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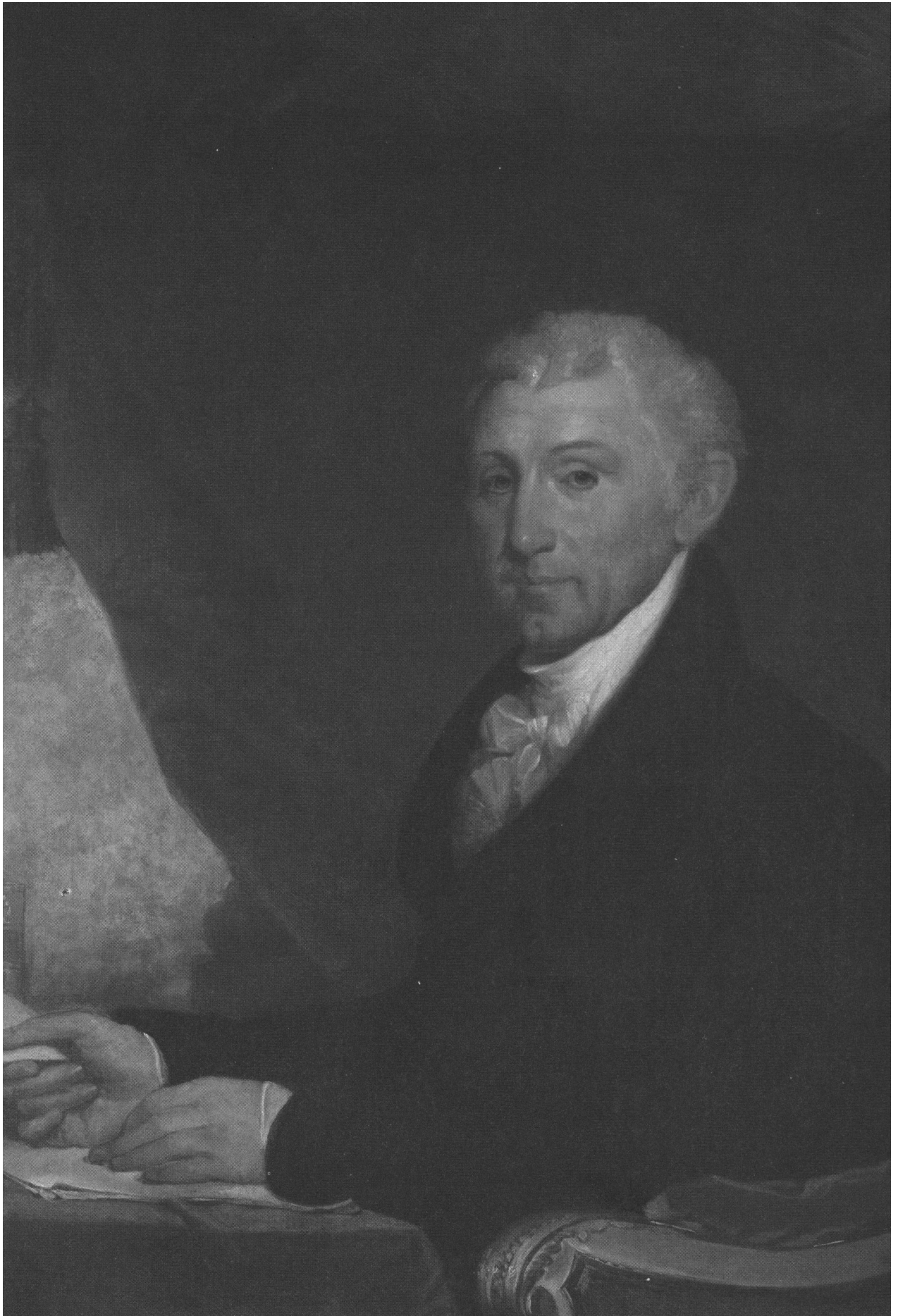
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BROOK POSTON

“Bolder Attitude”

James Monroe, the French Revolution, and the Making of the Monroe Doctrine

John Quincy Adams pointed to the paper in front of him and warned the president that it would “serve as a summons to arms, to arms against all of Europe.” President James Monroe listened, surely disappointed but perhaps not surprised by the reaction. His secretary of state did not understand. Monroe had, in one way or another, been “at arms” against European monarchism his entire life. The document Adams referred to, which would later become known as the Monroe Doctrine, was only Monroe’s latest, and he hoped greatest, counterstrike against the European monarchies in defense of republicanism.¹

It started for the president almost fifty years before when Monroe was nearly killed by a Hessian bullet at the battle of Trenton on the day after Christmas in 1776.² The wound troubled the future president throughout his life, and the pain may even have reminded him of the struggle that November morning in 1823 as he and John Quincy Adams debated the language of the Monroe Doctrine.³ Adams, his most valued cabinet member, accused Monroe of “throwing down the gauntlet” against the monarchies of Europe.⁴ The proposed doctrine terrified the secretary of state. Eight years younger than the president, he had not served in the War of Independence, but it was more than that. John Quincy Adams had once shared his father’s Federalist convictions. Unlike Monroe, he had not spent a lifetime defending the republican movement against European monarchists. It is difficult to exaggerate how important republicanism was to James Monroe. In his one

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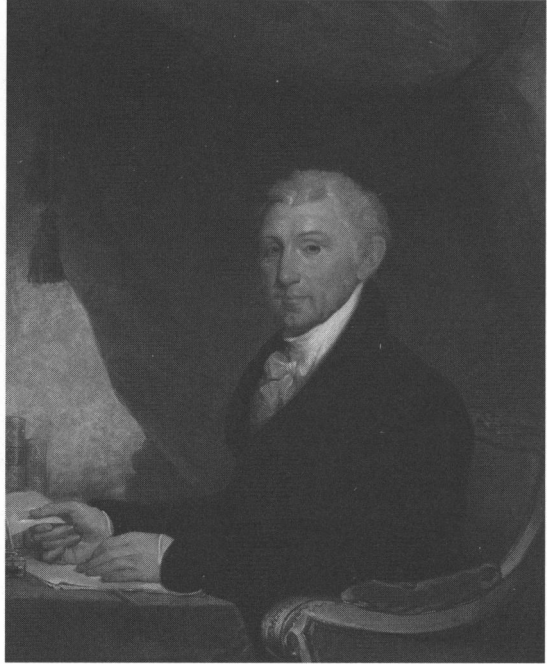


James Monroe (1758–1831) suffered a wound at the battle of Trenton on 26 December 1776. He is shown here on the ground to the left of George Washington (1732–1799). Pain from the wound may have served as a constant reminder to Monroe of the struggle between republicanism and monarchy. (*Library of Congress*)

major work of political philosophy, Monroe called the American Revolution the “most important epoch in the history of mankind” because it created a style of republican government “better calculated to secure to the people the blessings of liberty” than any that had come before.⁵ Because of his passion for republicanism, Monroe dedicated his life to promoting the cause.⁶

Monroe must have considered the course the republican cause had taken over the past half century as he listened to Quincy Adams rail against his first draft of the Monroe Doctrine. He might even have agreed with Adams’s argument that the United States should remain “safe in their distance” from the “convulsions” of Europe if it had not been for the French Revolution. But events in France in 1789 seemed to auger a worldwide flowering of republicanism. Monroe believed deeply that it was therefore every American’s duty to support France’s Revolution in much the same way the

This 1817 Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828) portrait of Monroe shows him just after he took office as president of the United States. (*Virginia Historical Society, 1880.1*)



French had the American version. He regretted their eventual failure to do so as a missed opportunity for both the country and the republican cause.⁷

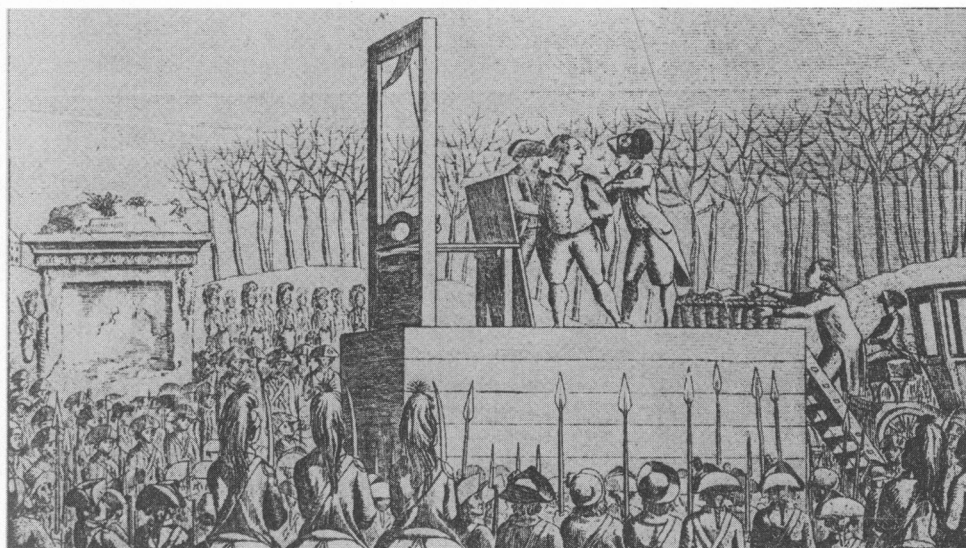
It was this failure that Monroe hoped to correct with his Annual Message of 1823, which announced what would become known as the Monroe Doctrine. Most historians argue that the importance of the doctrine lies in its dual role as a statement of American hegemony in the western hemisphere and isolation from Europe. Adams, with his strong record as a nationalist and isolationist, often receives the bulk of the credit for building this new pillar upon which so much of subsequent American foreign policy stands. Meanwhile, James Monroe's original goal for the doctrine remains largely forgotten.⁸ For Monroe, the doctrine announced to mankind that the United States would support the republican cause around the world. The idea was decades in the making—the culmination of a career dedicated to republicanism. Historians have stressed other concerns leading to the doctrine's creation, including the threat Russia posed to Oregon and the politicking before the election of 1824, when three members of Monroe's

