claimed by the British, Adams' idea was to convince the Russians to cede all of their claims to Oregon south of the 54'40" parallel to the U.S. That would line up the Americans and the Russians in an agreement that squeezed out the British completely from the Pacific coast. The fact that he had no intent of actually making that a serious claim by the U.S. was something he neglected to tell the Russians, much less the British.

The opportunity for Adams to proceed with this idea was soon handed to him by the Russians.

On September 4, 1821 the Russian government issued a *Ukase* (a proclamation) reserving to Russians only, "*the pursuits of commerce, whaling, fishing and other industry on all islands, ports and gulfs including the whole north-west coast of North America to the 45'50 north latitude....*" The Ukase also announced that no non-Russian ship may approach or land on any of the islands belonging to Russia. [46] The Ukase claimed its territory to extend as far south as the fifty-first degree, which is the parallel where the Columbia River enters the Pacific Ocean-- in other words the heart of the Oregon Territory.

Of course, the U.S. found such a claim unacceptable, but it was not until almost two years later that Adams would dispute such a claim in a direct face-to-face exchange with a Russian representative. Russian Minister Baron Tuvill visited Adams on July 17, 1823, and was informed by Adams that, the United States "*would contest the right of Russia to any territorial establishment on this continent, and that we should assume distinctly the principle that the American continents are no longer subject to any new colonial establishments.*" [47]

Earlier, the Russian Ambassador to the U.S., Pyotr Ivanovich Poletika (1748-1849), responded to Adams' more immediate complaint of the claims by stating that, since Russia held both shores of the North Pacific ocean, the east as far south as 51 degrees north latitude, the west as far south as 45 degrees, Russia would really be entitled to declare the waters of that ocean to be a closed sea north of a line between those two coastal points. But, he continued, the czar's government preferred to assert only its "essential rights." It would not, he said, close it, but just keep everyone 100 miles out.

Adams told Poletika that the United States would not for one moment acquiesce to this policy. It would never admit the Russian claims or give up the right of its citizens to freedom of the seas and to trade in the Northwest. [48]

Adams Finds Unexpected (and Dubious) Allies

It was at about this time that a New England opium trader began agitation to force the United States government to take more aggressive action on the Oregon question. This was Captain William Sturgis (1782-1863), founder of the Boston shipping and trading firm Bryant and Sturgis. The Sturgis family

was part of the Perkins syndicate and was directly related to the British-Swiss Baring banking empire.

William Sturgis had explored the Northwest Pacific Coast as early as 1798. In 1822, Sturgis wrote a series of articles in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. In these articles, he promoted establishing a naval post in Puget Sound (in present day Washington State) to protect American trading and merchant ships (i.e., his company's fur and opium trade), but deprecated the idea of ever establishing an American settlement on the Columbia River. He said it would be wrong to encourage any settlement of American emigrants in the Oregon Territory, because the region was too remote to ever be part of the United States. This, of course, was the exact opposite of Adams' outlook and policy. Sturgis unleashed a tremendous publicity campaign for his views. He repeated and elaborated his plans in another article in October, 1822 in the *North American Review*. Then in 1845, on the eve of a final settlement of the "Oregon Question," Sturgis gave a lecture in which he again politicizes against bringing any of the territory west of the Rocky Mountains in to the the U.S. as new states. [49]

Sturgis's intervention at this time, while motivated by his opium trading interests and the interests of the British bankers to prevent any permanent American settlement, had a quite different result than he had intended. Up to this time, the Pacific Northwest was not a subject of wide interest in the country. Adams now used the popular interest in Oregon that Sturgis, and others, had created, to further his policy of knocking the Russians out of the territory, and to force the British to accede to the 49th parallel as the boundary. Adams knew that a serious conflict with Britain over the Northwest coast at this time would be premature. Yet, all the agitation in Congress and by Sturgis was forcing him to act.

Part of the Congressional pressure came from Congressman John Floyd of Virginia, who sent Adams a letter demanding forceful American intervention in Oregon. Senator Floyd's intention, as one of the "state's rights nullifiers [50], both from his letter to Adams, and his introduction of bills in the House, was to damage the reputation of John Quincy Adams in the period leading to the 1824 Presidential elections, in which Adams would be a candidate. [51]

Adams used Floyd's letter to begin the public airing of his own policy. He wrote back to Floyd in July, 1823, accepting the necessity of an early settlement with Russia and firmness against British claims to the entire Columbia River basin, and stated his intention of establishing a government post at the mouth of the Columbia. Toward the end of his letter, Adams stated his principled policy that no European power had any moral right to hold territory or colonies in the Americas; the policy that President James Monroe would give to the world in just a few short months-- known today as the "Monroe Doctrine."

