

## **Rush-Bagot Pact, 1817 and Convention of 1818**

The Rush-Bagot Pact was an agreement between the United States and Great Britain to eliminate their fleets from the Great Lakes, excepting small patrol vessels. The Convention of 1818 set the boundary between the Missouri Territory in the United States and British North America (later Canada) at the forty-ninth parallel. Both agreements reflected the easing of diplomatic tensions that had led to the War of 1812 and marked the beginning of Anglo-American cooperation.

U.S. political leaders had long expressed interest in disarming the Great Lakes and had proposed such a measure during negotiations that led to the 1794 Jay Treaty, but British officials had rejected this proposal. During the War of 1812, both Great Britain and the United States had built fleets of ships on lakes Erie and Ontario, and fought many battles in the region. Near the end of the war, U.S. forces had achieved dominance over the Lakes. After the war, both powers were wary of one another's military strength and a postwar shipbuilding race ensued. However, both countries also wished to reduce their military expenditures. Unfortunately, the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, contained no disarmament provisions. However, it did establish commissions to resolve contested areas along the border (as determined by the 1783 Treaty of Paris) between the United States and British North America.

Although tensions between Great Britain and the United States remained high along the Great Lakes, overall relations improved. Postwar trade rebounded, and British political leaders increasingly viewed the United States as a valuable trading partner, while also realizing that British North America would be expensive and difficult to defend should another war break out. When U.S. Minister to Great Britain, John Quincy Adams, proposed disarmament on January 25, 1816, British Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh responded favorably. The British Government had already dispatched Charles Bagot as Minister to the United States with the intention of improving relations between the two countries.

Bagot met with Secretary of State James Monroe informally, and finally reached an agreement with his successor, Acting Secretary Richard Rush. The agreement limited military navigation on the Great Lakes to one to two vessels per country on each lake. The U.S. Senate ratified the agreement on April 28, 1818. The British Government considered a diplomatic exchange of letters between Rush and Bagot sufficient to make the agreement effective.

In addition to the issue of military navigation of the Great Lakes, the British Government was also open to negotiations regarding a number of other points of contention that had not been resolved by the Treaty of Ghent. Several commissions met to settle border disputes along the U.S. border with British North America. One of these commissions awarded several islands off the coasts of Maine to New Brunswick. However, negotiators deadlocked over other parts of the northern borders of Maine and New Hampshire. That issue would not be resolved until the 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty, which also resolved the border between Canada and northeastern Minnesota.

Several other separate committees determined other stretches of border that negotiators at the 1783 Treaty of Paris had drawn with faulty maps. The commissions divided the St. Lawrence and other rivers connecting the Great Lakes to allow both countries navigable channels, and

handed Wolfe Island near Kingston, Ontario to the British and Grosse Île near Detroit to the United States. British and U.S. negotiators also agreed to make present-day Angle Inlet, Minnesota the end point of the 1783 border and to allow the Convention of 1818, concluded by Rush and Albert Gallatin, to determine the border to the west of that point.

While these commissions debated border issues, Rush and Gallatin concluded the Anglo-American Convention of 1818 that, among other things, confirmed permanent U.S. rights to fish off Newfoundland and Labrador. The Convention also made provisions for Russian mediation over the issue of escaped slaves in British hands (U.S. slaveowners were eventually provided monetary compensation) and also determined that the border from Angle Inlet would run south to the forty-ninth parallel, and then due west to the Rocky Mountains. The Oregon Country would remain open to both countries for ten years.

Although the agreements did not completely settle border disputes and trade arrangements, the Rush-Bagot agreement and the Convention of 1818 marked an important turning point in Anglo-American and American-Canadian relations.

## Monroe Doctrine, 1823

In his December 2, 1823, address to Congress, President James Monroe articulated United States' policy on the new political order developing in the rest of the Americas and the role of Europe in the Western Hemisphere.

The statement, known as the Monroe Doctrine, was little noted by the Great Powers of Europe, but eventually became a longstanding tenet of U.S. foreign policy. Monroe and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams drew upon a foundation of American diplomatic ideals such as disentanglement from European affairs and defense of neutral rights as expressed in Washington's Farewell Address and Madison's stated rationale for waging the War of 1812. The three main concepts of the doctrine—separate spheres of influence for the Americas and Europe, non-colonization, and non-intervention—were designed to signify a clear break between the New World and the autocratic realm of Europe. Monroe's administration forewarned the imperial European powers against interfering in the affairs of the newly independent Latin American states or potential United States territories. While Americans generally objected to European colonies in the New World, they also desired to increase United States influence and trading ties throughout the region to their south. European mercantilism posed the greatest obstacle to economic expansion. In particular, Americans feared that Spain and France might reassert colonialism over the Latin American peoples who had just overthrown European rule. Signs that Russia was expanding its presence southward from Alaska toward the Oregon Territory were also disconcerting.