cabinet, John C. Calhoun, William H. Crawford, and John Quincy Adams, vied for the presidency. For Monroe, though, it was a chance to correct the mistakes of the past, both his and the country's. After all, as he told Thomas Jefferson in 1823, "the state of Europe, and our relation to it is pretty much the same, as it was, in the commencement of the French Revolution." As president it was his duty to explore whether the United States could "take a bolder attitude in regard to it [republican revolution], in favor of liberty, than we then did? Can we afford greater aid to that cause?" The Monroe Doctrine was the president's answer. It was a manifestation of the "bolder attitude" Monroe wanted the country to exhibit in favor of the republican cause, and its roots can be traced to his experience with the French Revolution thirty years earlier.⁹

The revolution that erupted in Paris at the Bastille on 14 July 1789 dominated the American political landscape during the 1790s. The French Revolution and the resulting conflict in Europe placed the United States in a dangerous situation. After the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, Britain and France made war upon each other with only occasional lapses until Napoleon's final defeat at the battle of Waterloo in 1815. For a quarter century the United States found itself caught between Europe's two superpowers.

Initially most Americans cheered the outbreak of revolution in France. They saw it as the natural outgrowth of the American Revolution. Future Federalists and Republicans alike enjoyed the legitimacy it seemed to grant their own republican experiment. As the violence in France increased, however, many Americans, especially Federalists like Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, questioned whether the two revolutions truly shared a common nature. Meanwhile, Monroe and his fellow Democratic-Republicans continued to see it as fulfilling the dream of spreading republicanism to Europe. As a result, the French Revolution became the key issue that divided the nation into two opposing camps.¹⁰

Amid this turmoil Thomas Jefferson, Monroe's mentor, assumed the post of secretary of state in 1789 while Monroe found himself elected to the Senate in 1790. Writing under the penname of "Aratus," Monroe began defending the French Revolution from its growing number of critics in 1791. He scoffed at those who treated it as a disease that the country might



Unlike the Federalists, Monroe and his Democratic-Republican allies remained steadfast supporters of the French Revolution even after the execution of Louis XVI in January of 1793. Monroe arrived as the minister to the French Republic in August of 1794. (*Library of Congress*)

catch. Monroe connected events in France to America's own revolution. He explained that during the American Revolution the tyranny of monarchy remained "in embryo only, and at a distance," whereas, "in France it was at its height and at home." In Monroe's mind France was now the new front-line in the war between monarchical reactionaries and the champions of republicanism. He argued that like their American brothers, the French were justified in rising up to secure their rights. Monroe insisted that "whoever owns the principles of one revolution, must cherish those of the other." For him, the two revolutions possessed an intrinsic bond.¹¹

During the next few months, Monroe penned two further essays calling on the friends of republicanism to support the French government. He warned Americans that the future of the republican movement depended upon French victory. For centuries the failure of free governments around the world had "shielded despotism behind a wall of impregnable strength." Now in France republicans had an opportunity to "dispel" the "dark cloud" of absolutism. If they did not, "the light of truth and reason [would] be

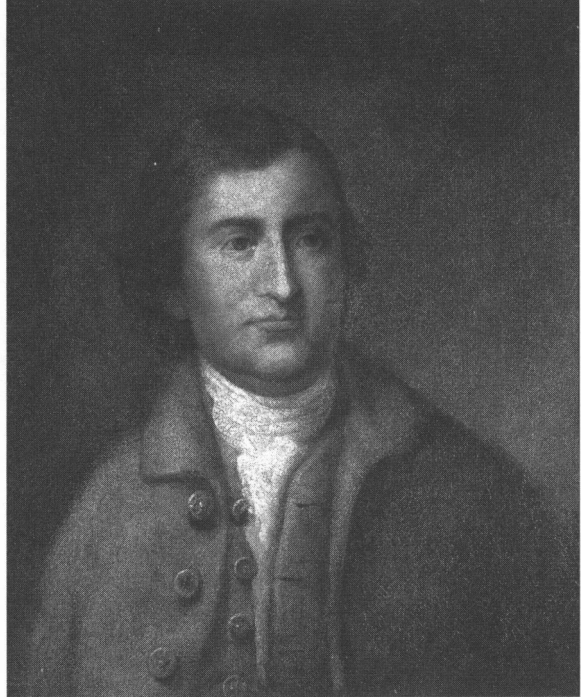
extinguished forever.” Americans needed to support the French Revolution to accomplish this. Monroe told his fellow Americans that, “as a friend of humanity I rejoice in the French Revolution” because it was in France (and the United States) where “a fair experiment will be made . . . whether mankind are capable of self-government.” If republicanism failed it would never be attempted again, and therefore Americans, as the “authors of a great revolution” of their own, owed it themselves to support the spread of republicanism in Europe.¹²

Monroe’s support for the French Revolution eventually provided him with a unique opportunity to aid the cause. By 1794, President George Washington, caught between the growing acrimony between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, decided to appoint a known supporter of the French Revolution as his minister in Paris. He turned to James Monroe. A more circumspect politician might have declined the appointment, but after conferring with fellow republican leader James Madison, Monroe accepted.¹³

Monroe took the position primarily because he believed that only a dedicated republican could maintain the proper link between the two nations. In fact, his fervor for the revolution meant that although he officially represented the interests of the U.S. government in Paris he thought he owed a higher duty to the republican cause. Before his departure, he told Jefferson that there was “no sacrifice I would not be willing to make for the sake of France and her cause.” He viewed the United States’ narrowly defined national interests as less critical than his higher duty to serve as a bridge between the two republics. Further, Monroe saw no conflict between his obligations as a U.S. minister and his devotion to France because he believed the French cause to be vital to the future of the United States.¹⁴

Monroe’s new posting in Paris gave him a chance to make history. He recognized that “French historians will record the conduct of this country toward theirs. They will note that of individuals also. Those who shall take any part which the world & posterity may not approve, be them who they may, will be handed down in their proper colours.” Monroe desperately wanted to be remembered in the proper “color.” He hoped to secure a grand republican alliance that would stand united against the monarchies of Europe. To achieve this, Monroe’s official dispatches consistently portrayed the French Revolution as a close cousin to its American forebear.¹⁵

Edmund Randolph (1753–1813) replaced Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) as secretary of state in January of 1794. In his messages to the new secretary, James Monroe consistently tried to portray the French rebellion as the natural continuation of the American Revolution. (*Virginia Historical Society, 1858.5*)



Despite the violence in Paris, Monroe remained convinced that the viciousness of the “Reign of Terror” did not accurately reflect the Revolution’s principles. He arrived in France a mere five days after the execution of French leader Maximilien Robespierre, the major architect of the Terror. Robespierre had for the past year ruled France with an iron fist. The Thermidorian Reaction, a revolt against the Jacobins, executed Robespierre on 28 July, though only after his Reign of Terror sent thousands to the guillotine. Monroe felt no sympathy for “The Incorruptible” as Robespierre’s adherents had nicknamed him. He told Secretary of State Edmund Randolph that Robespierre bore sole responsibility for the recent bloodshed in France. Robespierre, in Monroe’s estimation, “amassed in his hands all the powers of the government.” Before his fall he stood nearly “omnipotent” within the Committee of Public Safety, which then ruled France. Most importantly, it was Robespierre’s “spirit” that had directed “the unceasing operation of the guillotine” that horrified so many Americans.¹⁶

Monroe knew his audience well. Americans strongly distrusted executive tyranny, and he assured them that none of antiquity's great tyrants could match Robespierre, whose "acts of cruelty and oppression are perhaps without parallel in the annals of history." Monroe focused so exclusively on this "bloody and merciless tyrant" in order to defend the French Revolution from attack by its enemies in America. He told Randolph that Robespierre "aimed at despotic powers" and ultimately hoped to "establish himself on the throne of the Capets." He depicted Robespierre as a power hungry aspiring monarch entirely antithetical to true republicanism. Such imagery innately resonated with Americans. Doubtless, Monroe aimed to evoke memories of George III or even thoughts of Julius Caesar and the fall of the Roman Republic. A single tyrant could easily and most plausibly assume blame for the Revolution's descent into brutality.¹⁷