Recall what Adams had told the Russian Minister Baron Tuyll also in July, 1823: "*But what right has Russia to any colonial footing on the continent of North America? Has she any that we are bound to recognize? And is it not time for the American Nations to inform the sovereigns of Europe, that the American continents are no longer open to the settlement of new European colonies?*" [52] And in case his point was not clear, he restated it, that the United States would "*contest the right of Russia to any territorial establishment on this continent and that we should assume distinctly the principle that the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments.*" [53]

In a letter from Adams to the American Ambassador to Russia, Henry Middleton, Adams made clear the U.S. negotiating position: "*The right of the United States from the forty-second to the forty-ninth parallel of latitude on the Pacific Ocean we consider as unquestionable. This territory is to the United States of an importance which no possession in North America can be of to any European nation, not*

only as it is but the continuity of their possessions from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, but as it offers their inhabitants the means of establishing here-after communications from the one to the other.” [54]

Now Adams was ready to deal with the British, and one must admire his nerve. Recall what he told the Russians as you read what he proposes to the Brits. He proposed to the British ambassador to the U.S., Stratford Canning (1786-1880) that the United States and Great Britain reach a common understanding, and then jointly propose to Russia a tripartite treaty. Adams told Canning that the United States had *“no territorial claim of their own as high as the fifty-first degree of latitude.”* He hinted that if Great Britain did not cooperate with the United States against the territorial, as well as the maritime pretensions of Russia, she might get caught in a Russian-American vice closed at 51 degrees, the southern limit of the Russian claims, which, of course, was Adams' idea, not the Russian's, but Canning did not know that and Adams was not going to inform him of it either.

Canning replied that the British claims encompassed everything between 58 degrees and the Columbia River. Britain, of course, was less concerned with its northern boundary with Russia than with obtaining the Columbia as its southern boundary with the United States. In the process of these discussions with Canning, Adams said that Great Britain may have some legitimate claims to Canada, but that he must *“leave the rest of the continent to us.”* [55]

Parallel to the discussions with Canning, Adams commented to Monroe's cabinet, that the world should be, *“familiarized with the idea of considering our proper dominion to be the continent of North America. From the time we became an independent people, it was as much a law of nature that this should be our pretension as that the Mississippi should flow to the sea.”* [56]

Adams knew that the United States had neither the military capability, nor the political possibility, to attempt to drive the Russians or the British out by force, and he had no intent to even propose that to Monroe or the President's cabinet. Adams thought that if he let Russia be sure of a domain at least as far south as 55 degrees, and in the process lessen British concerns about the pressure from Russia, then Britain would press less heavily south of 51 degrees or at least 49 degrees.



In sum, Adams proposed the following: 1) Make the unsettled areas of the northwest coast free and open to the fishermen and traders of all three countries; but, 2) draw boundaries beyond which none would make settlements: Russia, none south of 55 degrees; Britain none north of 55 degrees, nor south of 51 degrees, or at least none south of 49 degrees; the United States none north of 51 degrees, or 49 degrees. Fifty-one degrees included the entire Columbia basin, and would, in Adams's view, give the United States complete access to all the headwaters of the Missouri and the Columbia rivers.

In the end, the treaty with the Russians took some time to work its way through both governments and was not signed until 1824, and is known as the *Russo-American Treaty of 1824*. A year later the Russians and the British signed the *Anglo-Russian convention of 1825*, in which Russia ceded all claims south of 54'40," and left the field of battle for the Oregon Territory to the Americans and the British. But, the Russian-British treaty recognized Alaska as a Russian possession, something that the United States had never done. Between themselves, the two powers were still attempting to ignore Adams's non-colonization principle.

Before moving on to the further U.S.-British negotiations, there is a little more to report on the Russians. Having conceded the Oregon Territory to the Americans and the British, the Russians were more determined than ever to maintain at least a foothold on the Pacific coast of America. Recall that the Russians had established Fort Ross on the Russian river near what is Bodega Bay today, 30 miles north of San Francisco. Its purpose was to supply agricultural produce to the Russian colonies in Alaska, but that was never really successful. The Russians finally gave up the colony in 1841, selling it to John Sutter. But, the Russians still maintained their colonies in Alaska, and would do so until 1867, finally selling Alaska to the U.S. for \$7.2 million. That story will be told toward the end of this report.

Now we return to Adam's further negotiations with the British.

The Monroe Doctrine: John Quincy Adams' Masterwork

Adams comments to the Russian and British ambassadors, and his comments to meetings of Monroe's cabinet, cited above, foretell the soon to be announced policy by the President that is known today as the Monroe Doctrine. That "doctrine," of course, was written for Monroe by his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams.

The Monroe Doctrine (not named as such until the 1850s) was presented by President James Monroe as part of his State of the Union address to Congress on December 2, 1823. In sum, the policy stated that any further actions by European nations to colonize any independent nation in North or South America would be seen by the United States as "*the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.*" It further stated that "*the U.S. would recognize and not interfere with existing European colonies in the Americas, nor would the U.S. involve itself in the internal affairs or conflicts of European nations.*" At the time, most of the colonies in Latin America of Spain and Portugal had won, or were about to win their independence from the Spanish and Portuguese empires. [57]

While Adams was negotiating and battling with the Russians and the British over the Oregon Territory, the independence movements in Latin America had won wide support from the American population and pressure from both the public and from the independence movements on the U.S. government for

recognition had to be responded to by the Monroe administration. Such an act by the U.S., in the minds of both Monroe and Adams, could mean war with the colonial powers, and they were not willing to risk that, though the U.S. had recognized the independence of the nations of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Columbia and Mexico in 1822.