For their part, the British also had a strong interest in ensuring the demise of Spanish colonialism, with all the trade restrictions mercantilism imposed. Earlier in 1823 British Foreign Minister George Canning suggested to Americans that two nations issue a joint declaration to deter any other power from intervening in Central and South America. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, however, vigorously opposed cooperation with Great Britain, contending that a statement of bilateral nature could limit United States expansion in the future. He also argued that the British were not committed to recognizing the Latin American republics and must have had imperial motivations themselves.

The bilateral statement proposed by the British thereby became a unilateral declaration by the United States. As Monroe stated:

“The American continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”

Monroe outlined two separate spheres of influence: the Americas and Europe. The independent lands of the Western Hemisphere would be solely the United States' domain. In exchange, the United States pledged to avoid involvement in the political affairs of Europe, such as the ongoing Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire, and not to interfere in the existing European colonies already in the Americas.

By the mid-1800s, Monroe's declaration, combined with ideas of Manifest Destiny, provided precedent and support for U.S. expansion on the American continent. In the late 1800s, U.S. economic and military power enabled it to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. The doctrine's greatest extension came with Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary, which inverted the original meaning of the doctrine and came to justify unilateral U.S. intervention in Latin America.

## **Acquisition of Florida: Treaty of Adams-Onís (1819) and Transcontinental Treaty (1821)**

The colonies of East Florida and West Florida remained loyal to the British during the war for American independence, but by the Treaty of Paris in 1783 they returned to Spanish control. After 1783, American immigrants moved into West Florida.

In 1810, these American settlers in West Florida rebelled, declaring independence from Spain. President James Madison and Congress used the incident to claim the region, knowing full well that the Spanish government was seriously weakened by Napoleon's invasion of Spain. The United States asserted that the portion of West Florida from the Mississippi to the Perdido rivers was part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Negotiations over Florida began in earnest with the mission of Don Luis de Onís to Washington in 1815 to meet Secretary of State James Monroe. The issue was not resolved until Monroe was president and John Quincy Adams his Secretary of State. Although U.S. Spanish relations were strained over suspicions of American support for the independence struggles of Spanish-American colonies, the situation became critical when General Andrew Jackson seized the Spanish forts at Pensacola and St. Marks in his 1818 authorized raid against Seminoles and escaped slaves whom were viewed as a threat to Georgia. Jackson executed two British citizens on charges of inciting the Indians and runaways. Monroe's government seriously considered denouncing Jackson's actions, but Adams defended the Jackson citing the necessity to restrain the Indians and escaped slaves since the Spanish failed to do so. Adams also sensed that Jackson's Seminole campaign was popular with Americans and it strengthened his diplomatic hand with Spain.

Adams used the Jackson's military action to present Spain with a demand to either control the inhabitants of East Florida or cede it to the United States. Minister Onís and Secretary Adams reached an agreement whereby Spain ceded East Florida to the United States and renounced all claim to West Florida. Spain received no compensation, but the United States agreed to assume liability for \$5 million in damage done by American citizens who rebelled against Spain. Under the Onís-Adams Treaty of 1819 (also called the Transcontinental Treaty and ratified in 1821) the United States and Spain defined the western limits of the Louisiana Purchase and Spain surrendered its claims to the Pacific Northwest. In return, the United States recognized Spanish sovereignty over Texas.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Rush-Bagot Pact 1817

1. What was the purpose of the Rush-Bagot Pact?
2. Why was each side willing to agree to the pact?
3. What issues did the pact solve?
4. What issues did the pact not solve?
5. How does the Rush-Bagot Pact represent an important turning point in Anglo-American relations?

### Treaty of Adams-Onis

1. What incident allowed President Madison and congress to claim Florida for the United States?
2. How did the United States use that incident to their advantage?
3. What two actions taken by Andrew Jackson strengthened the position of the United States?
4. How did United States take advantage of Jackson's actions?
5. How did Spain fare in terms of territory gained and lost?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Monroe Doctrine 1823

1. What are the three main concepts of the doctrine?
2. What did the United States hope to accomplish in removing themselves from Anglo affairs?
3. What did Monroe warn European powers against?
4. Why does that represent a potential problem?
5. What two spheres did Monroe outline?

### Comparisons

1. In what ways do the actions of the United States in the Treaty of Adams-Onis represent a more aggressive approach to foreign policy than does the Rush Bagot Pact?
2. In what ways does the Monroe Doctrine represent an even more aggressive foreign policy stance than does the Treaty of Adams-Onis?
3. How would you characterize the progression of American foreign policy from 1817 to 1823?