With the fall of Robespierre, Monroe assured his fellow Americans that the Revolution would stabilize itself. It would morph from the tyranny of the Jacobin Terror into a sister constitutional republic. Monroe asked Randolph, rhetorically, "is there any hope that the vicious operation of the guillotine may be hereafter suspended?" In answer to his own question, he explained that with Robespierre gone the entire country "appears to enjoy perfect tranquility." The outbreaks of violence had been exceptions. Monroe even fancifully dismissed the Terror itself as a foreign plot. Robespierre and his allies were, Monroe claimed, "probably in the pay of foreign powers" and had been "employed to perpetrate those atrocities merely to make the revolution odious & thus oppose it."¹⁸ Whether to friends, such as Madison and Jefferson, or in his official correspondence to the secretary of state and the president, Monroe continually stressed the Revolution's steady progress toward stable republicanism. In January of 1795, half a year after his arrival, Monroe informed Edmund Randolph that Robespierre's excesses showed every sign of healing.¹⁹

Monroe knew that most Americans received their news on events in France from hostile British newspapers, and he certainly hoped to counter these biased accounts. He was not, however, simply downplaying the Revolution's violence to score political points. Though his evaluation of the French Revolution was excessively optimistic, Monroe genuinely believed most of his reports. He saw the Revolution as "essentially moder-

ate.” The triumph of republican government represented the just aspects of the Revolution, and he viewed it as proceeding in the pattern of its American cousin. The violence represented only minor interruptions along the way. The true revolution was, in Monroe’s mind, the quest for freedom from monarchical rule and the creation of a representative government. He could, with some measure of intellectual honesty, omit anything that did not fit the model of a revolution toward constitutional republicanism. This mindset helped Monroe justify his quest to bring these two republics together by any means necessary.²⁰

As Monroe wrote to Randolph stressing the Revolution’s successes and the overall “tranquility” in France following the fall of Robespierre, he also tried to convince the French of American “loyalty” to their new republic. Here Monroe found himself in a difficult position. Robespierre’s fall had thrown the French government into chaos. Meanwhile, Franco-American relations had been strained to the point of breaking when he arrived in Paris. The recall of Gouverneur Morris (Monroe’s predecessor) and Washington’s declaration of neutrality contributed to the cool response Monroe received when he presented his papers to the Committee of Public Safety. After waiting in vain for the committee to officially recognize him as the new minister in France, Monroe took drastic measures. He sent a letter to Phillipe Merlin de Douai, president of the French National Convention, on 13 August 1794, requesting recognition as a representative of a “Sister Republic.” Monroe believed that only by reaching out to the French people could he hope to accomplish his objectives. The French Convention agreed to Monroe’s request, and he addressed them the next day.²¹

A crowd, surrounding Monroe as he made his way to the Hall of the French National Convention, shouted, “long live the United States of America, our brave brothers.”²² As he entered the hall, the Parisian mob cheered him as a symbol of the Revolution. He positioned himself at the dais, standing before the 700-member Convention, and affirmed the two nations’ connection. “Republics should approach near to each other” he began, “The French and American republics in particular should stand side by side.” After all, their “governments are similar[,]” both are constructed upon “the equal and inalienable rights of man.” He assured the French that just as America once endured her own “day of oppression” and emerged

from it “in the enjoyment of peace, liberty and independence” so too would France.²³

Monroe ended his speech with reference to the role he hoped to play in this great drama: “I pursue the dictates of my own heart in wishing the liberty and happiness of the French nation.” Further, he vowed to do “everything in [his] power to preserve and perpetuate the harmony so happily subsisting at present between the two Republics.” This, Monroe believed, was the noblest cause to which he could possibly devote his energies. If he succeeded he would, “deem it the happiest event of my life, and return with a consolation, which those who . . . have served the cause of liberty alone can feel.” Monroe also presented declarations from both houses of Congress, wishing the French people well, and he even personally expressed President Washington’s own fond wishes for the cause. Even as Monroe took these measures, he recognized that some in the United States might not appreciate his actions. They would have preferred he had “smuggled” Congress’s statements of support for the French republic under the cover of darkness.²⁴

Knowing his actions would be criticized by his Federalist opponents, Monroe preemptively wrote to the secretary of state explaining the positive reaction his address received. He claimed that after his speech the French exhibited great “affection” for the American republic. When news of Monroe’s speech reached the United States, it did indeed irritate both the Washington administration and Federalists everywhere. In December of 1794, Randolph admonished Monroe in future to behave in a more “circumspect” manner. He reminded Monroe of his duty to present the administration’s policy rather than express his own views on the French Revolution. Randolph worried that the British might look askance at this public display of support for France, warning Monroe that “the extreme glow of some parts of your address” exceeded the parameters and spirit of his instructions. He urged Monroe to use caution when making public speeches and to “cultivate the French Republic with zeal, but without any unnecessary éclat.”²⁵

The administration’s reaction contrasted sharply with the encouragement Monroe received from supporters. Madison told Monroe that though his speech had been “grating” to many in the Federalist camp, his fellow Republicans heartily approved of his actions. Kentucky senator John Brown

told Monroe that his address to the convention “has been read with enthusiasm and approbation by every friend to the Rights of Man, as breathing the genuine sentiments of republicanism and as expressing the sense of nineteen twentieths of the citizens of the Union.” Though the criticism from the administration stung, Monroe no doubt felt vindicated by the support he received from fellow Republicans.²⁶ Further, his successes in the diplomatic realm convinced Monroe that this was the best way to improve relations with France. He had, after all, in his short time as minister repaired much of the damage done by his predecessor.

Monroe responded to Randolph’s criticism by explaining exactly why he took such drastic action. He reminded the secretary of state of the strained state of relations between France and the United States upon his arrival; the treaty of 1778 had been violated, American commerce harassed, and the previous Minister removed. Monroe described to Randolph how “connections between the two countries hung, as it were, by a thread.” All in all, it appeared to Monroe that without drastic action the relationship between the two republics might deteriorate completely. Therefore, he thought his duty was to act in such a way that assured the French public and the members of the National Convention that the United States supported their Revolution. Furthermore, Monroe argued, the scheme had worked. With the French people and the National Convention on his side, the Committee of Public Safety had relented. Monroe informed Randolph that his actions had also gained massive concessions from the French, including their agreement to discontinue the seizure of American ships.²⁷

Though Monroe experienced some difficulties from the administration following his early outpouring of support for the French cause, it was the completion of Jay’s Treaty that placed his mission in serious jeopardy. Federalist Chief Justice John Jay negotiated a treaty of amity and commerce in London during the fall of 1794. Democratic-Republicans saw the resulting agreement, known as Jay’s Treaty, as a betrayal of France. After finally seeing the treaty’s full text in September of 1795, Monroe lamented its “forming an important epoch in the history of our country. It fully explains the views of its author and his political associates.” To Monroe the treaty laid bare the Federalists’ true colors. He believed that Jay had sacrificed the inter-

ests of both the country and the republican cause in order to preserve a relationship with monarchical Great Britain.²⁸

Upon learning of the treaty, the French Directory, which now ruled France, enacted a harsh new policy toward the United States in February of 1796. The French told Monroe that “it considered the alliance between us as ceasing to exist, from the moment the [Jay] Treaty was ratified.” Monroe tried to convince the Directory to reconsider. He warned that only France’s monarchical enemies would benefit from a split between the two republics. Monroe also assured the Directory that despite the treaty France still had many friends in the United States and that breaking off relations would turn some of these against their cause. France’s enemies within the U.S. and around the world would seize upon such a measure and use it against them. Remarkably, and rather inappropriately, he even assured the French that if “left to ourselves everything will I think be satisfactorily arranged, and perhaps in the course of the present year”—a thinly veiled hint that Jefferson’s anticipated election as president in November 1796 could overturn Jay’s Treaty and reverse its ill effects. In that happy event, Monroe did not doubt that he could preserve the alliance with France.²⁹ Unfortunately for the unwitting minister, his Federalist rivals had already set in motion his recall from Paris. Arch-Federalist Timothy Pickering’s appointment as secretary of state sealed Monroe’s fate. Pickering, who had determined that keeping an ardent Francophile as minister to France threatened both national security and the Federalist Party, eventually prevailed upon President Washington to replace Monroe.³⁰

Upon receiving notice of his removal, Monroe once again addressed the French government. He reflected on having been “witness to a revolution in my own country. I was deeply penetrated with its principles which are the same with those of your revolution.” Monroe told the French leaders that he felt as though he had “partaken with you in all the perilous and trying situations in which you have been placed.” The French were poised to enter a “dawn of prosperity,” and Monroe had tried to preserve the “close union and perfect harmony between our two nations.” His entire ministry had been dedicated to “promot[ing] this object.” An embittered Monroe regretfully left his post in December of 1796 and arrived back in the United States in late June of 1797.³¹