The British were hesitant to take advantage of Spain's and Portugal's difficulties with their colonies and when France and Russia proposed that the British and the Russians together help Spain suppress the independence movements, the British declined, fearing loss of its trading business in Latin America. France's interest was its own-- it wished to become the new colonial power in the Americas, which of course, the British had no interest in facilitating.

The British, led by Foreign Minister George Canning (1770-1827), proposed to the U.S. that the two countries join together to oppose the French and Russian-led intent. President Monroe was inclined to agree to the British proposal of a joint declaration, despite Canning's refusal to recognize the independence of the new South American republics. Although former Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison favored Monroe accepting the British proposal, John Quincy Adams was absolutely opposed. Adams also saw the Russian involvement in this as related to the still active Russian activity on the Pacific coast, now focused on their colony at Fort Ross in California.

Commenting on the clear difference between the republican system and the system of colonial empires Adams had written on May 27, 1823:

"The South Americans should be informed or reminded by American diplomats that the European alliance of emperors and kings has assumed as the foundation of human society the doctrine of unalienable allegiance. Our doctrine is founded upon the principle of unalienable right. The European allies, therefore, have viewed the cause of the South Americans as rebellion against their lawful sovereign. We have considered it as the assertion of natural right. They have invariably shown their disapprobation of the revolution, and their wishes for the restoration of the Spanish power. We have as constantly –favored the standard of independence and of America." [58]

On October 16, 1823 a formal note from Baron von Tuyl, delivered to Adams, announced that the Czar, in conformance with the principles of his allies, would not receive any agents whatsoever from any of the rebel governments in America. It expressed satisfaction that the United States, in recognizing the independence of those governments, at least had proclaimed its intention to continue to be neutral. This was a not-too-veiled threat that, should the United States swerve from neutrality, the czar of Russia, spokesman of the *Holy Alliance* (consisting of Russia, Prussia and Austria), would intervene with France to support Spain's recovery her now lost colonies.

As Adams notes in his diary of November 7, 1823, reporting on the cabinet meeting that day to discuss both the proposal from Canning and the threat from Russia, he stated that he told the cabinet:

"I remarked that the communications recently received from the Russian Minister, Baron Tuyl, afforded, as I thought, a very suitable and convenient opportunity for us to take our stand against the Holy Alliance, and at the same time to decline the overture of Great Britain. It would be more candid, as well as more dignified, to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war." [59] [60]

Monroe agreed, and his arguments also won over the rest of Monroe's cabinet.



“Monroe Doctrine, 1823. The Birth Of The Monroe Doctrine.” Painting by Clyde O. Deland (1912). John Quincy Adams is at the left, speaking. President James Monroe is in the center.

Then on November 20, Adams put forward in exact terms what the world would soon know as the Monroe Doctrine. He told the cabinet:

“My purpose would be in a moderate and conciliatory manner; but with a firm and determined spirit, to declare our dissent from the principles avowed in those communications; to assert those upon which our own Government is founded, and, while disclaiming all intention of attempting to propagate them by force, and all interference with the political affairs of Europe, to declare our expectation and hope that the European powers will equally abstain from the attempt to spread their principles in the American hemisphere, or to subjugate by force any part of these continents to their will.” [61]

Having formulated the fundamental idea that the United States was to now directly challenge the oligarchical system of Europe, Adams responded to the Russian threats. On November 27, he read to the Russian Minister his *“Observations on the Communications recently received from the Minister of Russia.”* [62]

At the time Adams considered this the most important state paper he had ever written. The document stated that the government of the United States recognized the right of nations to establish and modify their own governments according to their own judgments. While espousing the republican principle, it had not sought by the propagation of its own principles to disturb the peace or to meddle with the policy of any part of Europe. It had recognized the established independence of the former Spanish colonies, and entered into political and commercial relations with them. In the existing contest between

these states and their mother country, the United States would remain neutral as long as the European powers, apart from Spain, did so.

The "Observations" closed with a direct challenge to the Russian intention of intervening in America:

"The United States of America, and their Government, could not see with indifference, the forcible interposition of any European Power, other than Spain, either to restore the dominion of Spain over her emancipated Colonies in America, or to establish Monarchical Governments in those Countries, or to transfer any of the possessions heretofore or yet subject to Spain in the American Hemisphere, to any other European power." [63]

Just a few short days elapsed before President Monroe delivered his annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823.

Monroe's address included the following:

"....The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintain it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgement of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security." [64]

The Russians and the British were shocked by Monroe's announcement. Both realized that they had been outflanked by Adams, but there was little they could do, since their mutually conflicting aims in the Americas and elsewhere prevented joint action against the United States.

George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary was livid, and *"was hot with resentment over the Monroe message of December, 1823; was annoyed by the agitation in Congress over the Oregon issue, '... detested the republicanism of the United States; was utterly and openly contemptuous of its democracy; and thought its government tricky."* [65]

That the United States has violated the principles of the Monroe Doctrine repeatedly in the two centuries since it was created by John Quincy Adams is unfortunately true. Beginning with the Mexican- American war, other violations include the Spanish-American War of 1898, multiple invasions of Latin American and Caribbean nations by the U.S. Marines to collect debts, the invasions of Mexico by Woodrow Wilson, the Vietnam War, the invasion of Panama during the Reagan

administration, the support given for Britain's war against Argentina in 1982, and the unending wars of regime change over the past two decades in the Middle-East and North Africa.