The administration's conduct enraged Monroe. Upon his return to the country, he even published an account of his ministry, "A View of the Conduct of the Executive, in the Foreign Affairs of the United States, Connected with the Mission to the French Republic, during the years 1794, 1795, 1796," in which he criticized the conduct of the Washington administration. In it, Monroe laid out his entire three-year ministry, complete with accompanying correspondence. In his private letters he lashed out at Washington, acerbically deriding the tone of his famous farewell address as akin to historical monarchs who "practiced ingratitude in their transactions with other great powers." He continued with a typical anti-Federalist tirade, asserting that "where these men will plunge our affairs God only knows, but such a collection of vain, superficial blunderers, to say no worse of them, were never I think before placed at the head of any respectable State."³² According to Monroe, America had enjoyed a standing with France "so advantageous . . . so easy to preserve! And yet all these advantages have been thrown away." The administration instead sought to "plunge us into a war with our ancient ally, and on the side of the kings of Europe contending against her for the subversion of liberty!" The Federalists, Monroe claimed, hoped to bring the United States in line with England and had in the process thrown "our national honor . . . in the dust." All this might easily have been avoided. If the administration had simply "stood well with France . . . we might have preserved our ancient renown . . . and even appeared as a defender of liberty" without the necessity of reverting to arms. This last is a critical point. Monroe primarily wanted to lend moral support for republicanism in France. He did not advocate U.S. military intervention in the French Revolution, but he wanted the government to provide unequivocal ideological support for the cause. By failing to do so the United States had squandered an opportunity that would haunt the nation for ages to come, "nor will centuries suffice to raise us to the high ground from which we have fallen." Eventually Monroe himself tried to hasten America's climb back to the "high ground" with the Monroe Doctrine.³³

After Monroe left Paris in 1797, his political career soared while republicanism in France collapsed. Monroe was elected governor of Virginia in 1799 and helped Jefferson win the presidency in 1800. In Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the French Republic and made himself First Consul in

1799 and Emperor in 1804. As Napoleon relentlessly battled the European monarchies, Monroe ascended the American political ladder, attaining the presidency a year after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. This placed him in a unique position to try to correct the mistakes the United States had made in France.³⁴

Napoleon's defeat in 1815 extinguished republicanism on the European continent. Following the Congress of Vienna, the European powers worked in concert, united by monarchical government, distrust of republicanism, and fear of revolution. Czar Alexander I of Russia forged the ultra-conservative "Holy Alliance" in concert with Austria and Prussia, an alliance too reactionary even for Great Britain. The Holy Alliance operated on two fundamental principles—to preserve the settlement reached at Vienna and maintain peace in Europe and to prevent the spread of republican revolution. France, once again under Bourbon rule, later joined the alliance, uniting with other continental powers to repress revolutions throughout Europe.³⁵ Meanwhile Spain's American colonies had begun revolting in 1808 during the Napoleonic wars. By the time of Monroe's inauguration in March 1817, many of these colonies had established some measure of independence. He feared that the Holy Alliance might try to reassert Spanish power in the colonies and envisioned Europe's war against revolution spreading to America's doorstep.³⁶

Monroe's interest in Latin American independence went back some years. As secretary of state, he discussed the possibility of recognizing the independence of the rebelling Spanish provinces as early as 1811. He told Joel Barlow, then U.S. minister to France, that America could not possibly remain "indifferent" to the "just claims of our Southern Brethren." Monroe's concern with the progress of the Latin American revolutions continued into his presidency.³⁷

In his first Annual Message to Congress, Monroe called it "natural" for Americans to sympathize with their southern neighbors. Throughout his first term he gradually progressed toward official recognition of the Latin American republics as independent states.³⁸ By his third year in office, Monroe declared that "the steadiness, consistency and success with which they [the Latin American colonies] have pursued their object . . . give them a strong claim to the favorable consideration of other nations." In his fourth

annual message, Monroe alluded to a sense of inevitability concerning the colonies' independence. He declared that shortly "an adjustment will finally take place on the basis proposed by the Colonies." In other words, he believed that soon Spain would be forced to listen to the colonies' demands for independence and that "to promote that result . . . has always been the uniform policy of the government."³⁹ Despite Monroe's fervent support of revolution, his hardened political instincts initially kept him from bringing the United States more firmly on the side of the Latin American republics.

Threats from Europe forced Monroe to tread carefully for fear of bringing one or all of the European Allies into the conflict. In an 1820 letter to Andrew Jackson, Monroe explained his reasoning. He claimed that his goal had always been for the United States to, as he wished it had done in France, throw its "moral weight in the scale of the Colonies" while not directly participating in the war. Monroe believed that his decision kept Europe on the sideline during the Latin American revolutions. "Europe has remained tranquil spectators of the conflict, whereas had we joined the Colonies, it is presumable that several powers would have united with Spain." In Monroe's mind, active American support and aid to the revolutions would prove counter-productive to the cause because it would likely precipitate a more powerful European nation entering the war on Spain's side.⁴⁰ The United States lacked the military power to aid directly its republican brethren, but as the inventors of the liberal republic, the country lent ideological weight to the Latin American cause.⁴¹ The U.S. finally recognized the Latin America republics in a special message to Congress in 1822, but by then Monroe contemplated an even stronger approach.⁴²

Though he proceeded cautiously, the Latin American revolutions rekindled Monroe's long-cherished desire to support worldwide republicanism. Part of this stemmed from increasing European hostility. During his first term as president, Monroe watched as the European allies, with Great Britain leading the way, remained content to simply maintain the balance of power. But after 1820, the Holy Allies moved beyond the British vision for the concert of Europe by voting to approve violent Austrian repression of republican revolutions underway in nearby Naples and Piedmont. They pursued the same course in Verona the following year, in spite of British dissent. Finally, with a restored Bourbon King on the French throne, the Holy Allies

authorized French intervention against the newly created republican regime in Spain. This time the Alliance even announced their intention to move against Britain if it stood in the way. In 1822, Louis XVIII launched a 60,000-man army into Spain in order to crush the fledgling liberal regime and restore Ferdinand VII to the throne. These events startled Monroe, but he also held out hope that perhaps these monarchical reactionaries had overextended themselves.⁴³

Monroe hoped that a Bourbon military disaster in Spain might “put at issue its own future . . . perhaps its existence.” He thought a defeat would undermine the restored Bourbon regime and might even spark renewed revolution in France. Monroe told Jefferson that he refused to “believe that the revolutionary spirit has become extinct” in France. The president held to the ideals of the revolutionary era. He still believed in the righteousness of the French Revolution’s original purpose. The remainder of Monroe’s letter to his former mentor exhibits an almost regretful tone. Monroe lamented the United States’ squandering past opportunities to advance the revolutionary cause. Now, fate granted him a chance to rectify those mistakes. The country faced another critical historical moment analogous to Monroe’s experience in France thirty years earlier. “Such is the state of Europe, and our relation to it is pretty much the same, as it was, in the commencement of the French Revolution.” The United States meanwhile maintained the same policy of neutrality and isolation. Monroe, now in a position to direct America’s foreign affairs, questioned this strategy. He began to contemplate a more powerful statement in favor of republicanism. He asked Jefferson, “can we, in any form, take a bolder attitude in regard to it [revolution], in favor of liberty, than we then did? Can we afford greater aid to that cause, by assuming any such attitude, than we now do?” In the coming months events provided Monroe with an opportunity to assert his version of this new “bolder attitude.”⁴⁴

During the summer and fall of 1823, Monroe learned that the French had succeeded in suppressing the Spanish revolutionary government. Rumors swirled around Washington City that the Holy Alliance, in addition to their adventures against republicanism in Europe, planned to reassert Spanish control over the Latin American colonies. The British viewed this proposal fearfully. As the preeminent maritime power they wanted free

access to Latin American markets. By 1823, Foreign Minister George Canning realized that the British had lost effective control over the “concert of Europe.” The Russian-led Holy Alliance adopted increasingly aggressive tactics against revolutionary regimes. Canning looked upon the United States as a potential ally in preventing European interference in Latin America. In October of 1823, he suggested Anglo-American cooperation to achieve this end. He asked Monroe to agree to the following:

1. We conceive the recovery of the colonies by Spain to be hopeless.
2. We conceive the recognition of them, as independent states, to be one of time and circumstance.
3. We are, however, by no means disposed to throw any impediment in the way of an arrangement between them and the mother country by amicable negotiations.
4. We aim not at the possession of any portion of them ourselves.
5. We could not see any portion of them transferred to any power with indifference.⁴⁵

This amounted to an alliance with Great Britain for the preservation of Latin American independence. Canning’s offer struck a chord with Monroe, who sent another letter to Jefferson seeking advice on how best to respond. Monroe posed a startling proposition: “Shall we entangle ourselves, at all, in European politics?” A joint proclamation would, after all, force the United States to abandon the most sacred principle of its foreign policy. Canning’s proposal effectively constituted a counter-alliance against the Holy Allies. Monroe recognized the country’s long standing policy of neutrality toward the European powers—most famously enunciated in the farewell address he had so vehemently castigated a quarter century earlier. Jefferson himself continued the principle during his presidency. An agreement with the British would significantly reverse this policy. But, as Monroe told Jefferson, “if a case can exist” where the American policy could be “departed from, is not the present instance precisely that case?” This proposal offered him a chance not only to detach the strongest nation in the world from the other monarchical powers but also to preserve Latin American republicanism.⁴⁶