A common error made by many today is to confuse the Monroe Doctrine with what is called the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, something that would have shocked John Quincy Adams. [66]

In dramatic contrast to the Roosevelt Corollary (and John Bolton's threats to Venezuela today), statesman Lyndon LaRouche, in an article dated November 30, 2000, restates the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, and more precisely those of John Quincy Adams, as being more necessary today than ever, and that those principles must be the defining ones for relations among all nations.

In the article, *"In the Footsteps of John Quincy Adams-- My Strategy for the Americas,"* LaRouche states:

"It is known to those figures throughout the Americas, that the Monroe Doctrine was adopted in defiance of the leading European enemies of both the U.S.A. and of all of the emerging young republics of Central and South America. These enemies were, chiefly, both the British monarchy and the Habsburg-denominated forces of the so-called Holy Alliance. Those enemies, in those same or other disguises, are the only significant enemies of the states of Central and South America, both within and outside our republics, and inside the U.S.A. itself, still today." [67]

And here LaRouche explains exactly what the Monroe Doctrine was, and is:

"The most important of the currently relevant, crucial points made by Adams, were two. First, the notion that a community of principle was the proper basis for all relations among the U.S.A. and all of the emerging republics of the Americas. Second, that although the U.S. refused to degrade itself to the role of a 'cock boat in the wake of a British man of war,' in Britain's neocolonialist depredations against the emerging republics of the Americas, the U.S.A. did not have the power, at that time, to challenge Britain's predatory practices directly with military force. However, as soon as the U.S. had such power, there should be an enforced end to the role of both Habsburg-denominated and British imperial ambitions in the affairs of all parts of the Americas." [68]

The Oregon Trail Decides the Question

With the U.S.-Russian and British-Russian questions settled, there remained only the boundary between the United States and Britain to be determined.

The British demanded of the United States, that the border separating their respective territories in the Northwest be the Columbia River, rejecting not only Adams's proposed line of 51degrees, but even Adams's compromise line of 49 degrees. Now Prime Minister, Canning knew that if the area comprising Washington State was to remain a territory of joint occupancy for another decade or more, it would then fall to the Americans as settlers poured in, across the Rocky Mountains via the Oregon Trail and by sea. Therefore, Canning pushed for an immediate agreement.

The U.S. negotiator in London for the 1826 discussions for the renewal of the 1818 joint occupancy agreement was Albert Gallatin, at the time the U.S. ambassador to Britain. Gallatin's view at the time was that the British were “so anxious to prevent a rupture with the United States that she was willing to let the territory gradually slip into American hands.” [69]

Adams, of course, had a similar evaluation. Now as President, elected in 1824, he proposed that the existing 1818 joint occupancy agreement be extended for another ten years. The British, unwilling and unable to fight, finally agreed to the extension of the agreement.

Unfortunately for the nation, Adams lost the 1828 presidential election to Andrew Jackson. Jackson never did a thing for Oregon. This supposed promoter of western interests virtually ignored the Pacific Northwest for his two terms as President, ending in 1837.

The consolidation of the territory for the United States during this period reverted to the associates of Adams, in the missionary societies and other private interests. By the mid-1830s, and more so during the next decade, thousands of pioneers, and a handful of great men, like Marcus Whitman, who founded a mission near present day Walla Walla, Washington, established a strong enough presence in the Oregon Territory, that the immediate establishment of a territorial government there was warranted, and proposed by the settlers.



A wagon train on the Oregon Trail

In 1841 Senator Lewis F Linn of Missouri introduced bills in the Senate, pushing for not only recognition of Oregon as a Territory of the U.S., but also demanded that the boundary of the territory extend north to 54°40'. In addition, he demanded that the laws of the United States be applicable in the territory.

Linn's agitation for action on Oregon was seconded by the famous Naval explorer Lieut. Charles Wilkes, who presented a report to the Secretary of the Navy in 1842. Wilkes advocated for U.S. action in consolidating the Pacific Northwest for the United States, focusing on potential ports and naval facilities, especially those of Puget Sound. [70]

On May 16, 1842, the first organized wagon train to follow the Oregon Trail set out from Elm Grove, Missouri with more than 100 pioneers. As Americans arrived in Oregon they would find settlement south of the Columbia River, across from the Hudson Bay's Fort Vancouver. Despite the Hudson's Bay Company policy to discourage U.S. emigration, the chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, John McLoughlin, offered the American settlers food and farming equipment on credit. [71]

This was followed by an "Oregon Convention" held in Cincinnati on July 4, 1843, that adopted a resolution asserting that the U.S. had the right to all the territory between California and that of 54°40', and that the immediate occupancy of that entire territory by the U.S. must be done forthwith. [72]



The Oregon Trail

Then a mass migration began in 1843 as American settlers created large concentrations of Americans in the Willamette Valley, which far outnumbered the Hudson's Bay Company personnel at Fort Vancouver. Shortly thereafter, Fort Vancouver was abandoned by the British as they moved to the more secure Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island, north of the 49th parallel.