For two decades republicans had watched the promise of the French Revolution fade. Now a potential rift between Britain and the Holy Allies

appeared possible. The British had been French republicanism's most implacable foe. But now, Monroe told Jefferson, "I think a change has since been wrought" in them.⁴⁷ The Holy Allies had moved in a more conservative direction, while British liberals looked askance at their activities. The British constitutional monarchy increasingly had more in common with the American republic than autocrats like the Russian Czar. Monroe wanted to force Great Britain either to stand with the "monarchs of Europe" and despotism or with the "U States and liberty." He believed that this was an important enough opportunity to risk "entangling" in European affairs. "My own impression," he told Jefferson, "is that we ought to meet the proposal of the British government and to make it known that we would view interference on the part of the European powers and especially an attack on the [Latin American] Colonies by them as an attack on ourselves." Jefferson's response only added to Monroe's fervor.⁴⁸

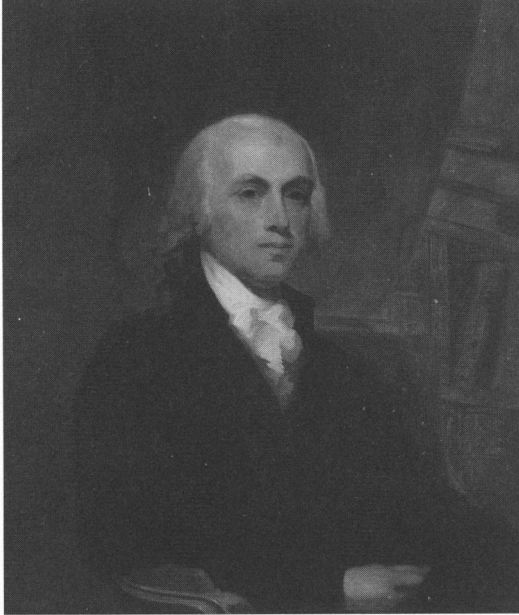
Jefferson weighed Monroe's concerns carefully. He called Canning's offer "the most momentous [question] . . . offered to my contemplation since that of Independence." Although he reiterated his desire never to "entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe," Jefferson found Canning's offer too enticing to ignore. Jefferson perceived continental Europe descending back into the "domain of despotism." He hoped that accepting Canning's offer might "draw to our side" the "most powerful member" of the European alliance and ultimately "bring her into the scale of free government" thereby landing a critical blow in the struggle for republicanism. And, after all, by bringing Great Britain into the fight to secure republicanism in the western hemisphere, the U.S. would not be entangling itself in "their" war "but ours."⁴⁹

Monroe also wrote to James Madison for advice. Though the former president refused to trust the British, he too responded with eagerness. After reading Monroe's letter, Madison told Jefferson that "in the great struggle of the Epoch between liberty and despotism we owe it to ourselves to sustain the former, in this hemisphere at least." Madison even suggested that Monroe ask the British to extend their efforts not only to Latin America but also to "the French invasion of Spain." Madison wanted Monroe to ask the British to "make the Greeks," then in the midst of their own republican revolution, "an object of some favorable attention." He hoped to press the British to support the cause of liberty in Europe as well as the western

hemisphere. Madison's advice accorded with Monroe's own thinking, so after conferring with the leading lights of the revolutionary generation's old guard, he proposed to discard one of the bedrock principles of American foreign policy.⁵⁰

Canning's offer provided Monroe with an opportunity to guide the United States toward the kind of robust support for republicanism that he believed it should have extended to France in the 1790s. With his old Republican colleagues' support, Monroe convened his cabinet in November 1823 to discuss Canning's proposal. Only then did he receive an entirely different perspective from John Quincy Adams. The secretary of state agreed with the general idea of warning the European powers against reestablishing colonies in the new world but, perhaps concerned with looking too much like an unreformed federalists, he also thought that by accepting Canning's proposal the United States would "come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war." In other words, he believed that the country needed to make a unilateral statement.⁵¹

Adams was largely uninterested in the worldwide movement toward republicanism. To him the United States alone stood as the last bastion of freedom in the world. In his famous 4 July 1821 speech to Congress in response to the calls for American aid to the revolutionary regimes in Latin America, Adams declared that the United States "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. . . . She is the well-wisher to freedom and independence of all but she is the champion and vindicator only of her own." He saw Great Britain as another rival for power in the New World and not as a potential ally in a grand concert for liberty. He wanted the United States to assert itself as the dominant power in the Western hemisphere. Accepting Canning's proposal would invite British incursions into Latin America, weakening U.S. prestige and influence in the region. He also might have worried that his presidential fortunes would be harmed by an alliance with Britain. As secretary of state he would be held responsible for the agreement, and as the son of a Federalist ex-president and a former Federalist himself, he may have worried that the Anti-British portion of the electorate would refuse to vote for the man responsible for such an alliance with the old enemy.⁵²



Monroe asked his friend, former president James Madison (1751–1836), for advice on how to respond to Great Britain’s offer of alliance in defense of the Latin American republics. (*Virginia Historical Society, 1856.2_AfterCons*)

On 13 November 1823, Adams confided to his journal that the president appeared “unsettled in his own mind as to the answer to be given to Mr. Canning’s proposals.” He claimed that Monroe was terrified “far beyond anything that I could have conceived possible with the fear that the Holy Alliance are about to restore immediately S. America to Spain.” Adams told the president, “I no more believe that the Holy Allies will restore the Spanish dominion upon the American continent than that the Chimborazo will sink beneath the Ocean.” He did not yet understand exactly what Monroe had in mind. The president was not thinking about a simple statement in support of the western hemisphere but was actually considering a wider proclamation in favor of republicanism, which was likely to provoke the Holy Alliance and even lead to war.⁵³

The situation changed on 16 November when Monroe learned from Richard Rush, minister to Great Britain, that Canning had received assurances from France against Holy Alliance interference in the Western Hemisphere. Rush reported that Canning was now uninterested in pursuing a joint venture. According to Adams, Monroe appeared “to be in [such] an

extraordinary degree of dejection . . . [that] there must be something that affects him beside the European news.” Adams could not understand why these events caused Monroe such angst. He failed to realize the importance of this moment to the former republican revolutionary. For Monroe and his old brothers in arms, the chance to pull Great Britain away from the Holy Alliance while securing republicanism around the world represented an opportunity nearly as important and emotive as the American Revolution itself. The lingering trauma of Monroe’s past experience in France only made the question more personal.⁵⁴

The following days revealed how seriously Monroe took this question. Even without British backing, Monroe still hoped to commit the United States to a unilateral support of republicanism around the globe. On 21 November, Adams learned exactly what “affected” the president. When Monroe read his outline of the “Monroe Doctrine” to the cabinet, it struck Adams like a bolt of lightning. This is a key to understanding Monroe’s vision for the doctrine as well as his role as its architect. He added several passages to his annual message that surprised Adams. These all pointed toward the “bolder attitude” Monroe envisioned for American support of worldwide republicanism. The president began by warning of the “formidable dangers” that “menaced” the country. His draft message urged Americans to prepare themselves to defend the cause of liberty against its enemies, criticized the French invasion of Spain, and tacitly recognized Greek independence with joyous praise of the “heroic revolutionary struggle.” Finally, taking Jefferson and Madison’s suggestions to heart, Monroe declared the United States the champion of republicanism, not only in the west but also around the world. Here the alarmed Adams called Monroe’s draft “a summons to arms—to arms against all Europe.” He warned the president that his message might enrage the nations of Europe and drive the United States to war. Europe, he claimed, had always gone through “convulsions,” including revolutions and counter-revolutions. The United States meanwhile looked upon these “safe in our distance” and wisely maintained a “forbearance to interfere.” With this message, Monroe, in his zeal for the revolutionary movement, would “buckle the harness and throw down the gauntlet.” In other words, this would entangle the country in Europe’s incessant wars. Worse it did so “for objects of policy exclusively European.” Adams prevailed



Though John Quincy Adams (1767–1848) served as Monroe’s closest adviser, he opposed an alliance with Great Britain in defense of the Latin American republics and was alarmed at the president’s first draft of his annual message of 1823. (*Library of Congress*)

upon the president to soften his message. It would, he cried, “be as new to our policy as it would be surprising.”⁵⁵

Adams argued for a message that stated the government’s “earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European powers by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe.” He envisioned a private warning to various European nations against further colonization in the New World. Monroe did not agree. Perhaps he saw this in a similar vein to his time in France when the Washington administration had preferred that Monroe keep his statements of support for the French Revolution private rather than publicly championing the cause, as he had done when he addressed the French National Assembly upon his arrival in Paris in 1794.⁵⁶ Monroe wanted a forceful public declaration from the United States outlining its ideological position on the movement toward worldwide republicanism. Had he agreed to Adams’s suggestion to send private notes to the European nations, he would have been repeating the same mistake of the 1790s. Still, Monroe hoped for unanimity within his cabinet,

and he took Adams's comments into consideration. Combined with his secretary of state's warnings were Monroe's own fears concerning the Holy Alliance. Monroe, after many years of devoted struggle, was inclined to see monarchical conspiracies wherever he looked. In his mind, British monarchists had conspired to destroy the American colonies in the years preceding the revolution. During the 1790s the same monarchists had conspired to destroy the French Revolution, while their allies in the Federalist Party labored to corrupt the American republic. Now the princes of Europe linked arms to crush revolutionary movements in Europe. It did not take a great leap of imagination for Monroe to think them capable of targeting the United States if he tried to champion the republican cause in Europe. He therefore chose to heed Adams's warning and preserve the cause of republicanism in the western hemisphere only. Monroe did retain strong sentiments of support for budding European republicanism in the words of the doctrine if not the substance of administration policy.⁵⁷

In the final draft of the message, the president continued a theme from his previous year's address, when he had declared that Greece "fills the mind with the most exalted sentiments" and had lamented that "such a country should have been overwhelmed and so long hidden, as it were, from the world under a gloomy despotism." He claimed that the fate of the Greeks filled Americans with "unceasing and deep anger." Now that the birthplace of democracy "contend[ed] in favor of their liberties" to "recover their independence," just as the United States had done in 1776, it could not help but elicit "sympathy and excitement" from Americans. Monroe also set his sights on the European monarchies themselves. Though Monroe removed the passages that Adams called a "summons to arms" and chose not to "throw down the gauntlet" against them, he did criticize members of the Holy Alliance. After mentioning in his message of 1822 that Spain and Portugal were taking steps to "improve the condition of the people," a year later he lamented the subsequent course of events.⁵⁸

Americans kept an eye on the cause of liberty in Europe, "cherish[ing] sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow men on that side of the Atlantic." The president claimed that "Europe is still unsettled." Monroe held out hope that Europe would eventually undergo a republican revolution of its own and that the monarchists' efforts

to suppress these movements were nothing more than a feeble attempt to hold back the tide. He pointed to the allied powers' decision to "interpose by force in the internal concerns of Spain" as proof of their desperation. Monroe wanted the Holy Allies to know that Americans disapproved of their attempts to foist a restored monarchy in place of the liberal regime in Spain.⁵⁹

The spread of republicanism in Latin America interested Americans more closely. Monroe continued that "with the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers." These "causes" were the Latin American revolutions. Monroe declared victory for republicanism in the western hemisphere, trumpeting that Latin American governments had not only "declared but maintained independence" and that the United States had recognized these new states on "just principles." Those just principles primarily concerned the inherent differences between the governments of Europe and the United States. "The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America," and Latin America's choice of government, as much as proximity, imbued the region with particular importance. With republicanism taking root in Latin America the United States refused to stand idly by if the allied powers tried to force their style of government on the Western Hemisphere. To allow that would threaten America's "peace and happiness." Monroe also criticized the quality of monarchical government. He claimed that no nation would ever willingly choose monarchy over republicanism. No one believed, "that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it [monarchy] of their own accord." Latin America shared this republican connection to the United States and "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." The republican connection forced the United States to support Latin America.⁶⁰

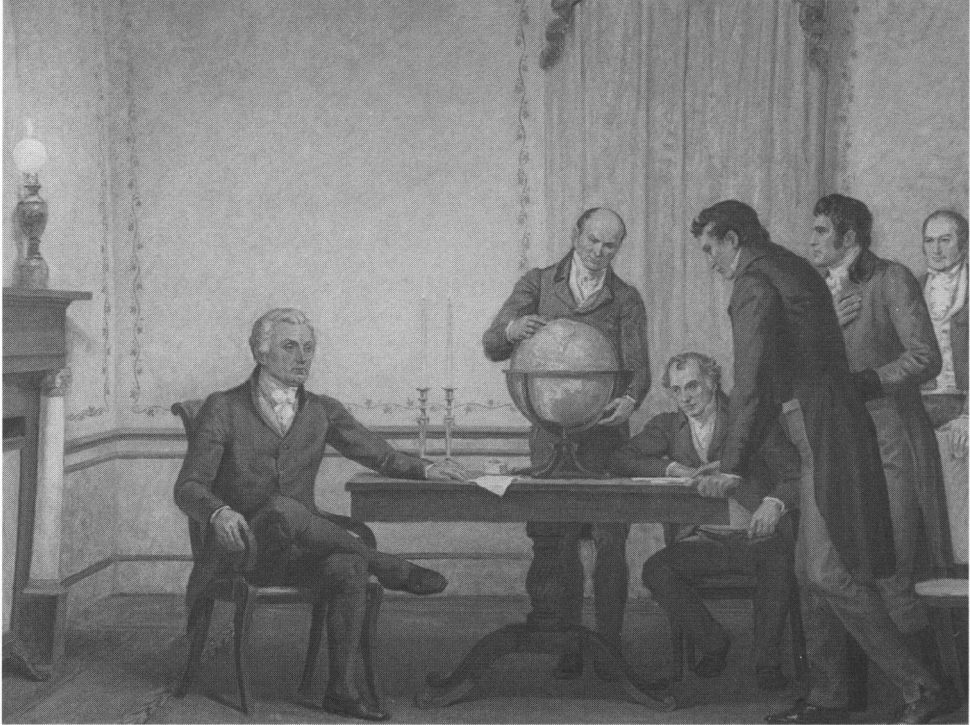
Finally, Monroe outlined the words that helped define American foreign policy for the rest of the century: "We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the U.S. and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their [Europe's] part to extend their sys-

tem to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.” This, the core of the doctrine, had its origins in Monroe’s republicanism. The attempt to keep the European powers out of the affairs of the western hemisphere stemmed directly from his dedication to the cause. He hoped that his statement would still be seen as a great victory for republicanism.⁶¹

Half a year after he created it, the president gave some indication of what he hoped to accomplish with the new policy in a letter to Jefferson. He wrote to his old mentor in alarm when word reached him of a French government envoy to Colombia offering the new nation recognition in exchange for a promise that the Colombians create a monarchical government. Monroe wrote that the “attitude” the United States took in this crisis was “in the highest degree important to the whole civilized world” primarily because the country stood alone against the monarchs of Europe. Though the French were willing to leave a monarchical Latin America alone, this did not satisfy Monroe. Latin American independence meant little without Latin American republicanism.⁶²

In the years that followed, Monroe saw the Monroe Doctrine as the crowning achievement of his presidency. He gushed with pride in telling James Madison of a letter he received from the Marquis de Lafayette. The old French hero of Yorktown commented on the positive effect Monroe’s Doctrine had on Europe, throughout which the “friends of liberty” lauded the president’s message.⁶³ Monroe’s subordinates realized the importance he placed on the new policy. Caesar A. Rodney, a diplomat in Buenos Aires and son of one of Monroe’s fellow revolutionaries, congratulated the president on his message, telling Monroe that “the state of the world required this frank and manly avowal of your patriotic sentiments.” Rodney even hearkened back to his father’s days during the American Revolution when he told the president, “you breathe a spirit worthy of the purest and proudest days of the Revolution.” Finally, he expected the Monroe Doctrine to have a powerful effect because the “weight of the moral character” of the United States was worth “armies in the field.” Such praise convinced Monroe that his message made an important contribution to the republican cause.⁶⁴

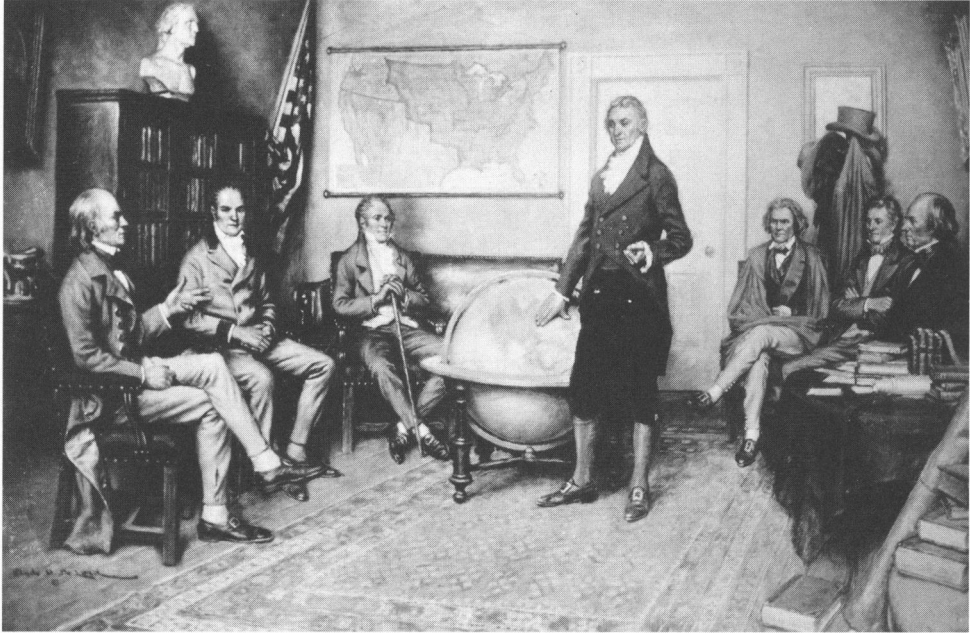
In his final annual message to Congress in 1824, Monroe spoke with pride at his accomplishment. He again linked the cause of revolution around the world. He referred to the revolutions in Latin America and Greece,