Then next year began the final phase of the settlement of the "Oregon question." Charles H. Carey's "A General History of Oregon Prior to 1861" summarizes it best:

"The national democrat convention at Baltimore, which nominated James K. Polk for president, May 27, 1844, adopted a platform containing the following declaration: 'Resolved: That our title to the whole of the territory is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England, or any other power; and that the reoccupation of Oregon, and the reannexation of Texas, at the earliest practicable period, are the great American measures, which this convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union.' A slogan of the ensuing Polk campaign was 'Fifty-four Forty or Fight,' an interpretation of the platform which was founded on the declaration of the

Oregon convention, held in Cincinnati.... Furthermore, the Polk administration was definitely charged with responsibility for Texas as well as Oregon, and the country was facing the possibility of two foreign wars."

"Polk was elected, November, 1844, on a platform which asserted the claim of the United States to the 'whole of the territory' of Oregon, and in his inaugural message, March 4, 1845, he repeated the language of the platform, that our 'title to the country of Oregon is clear and unquestionable.' He declared it to be his duty to assert and maintain by all constitutional means the right of the United States to the portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky mountains, omitting, however, the claim to the 'whole' of the territory, asserted in the platform. This aroused deep interest and some resentment, in Great Britain, and at the same time constituted notice to the statesmen of that country of the strength of American determination not to yield any material portion of the disputed region." [73]

By late, 1845, the conflict between the British and the U.S. over Oregon had reached the point of war talk and war preparations. The British proposed arbitration to be overseen by a neutral body, if one could be found, but the U.S. would not even consider that.

Both governments wished to avoid war over Oregon, especially the British, since they had their hands full waging the Opium War against China during this period, and other colonial conflicts in India, Afghanistan, and South Africa, and a famine in Ireland. Oh, the problems of an empire!

Again from Charles H. Carey:

"In a message to congress, March 24, 1846, the president had recommended an increase of the navy and the raising of an 'adequate military force to guard and protect such of our citizens as might think it proper to emigrate to Oregon,' and had called attention to warlike preparations which were even then being advocated in Great Britain.... The British government, however, was convinced by this time that the United States would, on account of public opinion, elect war rather than make material concessions...." [74]



The 1846 Oregon Treaty boundaries

The British caved and agreed, finally, to the demand by the U.S. administration that the border between

Oregon and the British territory shall be the 49th parallel extended from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Thus, the treaty, finally, ended the British dream of owning the Columbia River. The U.S. Senate voted in favor of acceptance of the treaty, and the *Oregon Treaty* was signed in Washington, June 15, 1846, two months after Polk had initiated the U.S.-Mexican War. A war that John Quincy Adams led the opposition to in the U.S. Congress. For that war violated the principle of national sovereignty and non-aggression that Adams had established and fought for his entire life.

Senator John Calhoun of South Carolina wrote in a letter at the time, “expressing the belief that if the British government had known that war with Mexico had already arrived, the proposal for settlement of the boundary at 49' would not have been made.” [75]

And thus:

John Quincy Adams had made possible the Oregon Treaty of 1846. As a young Senator from Massachusetts he had supported Jefferson's Louisiana Territory purchase, thereby creating a massive addition of U.S. territory to the nation, and the future point for departure further westward. As a negotiator for the U.S. at the *Treaty of Ghent* ending the War of 1812, he helped return Astoria to American possession. As Secretary of State he drew the parallel of 49 degrees west to the Rocky Mountains.

Then, with the Transcontinental Treaty with Spain, as Secretary of State in 1819, he set the southern boundary of the Oregon Territory at 42 degrees from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, establishing a southern boundary for the Oregon Territory, and which was the first acknowledgment by any nation of America's legal possession to the Pacific Coast. He created the Monroe Doctrine, which established the U.S. as a nation of principle in foreign policy. His Russian Treaty of 1824, narrowed down the Oregon Question to the United States and Britain. Finally, he and his associates held the line for more than two decades that the U.S. would never accept the British possession of the Columbia River, when others were willing to just give it away. Sitting in the Congress in 1846, as the *Oregon Treaty* was signed, I am sure John Quincy Adams had a smile on his face.

The U.S. Purchase of Alaska From Russia

Before we conclude, we must wrap up the history of the Russian presence on American shores. By 1833 there were fewer than 200 people at Fort Ross in California. Americans were pouring into California, and it was merely a matter of time before Russia's California dream would come to an end. In 1841, the Russia-America Company sold the entire settlement to John Sutter, who had built his own fort just 20 miles away, thus, leaving Alaska as Russia's sole American possession.

With the outbreak of the Crimea War in 1853, and the defeat by Russia of the Turkish fleet, Britain and France entered the conflict on the side of Turkey, in March, 1854, and Russia feared that the British would use the war to take Alaska, just as they took Astoria in the War of 1812.