This painting, which is in the U.S. Capitol, depicts John Quincy Adams as the Monroe Doctrine's central figure. He is shown standing behind the globe explaining its implications to the rest of the cabinet, while President Monroe sits to his right listening passively. (*Architect of the Capitol*)

claiming that the cause of “liberty and humanity “continues to prevail” throughout the world. Latin America, in part because of his doctrine, was “settling down under governments elective and representative, in every branch, similar to our own.” The “deep interest” the United States took in that region “especially in the very important one of instituting their own government . . . has been declared and is known to the world.”⁶⁵

James Monroe's political career ended after he left the presidency in 1825. His six-year retirement from public life offers a sad conclusion to one of the great political careers in American history. Suffering from poor finances after a life of preferring public service over his private affairs, Monroe spent his final years beseeching Congress to compensate him for



In contrast to the previous painting, this work depicts Monroe as the doctrine's central figure. He is shown standing in front of the globe outlining his vision of the annual message of 1823 to the cabinet. John Quincy Adams, seated on Monroe's right, sits with his hand raised as if to ask a question of the president. (*Granger, NYC—All rights reserved*)

massive debts accrued while serving in various diplomatic posts—a humiliating undertaking for a former president. Worse, after his wife Elizabeth's death, health concerns forced him to leave his beloved Virginia to live with his daughter in New York. Even in this dark period in his life the republican cause still had the power to lift his spirits. Just before his death, the promise of a new revolutionary movement sparked the ailing ex-president. In 1830 a new generation of French citizens rebelled against the Bourbon restoration regime. Monroe allowed himself to believe that this new republican revolution would finally sweep away monarchism forever. In January of 1831, Monroe wrote with the same passion for the republican cause he had shown throughout his life to his former secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, by then a fellow ex-president. Monroe believed the news from France would open “a new epoch to that country and to the world.” Ever the optimist,

Monroe believed that this time republicanism would succeed. His doctrine had changed the climate and would allow republicanism to take root “under much more favorable circumstances” than it had during the 1790s. This was, he believed, because his 1823 message provided the moral and ideological support for republicanism to thrive, all without provoking the European powers with direct military action.

As his health deteriorated, Monroe comforted himself with the thought that the movement he had spent his life promoting would “extend its influence . . . to other people, to Spain and Italy and even to the North.” Monroe died six months later on the nation’s fifty-fifth birthday believing that the Monroe Doctrine had in some measure corrected the mistakes of the 1790s and provided republicanism with a chance to finally spread around the globe. His hope that his doctrine would shine as a beacon of republicanism in Latin America and around the world never materialized. The Monroe Doctrine failed to spread republican ideals but instead served as a vehicle through which the United States exerted a softer kind of imperialism. Ironically, the Monroe Doctrine became a tool to advance American hegemony in the western hemisphere that in many ways replaced the old monarchical imperialism that Monroe dedicated his life to defeating.⁶⁶



NOTES

1. John Quincy Adams (cited hereafter as JQA), diary, 21 and 22 Nov. 1823, in Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848* (12 vols.; 1874–77; New York, 1970), 6:195–97.
2. James Monroe, *The Autobiography of James Monroe*, ed. Stuart Gerry Brown (Syracuse, 1972), 22, 25–29, 223–24; see also, Harry Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (New York, 1971), 7–27. For other accounts of the battle of Trenton, see James Wilkinson, *Memoirs of My Own Times* (New York, 1816), 130; William Stryker, *Battles of Trenton and Princeton* (Boston, 1898), 360–64; and David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (Oxford, 2004), 1–6. After only two years at the College of William and Mary, Monroe abandoned his schooling to join the Continental Army. He saw action in a number of engagements during the fall and early winter of 1776. After weeks of retreating from the British, Gen. George Washington struck back at a detachment of 1,500 Hessian mercenaries in Trenton, New Jersey. Washington and his small band of soldiers recrossed the Delaware River on the night of 25 December. Lieutenant Monroe, still just a teenager, accompanied a unit of fifty men in the advanced guard. As the attack began, Monroe and his men surged forward and captured the enemy cannon thereby helping the Continental Army achieve its first major victory of the Revolutionary War.
3. Neither Monroe nor his contemporaries used the term “Monroe Doctrine,” but I use it in order to avoid confusion and for the sake of simplicity.
4. JQA, diary, 22 Nov. 1823, in Adams, ed., *Memoirs*, 6:195.
5. James Monroe, *The People, the Sovereigns: Being a Comparison of the Government of the United States with Those Republics which Have Existed before with the Causes of Their Decline and Fall*, ed. Samuel L. Gouverneur (Philadelphia, 1867), 18.
6. For James Monroe’s political philosophy, see *ibid.*, 18–34, 54–58, 154, 164, 170–71, 196, 200–220; James Monroe, “Some Hints Directing the Measures To Be Taken to Form a Monarchy Out of Several Confederate Democracies,” June 1788, in Daniel Preston, ed., *The Papers of James Monroe* (4 vols.; Westport, Conn., 2003–), 2:445–46 (cited hereafter as *Papers of James Monroe*); and James Monroe, “Speech to the Virginia Ratification Convention,” 10 June 1788, *Papers of James Monroe*, 2:429–30.
7. The quotations are from JQA, diary, 21 Nov. 1823, *Memoirs*, 6:195.
8. For evaluations of the Doctrine, see Luis Quintanilla “A Latin American View: Machiavellian Due to Corollaries,” and Gaston Nerval, “Egoistic from Its Pronouncement,” both in Armin Rappaport, ed., *The Monroe Doctrine* (New York, 1964). For a discussion of the purpose of the Doctrine, see Dexter Perkins, “To Deter the Continental Allies in the Western Hemisphere,” and Arthur P. Whitaker, “To Frustrate France’s Plans in South America,” both in *ibid.* For discussions on who formulated the Doctrine, see Worthington C. Ford “The Work of John Quincy Adams,” in *ibid.* See also, Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine: 1823–1826* (New York, 1932), 100–103. For arguments that point to John Quincy Adams as the primary shaper of Monroe’s foreign policy, see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1956) and William Earl Weeks, *John Quincy Adams and the American Global Empire* (Lexington, Ky., 1992). For a discussion of the role domestic politics played in the creation of the

Monroe Doctrine, see Ernest May, *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975). The most recent account of the Monroe Doctrine is Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 2011). Sexton also emphasizes John Quincy Adams's role in creating the doctrine, though he does give Monroe more credit than most.

9. James Monroe (cited hereafter as JM) to Thomas Jefferson (cited hereafter as TJ), 2 June 1823, in Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, ed., *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence Now for the First Time Printed* (7 vols.; 1898–1903; New York, 1969), 6:310 (cited hereafter as *Writings of James Monroe*); Noble Cunningham, *The Presidency of James Monroe* (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 61.

10. For a general treatment of the French Revolution and the early American republic, see Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty* (New York, 2009), 174–208, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (New York, 1993), 303–65, and James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic* (New Haven, 1993), 1–17, 69–92. For the diplomatic context, see Alexander DeConde, *Entangling Alliance* (Durham, N.C., 1958). During the years following the fall of the Bastille, when Jefferson watched the French Revolution's progress until Monroe's own posting as minister to the new French Republic in 1794, the American political world divided into two camps. Those who supported the French Revolution began to refer to themselves as Republicans or Democratic-Republicans, while those who opposed it maintained the title Federalists from the days of the battle over ratification of the Constitution. As the French Revolution devolved further into violence, Federalists eventually came to reject it utterly. By March 1793, after word had reached the United States of Louis XVI's execution and the outbreak of war between France and Britain, the two budding political parties stood totally at odds on the question of who the United States should support.

11. Quotations are from James Monroe, "Aratus Number I," 9 Nov. 1791, *Papers of James Monroe*, 2:511–13. Monroe took the penname "Aratus" from the Greek statesman Aratus of Sicyon who deposed the Sicyonian Tyrant Nicocoles in 251 BCE and helped create the Achaean League; see also, R. R. Fennessy, *Burke, Paine, and the Rights of Man: A Difference of Political Opinion* (The Hague, 1963). Monroe's defense of the French Revolution was only a small part in the massive trans-Atlantic debate occurring between those who supported it and those who feared its outcome (see, Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery* [New York, 2009]).

12. Quotations are from James Monroe, "Aratus Number II," 22 Nov. 1791, *Papers of James Monroe*, 2:514, and James Monroe "Aratus Number III," 17 Dec. 1791, in *ibid.*, 2:521.

13. JM to TJ, 27 May 1794, *ibid.*, 3:1–2. A number did turn down the appointment, including James Madison and Robert R. Livingston.

14. JM to TJ, 23 July 1793, in *ibid.*, 2:634–35. Secretary of State Edmund Randolph assured Monroe that his appointment was made in order to prove to France that the United States remained its staunch friend.

15. JM to TJ, 21 Aug. 1793, in *ibid.*, 2:635–36; Ammon, *James Monroe*, 112–15.

16. JM to Edmund Randolph (cited hereafter as ER), 15 Aug. 1794, in *Papers of James Monroe*, 3:25; Ammon, *James Monroe*, 108. For an evaluation of Robespierre see, Peter McPhee, *Robespierre: A Revolutionary Life* (New Haven, 2012).