But, “*Long before the outbreak of hostilities, Russian-American Company management had grave concerns about Alaska's vulnerability. The colony had no defenses to speak of; there were no Russian troops in Alaska at all. Should the English choose to attack the territory, especially from the sea, the*

management doubted it could be defended.... That there would be enemy action in the Pacific seemed inevitable, as Britain and her ally France feared a Russian-American alliance, anti-British in character, which might threaten Britain's position in the North Pacific. “ [76]

So began the process that culminated with the U.S. purchase of Alaska from Russia. As Lydia T. Black puts it in her book, “Russians in Alaska”:

“In 1853, Murav'iev-Amurskii had made representations to Emperor Nicholas I about the need to strengthen Russia's position in the Far East, in view of the dangerous international situation. He mentioned that 'it should be borne in mind that sooner or later we will have to yield our North American possession to [the United States]’” [77]

Thus, during the Crimean War the idea that America should acquire Alaska was presented through William McKendree Gwin, to President Pierce, who immediately declared himself in favor of such a purchase. [78] But, little more ensues for the rest of the decade of the 1850s.

By 1861, *“In the Russian capital, however, the decision to disengage was already a foregone conclusion.... The arguments for disengagement were focused, in the main, on the impossibility of defense against foreign powers (notably Great Britain)....”* [79]

However, negotiations for the sale to the United States were frozen for the duration of the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865). Negotiations resumed again in 1864 as the Russians became more confident of the Union's victory, which, interestingly, the Russians had help secure by posting the Russian Navy at New York City and San Francisco ports as a warning to the British and French not to intervene in the war on the side of the Confederacy.

In 1867, *“In St. Petersburg, a sympathetic government, friendly to the Americans, believed that soon the United States would dominate the entire North American continent. It was moving to transfer sovereignty over Alaska to the United States to remove a possible cause of misunderstanding and conflict between the two nations.”* [80]

The treaty selling Alaska to the United States was signed on March 18, 1867.

Postscript

The presidency of John Quincy Adams (1825-1829) saw him leading the revival of Alexander Hamilton's American System economic policy. It was a period of a tremendous expansion of U.S. infrastructure building, including the new technology of railroads. Adams was defeated in the 1828 presidential elections by Andrew Jackson, who not only ended all U.S. government support for infrastructure development, but also shut down the Second National Bank of the United States. Adams enjoyed a brief retirement to his home in Massachusetts before being elected to Congress in 1830, serving as member of Congress until the day he died on February 23, 1848. In the Congress, Adams made himself a great leader there too. He was the voice for the ending of slavery; so effective he was, that Southern Congressmen actually shut him up by passing a “gag rule,” forbidding him from introducing petitions and discussing the subject. [81] He was the leading Congressional voice against

the U.S. war against Mexico (1846-1848), where he was joined by freshman member Abraham Lincoln, and his old collaborator Albert Gallatin. During the war he wrote to Gallatin: "The most important conclusion from all this, in my mind, is the failure of that provision in the Constitution of the United States, that the power of declaring War, is given exclusively to Congress." [82] That is a failure that still plagues us today.

Recall Adams' words from his 1821, July 4 oration:

"Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause, by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself, beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. The frontlet upon her brows would no longer beam with the ineffable splendor of freedom and independence; but in its stead would soon be substituted an imperial diadem, flashing in false and tarnished luster the murky radiance of dominion and power. She might become the dictatress of the world: she would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit...."

What he saw with the war against Mexico was his warning of 1821 being ignored:

"The annexation of Texas to this Union is the first step to the conquest of all Mexico, of the West India Islands, of a maritime, colonizing, slave-tainted monarchy, and of extinguished freedom. . . . This Texas annexation we deem the turning-point of a revolution which transforms the North American Confederation into a conquering and warlike nation. Aggrandizement will be its passion and its policy. A military government, a large army, a costly navy, distant colonies, and associate islands in every sea, will follow of course in rapid succession." [83]

John Quincy Adams was not only prescient in his warning, but his words and principles must once again become those of the nation.

Notes

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O'Sullivan biographer Robert D. Sampson disputes Hudson's claim for a variety of reasons (See note 7 at Sampson, 2003, pp. 244–45.

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[30] Ibid.

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[32] Daws, Gavan, Shoal of time: a history of the Hawaiian Islands, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968. [ISBN 0-8248-0324-8](#).

[33] Ronda, James P., Astoria and Empire, University of Nebraska Press, 1990. pp. 2 and Chapter 2.

[34] Ibid., pp. 2.

[35] Chaitkin, Anton, Treason in America-- From Aaron Burr to Averell Harriman. Executive Intelligence Review; Second Edition, 1985.

[36] Ibid., pp. 344-346.

[37] Ibid., pp. 385.

[38] Ronda, pp. 258.

[39] Ibid., pp. 302.

[40] Article I of the *U.S.--British Treaty* reads:

Article I

There shall be a firm and universal peace between His Britannic Majesty and the United States, and between their respective countries, territories, cities, towns, and people, of every degree, without exception of places or persons. All hostilities, both by sea and land, shall cease as soon as this treaty shall have been ratified by both parties, as hereinafter mentioned. All territory, places, and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, or which may be taken after the signing of this treaty, excepting only the islands hereinafter mentioned, shall be restored without delay, and without causing any destruction or carrying away any of the artillery or other public property originally captured in the said forts or places, and which shall remain therein upon the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or any slaves or other private property. And all archives, records, deeds, and papers, either of a public nature or belonging to private persons, which, in the course of the war, may have fallen into the hands of the officers of either party, shall be, as far as may be practicable, forthwith restored and delivered to the proper authorities and persons to whom they respectively belong. Such of the islands in the Bay of Passamaquoddy as are claimed by both parties, shall remain in the possession of the party in whose occupation they may be at the time of the exchange of the

ratifications of this treaty, until the decision respecting the title to the said islands shall have been made in conformity with the fourth article of this treaty. No disposition made by this treaty as to such possession of the islands and territories claimed by both parties shall, in any manner whatever, be construed to affect the right of either.

<https://www.bartleby.com/43/26.html>

[41] Here is the entire message from Chaitkin:

“Establishing just what was Albert Gallatin’s own point of view, is an interesting question, even a vital one. I think his self defined mission, or place in the scheme of things, shifted somewhat from his earliest days on this continent to later in life. From what I could see, in the early days he is part of the Imperial effort to sabotage the development of a strong independent USA. Later on, I see him as working to define oligarchical control of the new country, rather than its destruction. Perhaps John Quincy Adams saw Gallatin as a perfect fit for diplomacy with Britain, since he must’ve been a favorite of ruling circles there. In 1831, Gallatin was president of the free trade convention held in Philadelphia, part of the general attack against American system policies. I don’t think he ever acted directly for the United States against Britain, nor was he ever a Hamiltonian at any time. But he was certainly a member of the international oligarchy, which Hamilton was not. As for the infrastructure proposals in 1808, Jefferson and Gallatin it seems to me talked the talk but did not walk the walk. Nothing got done. Jefferson refused all aid to the Erie canal, saying it was 100 years premature. I think that was a very complex dynamic and it would require real careful study of the details and background of political maneuvering’s involving Henry Clay, Adams, and others at the time.

“But to me, Gallatin is a precursor of the eastern establishment, a banker, a free trade or a sophisticate. He fit in to Northern financier orthodoxy. As I recall, Wall Street bankers wanted the bank of the United States rechartered, but in Wall street where they could control it, not in Philadelphia. Something like the New York Fed, classically.

“As to the election of 1800, from what I was able to uncover, after everybody burned their letters, it was actually Gallatin who encouraged Burr to try to become president and usurp Jefferson’s place. Gallatin was from the same set of Geneva agency as constituted the Secret Service link of Burr to the British, and I think that means somethings historically.”

[42] Ronda, pp. 56-57.

[43] Ibid., pp. 71.

[44] Irving, Washington, Astoria, Binfords & Mort Publishers, 1967.

Poe, Edgar Allan; Astoria: Or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains, by Washington Irving. Southern Literary Messenger, January, 1837. In Poe: Essays and Reviews, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984.

[45] Fort Vancouver; By the Division of Publications, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; Washington, D.C.; 1981, pp. 104-114.

[46] Nichols, Irby C., Jr. and Ward, Richard A., Anglo-American Relations and the Russian Ukase: A Reassessment; Pacific Historical Review; Vol. 41, No. 4 (Nov., 1972), pp. 444-459. University of California Press.

- [47] Stuart, Graham H., Department of State, A History of its Organization, Procedure, and Personnel. The MacMillan Company, New York, 1949, pp. 63-64.
https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.278350/2015.278350.The-Department_djvu.txt
- [48] Bemis, Samuel Flagg, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf., 1949), pp. 497.
- [49] A Most Remarkable Enterprise: Lectures on the Northwest Coast Trade and Northwest Coast Indian Life by Captain William Sturgis. Edited, with annotations and an introduction by Mary Malloy. Revised, republished edition, 2013, 8 vol. Black and white and color illustrations. Trade paperback. 216 pages.
- [50] "Nullifiers" were those, mostly in the Southern States, who held that the states were not bound by federal law and had the power to nullify such laws. This is the earlier genesis of what came to be called "states rights," and in the post-Civil War period became an *ex post facto* excuse for the "Lost Cause."
- [51] Ambler, Charles H. (1918), [*The Life and Diary of John Floyd Governor of Virginia, an Apostle of Secession, and the Father of the Oregon Country*](#). Richmond, Virginia; Richmond Press, pp. 60-65
- [52] Bemis, John Quincy Adams and...., pp. 368.
- [53] Stuart, Department of State, pp. 63-64.
https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.278350/2015.278350.The-Department_djvu.txt
- [54] John Quincy Adams' letter to U.S. Ambassador to Russia Middleton, July 22, 1823. As quoted in, Great Britain and the Oregon Question, by Robert George Winters, the University of Montana; Masters Degree Thesis, 1964. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3496&context=etd>
- [55] Hodge, Carl Vavanagh and Noland, Cathal J., U.S. Presidents and Foreign Policy: From 1789 to the Present, ABC CIO, Inc., 2007, pp. 59.
- [56] *ibid*, pp. 59.
- [57] "The Monroe Doctrine (1823)." Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy. United States Department of State. Archived from the original on January 8, 2012.
 Alternately, here is the text of that section of the speech by President Monroe.
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23&page=transcript>
- [58] John Quincy Adams to Anderson, 23 May 1823. Ford, ed., Vol. 7, p. 471.
- [59] Adams, Charles Francis, Editor, John Quincy Adams Diary, November 7, 1823. Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848. (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-7). Vol. VI, pp. 177-180.
- [60] Stuart, Department of State. pp. 63-64.