17. JM to ER, 15 Aug. 1794, *Papers of James Monroe*, 3:25–26.
18. *Ibid.*, 3:27. Monroe believed that the people stood prepared to support the French Revolution to the end. He claimed to have “neither seen nor heard any symptom of discontent showing itself among the people at large.” In fact, Monroe informed Randolph that he “never saw in the countenance of men more apparent content.” On his journey from Havre to Paris, Monroe witnessed celebrations of French military victories and citizens willingly handing over money, supplies, and even their own sons for the war. These were not the “symptoms” of a people tired of republicanism and willing to reject it.
19. JM to ER, 13 Jan. 1795, *ibid.*, 3:202–6.
20. Arthur Scherr, “The Limits of Republican Ideology: James Monroe in Thermidorian Paris, 1794–1796” *Mid-America* 79 (1997): 6–11, 33, 41–44. In his article on Monroe’s time in France, Scherr explains that “Monroe drew a sharp dichotomy between the radical phase of the French Revolution and the kind of republicanism he considered legitimate and respectable.” Although it is certainly true that Monroe deplored the “Terror,” he did not see Robespierre’s actions as part of the authentic republican revolution at all.
21. JM to Phillippe Merlin De Douai, 13 Aug. 1794, *Papers of James Monroe*, 3:24. See also, Beverley Bond, *The Monroe Mission to France, 1794–1796* (Baltimore, 1907), 15–16, and Monroe, *Autobiography*, 59–61.
22. Quotation from Ammon, *James Monroe*, 119.
23. JM, “Address to the French National Convention,” 15 Aug. 1794, *Papers of James Monroe*, 3:30–31. Monroe also formally presented declarations from both houses of Congress, wishing the French people well, and he personally expressed President George Washington’s own fond wishes.
24. *Ibid.* See also, JM to James Madison, 2 Sept. 1794, *ibid.*, 3:47–49.
25. JM to ER, 25 Aug. 1794, *ibid.*, 3:37–40; ER to JM, 2 Dec. 1794, *ibid.*, 3:172–74 (quotation from page 172).
26. James Madison to JM, 4 Dec. 1794, *ibid.*, 3:179; John Brown to JM, 5 Dec. 1794, *ibid.*, 3:182–84 (quotations).
27. JM to ER, 12 Feb. 1795, *ibid.*, 2:224–27. For the concessions Monroe achieved during his mission, see JM to ER, 13 Jan. 1795, *ibid.*, 2:202–6, and JM to Committee of Public Safety, 4 Jan. 1795, *ibid.*, 2:195–96.
28. JM to James Madison, 8 Sept. 1795, *ibid.*, 3:438.
29. JM to Timothy Pickering (cited hereafter as TP), 16 Feb. 1796, *ibid.*, 3:590 (first quotation); JM to Charles Delacroix, 17 Feb. 1796, *ibid.*, 3:591–92 (second quotation). See also, JM to James Madison, 5 July 1796, *ibid.*, 4:39–40.
30. JM to John Beckley, 23 June 1795, *ibid.*, 3:368–72. Pickering seized on Monroe’s unsuccessful replies to French complaints of the Jay Treaty as a pretext for removing the minister. Pickering also furnished the above letter from June of 1795 that Monroe wrote to George Logan, founder of the Democratic Republican Societies, in which he condemned Jay’s Treaty. Monroe also sent copies of this letter to George Logan, R. R. Livingston, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, and possibly George Clinton.
31. JM, “Address to the Executive Directory,” 1 Jan. 1797, *ibid.*, 4:138–39.

32. JM to James Madison, 1 Jan. 1797, *ibid.*, 4:139–40 (quotation on page 140). For Monroe's correspondence with the administration demanding an explanation for his dismissal, see JM to TP, 6 July 1797, *ibid.*, 4:157–58; TP to JM, 17 July 1797, *ibid.*, 4:164–65; JM to TP, 19 July 1797, *ibid.*, 4:165–66; TP to JM, 24 July 24 1797, *ibid.*, 4: 170–71; and JM to TP, 31 July 1797, *ibid.*, 4:173–76.
33. JM, "A View of the Conduct of the Executive," 23 Dec. 1797, *ibid.*, 4:195–229 (quotation from page 227). Monroe would have agreed in some respects with historian Seth Cotlar's contention that the 1790s represented a lost opportunity for American politics. Though Monroe would have seen Jefferson's election in 1800 as a corrective to rather than the culmination of these issues (Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* [Charlottesville, 2011]).
34. Monroe saw Napoleon as a tyrant much like Robespierre. His ascension effectively ended the French Revolution in Monroe's mind.
35. Rappaport, *Monroe Doctrine*, 2–8; Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York, 1996), 762–63.
36. For information on the United States and the revolutions in Latin America, see A. P. Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800–1830* (Baltimore, 1941) and James Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783–1829* (Chapel Hill, 1998).
37. JM to Joel Barlow, 27 Nov. 1811, *Writings of James Monroe*, 5:364.
38. JM, "First Annual Message to Congress," 2 Dec. 1817, *ibid.*, 6:33–35.
39. JM, "Third Annual Message to Congress," 7 Dec. 1819, *ibid.*, 6:112; JM, "Fourth Annual Message to Congress," 14 Nov. 1820, *ibid.*, 6: 158–59.
40. JM to Andrew Jackson, 23 May 1820, *ibid.*, 6:128.
41. JM to Albert Gallatin, 26 May 1820, *ibid.*, 6:132–33. See also JM to Jonathon Russell, 12 Mar. 1822, *ibid.*, 6:211–12, and JM to James Madison 10 May 1822, *ibid.*, 6:284–85. Monroe laid out his thinking to Madison on the subject in the first two pages of this letter. He also recognized that the independence movements needed recognition from European powers. A premature announcement of recognition from the United States might "alarm" the European powers and "defeat our own objects."
42. JM, "Special Message to Congress Concerning South American Affairs," 8 Mar. 1822, *ibid.*, 6:204.
43. Bemis, *John Quincy Adams*, 369–71.
44. JM to TJ, 2 June 1823, *Writings of James Monroe*, 6:309–10. See also Ammon, *James Monroe*, 483.
45. George Canning to Richard Rush, 23 Aug. 1823, *Writings of James Monroe*, 6:365.
46. JM to TJ, 17 Oct. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:323–25.
47. JM to TJ, 2 June 1823, *ibid.*, 6:309.
48. JM to TJ, 17 Oct. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:323–25; Ammon, *James Monroe*, 476–77.

49. TJ to JM, 24 Oct. 1823, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* (12 vols.; New York, 1905), 12:381–89.
50. James Madison to TJ, 1 Nov. 1823, in James Morton Smith, ed., *The Republic of Letters: Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, 1776–1826* (3 vols.; New York, 1995), 3:1879. See also James Madison to JM, 30 Oct. 1823, *Writings of James Monroe*, 6:394–96.
51. JQA, diary, 7 Nov. 1823, in Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 6:179. See also Ernest May, *Making of the Monroe Doctrine*, 188–89.
52. JQA, “Speech to The U.S. House of Representatives,” 4 July 1821, in The University of Virginia: Miller Center, Presidential Speeches Archive, <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3484> (accessed 29 Sept. 2016). See also Weeks, *John Quincy Adams and the American Global Empire*, 19–21; Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, 341–42; Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine*, 47–74; and May, *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*, 188–89.
53. JQA, diary, 13 and 15 Nov. 1823, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 6:185–86.
54. JQA, diary, 17 and 18 Nov. 1823, *ibid.*, 187–90 (quotation on page 6:190).
55. JQA, diary, 21 Nov. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:192–96; Ammon, *James Monroe*, 481–82.
56. For Adams’s suggestion on an “inofficial verbal note” to be delivered to the Russians, see JQA, diary, 25 Nov. 1823, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 6:199.
57. Quotations are from JQA, 22 Nov. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:198.
58. Quotations are from JM, “Sixth Annual Message to Congress,” 3 Dec. 1822, *Writings of James Monroe*, 6:298–99. See also, JM, “Seventh Annual Message to Congress,” 2 Dec. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:339.
59. JM, “Seventh Annual Message to Congress,” 2 Dec. 1823, *ibid.*, 6:339.
60. *Ibid.*, 6:339–41.
61. *Ibid.*, 6:340.
62. Quotations are from JM to TJ, 12 July 1824, *ibid.*, 7:29–30. See also, JM to James Madison, 2 Aug. 1824, *ibid.*, 7:31.
63. JM to James Madison, 22 Mar. 1824, *ibid.*, 7:12.
64. Casear A. Rodney to JM, 10 Feb. 1824, *ibid.*, 7:3.
65. JM, “Eight Annual Message to Congress,” 7 Dec. 1824, *ibid.*, 7:46–47.
66. T. C. W. Blanning, *The Nineteenth-Century: Europe, 1789–1914* (New York, 2000), 162–63; JM to JQA, 25 Jan. 1831, *Writings of James Monroe*, 7:216–18.