[61] Adams, Charles Francis, Editor, Diary, November 21, 1823. Vol. VI, pp. 194.

[62] *"Observations on the Communications recently received from the Minister of Russia."* Department of State, November 27, 1823.

And: Ford, Writings of John Quincy Adams, (7 vols., New York, 1913-1917), pp. 39-40.

[63] *"Observations on the Communications recently received from the Minister of Russia."* Department of State, November 27, 1823.

And: Ford, Writings of John Quincy Adams, pp. 39-40.

[64] "The Monroe Doctrine (1823)." Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy. United States Department of State. Archived from the original on January 8, 2012.

Alternately, here is the text of that section of the speech by President Monroe.

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23&page=transcript>

Also, Monroe Doctrine, December 2, 1823. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp

[65] Robert George Winters, Robert George. As quoted in, Great Britain and the Oregon Question. The University of Montana; Masters Degree Thesis, 1964.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3496&context=etd>

[66] The **Roosevelt Corollary** was articulated by President Theodore Roosevelt in his Annual Message to Congress in December, 1904. It gets its name from Roosevelt's assertion that it is an extension of the Monroe Doctrine. The developments evoking this claim stemmed from the Venezuela crisis of 1902-1903, in which that government had refused to pay its debts to certain European nations and those nations had blockaded Venezuela's ports.

The corollary states that the United States will intervene in conflicts between the European countries and Latin American countries to enforce legitimate claims of the European powers, excluding those European nations any right to take military action or otherwise.

Roosevelt stated that the Monroe Doctrine justified the United States role in being an "international police power" to enforce "legitimate debt" or to bring order to any nation in the hemisphere.

Theodore Roosevelt's December 1904 annual message to Congress declared:

"All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power." <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=56&page=transcript>

The Roosevelt Corollary was certainly also in response to the Drago Doctrine of 1902, named after Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs Luis Maria Drago. Drago had sent a diplomatic note to the United States, in which he called on the U.S. to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine, and for the U.S. to recognize that not only were European powers forbidden to use force against any nation in the Western Hemisphere, but also that no foreign power, including that of the United States, could be used to collect debt.

Drago's warning was, of course, on the mark as the next 20 years saw repeated military incursions into Latin American and Caribbean nations by the United States Marines to do precisely that, collect debts.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ended the Roosevelt Corollary with his Good Neighbor policy for the Western Hemisphere. So, the attempts today to invoke the Roosevelt Corollary is nothing less than a fraud by those who attempt to do so.

A little more on FDR's Good Neighbor Policy is found in this article: "*FDR's Good Neighbor Policy.*"

<https://fdrfoundation.org/good-neighbor-policy/>

"In his first inaugural address, President Roosevelt extended his hand in friendship to our southern neighbors in Mexico and South America when he announced his Good Neighbor Policy....

"In the field of World policy, I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor, the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others, the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a World of neighbors.'

"In order to create a friendly relationship between the United States and Central as well as South American countries, Roosevelt's policy reversed previous interventionist perspectives. Cordell Hull, FDR's Secretary of State, made the case in Montevideo at a conference of American states in December 1933: 'No country has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.' Roosevelt then confirmed the policy in December of the same year: 'The definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention.'"

Also, see my, "The Principle of National Sovereignty in an Era of 'Regime Change.'" February 5, 2019. http://www.californiadroughtupdate.org/pdf/The%20Principle%20of%20National%20Sovereignty%20in%20an%20Era%20of%20%E2%80%98Regime%20Change%E2%80%99-1.pdf?_t=1553621892

[67] LaRouche, Lyndon H., Jr, "In the Footsteps of John Quincy Adams-- My Strategy for the Americas," Executive Intelligence Review, June 7, 2019, pp. 44.

https://larouchepub.com/eiw/private/2019/2019_20-29/2019-22/43-52_4622-lar.pdf

[68] Ibid., pp. 44.

[69] Winters, Great Britain and....

[70] Carey, Charles H., A general History of Oregon Prior to 1861, Two Volumes, Metropolitan Press, Portland, Oregon, 1935, Vol II, pp. 447-448.

[71] Faragher, John Mack, Women and Men on the Overland Trail. Yale University Press, 1980, pp. 418.

[72] Carey, A general History..., Vol II, pp. 452.

[73] Carey, A general History..., Vol II, pp. 452 and 454.

[74] Carey, A general History..., Vol II, pp. 459.

[75] Carey, A general History..., Vol II, pp. 462.

[76] Black, Russians in Alaska..., pp. 267.

[77] Ibid., pp. 269.

[78] Ibid.,pp. 269.

[79] Ibid., pp. 280.

[80] Ibid., pp. 284.

[81] Miller, William Lee, Arguing about Slavery: John Quincy Adams and the Great Battle in the United States Congress, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995.

[82] John Quincy Adams to Albert Gallatin, Dec. 26, 1847. Quoted in Samuel Flagg Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Union, (New York, 1956), pp. 500.

[83] As quoted by Patrick Garrity in SHE GOES NOT ABROAD, IN SEARCH OF MONSTERS TO DESTROY – The Dispute Between John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay Over the South American Revolutions, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia; March 2009. pp. 44.

<https://www.classicsofstrategy.com/She%20Goes%20Not%20Abroad.pdf>