

## Document Packet ‘C’

**Instructions:** Read the background and context, followed by the four documents, then answer the questions that follow.

### Background and Context:

In 1794, The United States signed Jay’s Treaty with Britain. Britain and France at this point were engaged in a war, while France was simultaneously dealing with civil unrest and revolution within its borders. Adams, Hamilton, and the Federalists felt that a treaty with Britain was necessary to resolve a variety of lingering issues. Jefferson, Madison, and the Republicans felt that the United States should be aligned with the French and should honor the commitment that France made to America during the American revolution.

### Questions:

#### *Document 1:*

- 1) What do you think Hamilton means when he says that men will watch with “Lynx’s eyes?”
- 2) According to Hamilton, why do many people in the country dislike Great Britain?
- 3) Who are the three people that Hamilton thinks might be the next President? Do you think this might influence the way people respond to the Treaty? Why or why not
- 4) What happened in Boston in New York? Why did Hamilton think it was unreasonable? Do you find his arguments convincing?
- 5) What, according to Hamilton, was the real motive for opposition to the Treaty?

#### *Document 2:*

- 1) Who are “monocrats?”
- 2) According to Jefferson, what does the “whole body of the people” think about the Treaty with Great Britain?
- 3) Why would the House of Representatives oppose the treaty? Do they have the constitutional authority to do this?

#### *Documents 3 and 4:*

- 1) What is the difference between how Jefferson describes his opinions regarding the treaty with Thomas Pinckney and how he discusses the treaty with James Monroe? What do you think might account for this difference? What does this teach you about Thomas Jefferson?

#### *Overall Questions:*

- 1) Using these documents as evidence, explain the role that Jay’s Treaty played in causing political division in the United States.

Document C1:

The Defence No. I (written by A. Hamilton)

[New York, July 22, 1795]

IT was to have been foreseen, that the treaty which Mr. Jay was charged to negotiate with Great Britain, whenever it should appear, would have to contend with many perverse dispositions and some honest prejudices. That there was no measure in which the government could engage so little likely to be viewed according to its intrinsic merits—so very likely to encountre misconception, jealousy, and unreasonable dislike. For this many reasons may be assigned.

It is only to know the vanity and vindictiveness of human nature, to be convinced, that while this generation lasts, there will always exist among us, men irreconcilable to our present national constitution—embittered in their animosity, in proportion to the success of its operation, and the disappointment of their inauspicious predictions. It is a material inference from this, that such men will watch with Lynx's eyes for opportunities of discrediting the proceedings of the government, and will display a hostile and malignant zeal upon every occasion, where they think there are any prepossessions of the community to favor their enterprizes. A treaty with Great Britain was too fruitful an occasion not to call forth all their activity.....

...It was known, that the resentment produced by our revolution war with Great-Britain had never been entirely extinguished, and that recent injuries had rekindled the flame with additional violence. It was a natural consequence of this, that many should be disinclined to any amicable arrangement with Great Britain, and that many others should be prepared to acquiesce only in a treaty which should present advantages of so striking and preponderant a kind, as it was not reasonable to expect could be obtained, unless the United States were in a condition to give the law to Great Britain, and as if obtained under the coercion of such a situation could only have been the short lived prelude of a speedy rupture to get rid of them.....

...It was not to be mistaken that an enthusiasm for France and her revolution throughout all its wonderful vicissitudes has continued to possess the minds of the

great body of the people of this country, and it was to be inferred, that this sentiment would predispose to a jealousy of any agreement or treaty with her most persevering competitor—a jealousy so excessive as would give the fullest hope to insidious arts to perplex and mislead the public opinion. ....

...It was also known beforehand that personal and party rivalships of the most active kind, would assail whatever treaty might be made, to disgrace, if possible, its organ.

There are three persons prominent in the public eye, as the successor of the actual President of the United States in the event of his retreat from the station, Mr. Adams, Mr. Jay, Mr. Jefferson.....

...No one can be blind to the finger of party spirit, visible in these and similar transactions. It indicates to us clearly, one powerful source of opposition to the treaty.

No man is without his personal enemies. .... it would have been a vain expectation that the treaty would be generally contemplated with candor and moderation, or that reason would regulate the first impressions concerning it. It was certain on the contrary, that however unexceptionable its true character might be, it would have to fight its way through a mass of unreasonable opposition; and that time, examination and reflection would be requisite to fix the public opinion on a true basis. It was certain that it would become the instrument of a systematic effort against the national government and its administration; a decided engine of party to advance its own views at the hazard of the public peace and prosperity. ....

.... At Boston it was published one day, and the next a town meeting was convened to condemn it, without ever being read; without any serious discussion, sentence was pronounced against it.

Will any man seriously believe that in so short a time, an instrument of this nature could have been tolerably understood by the greater part of those who were thus induced to a condemnation of it? Can the result be considered as any thing more than a sudden ebullition of popular passion, excited by the artifices of a party, which had adroitly seized a favourable moment to surprize the public opinion? .... The intelligence of this event had no sooner reached New York, than the leaders of the clubs were seen haranguing in every corner of the city to stir up our citizens into an imitation of the example of the meeting at Boston. An invitation to meet at the City Hall quickly

followed, not to consider or discuss the merits of the treaty, but to unite with the meeting at Boston to address the president against its ratification.

This was immediately succeeded by a hand bill, full of invectives against the treaty as absurd as they were inflammatory, and manifestly designed to induce the citizens to surrender their reason to the empire of their passions. ....

...Can we believe, that the leaders were really sincere, in the objections they made to a decision, or that the great and mixed mass of citizens then assembled had so thoroughly mastered the merits of the treaty, as that they might not have been enlightened by such a discussion.

It cannot be doubted that the real motive to the opposition, was the fear of a discussion; the desire of excluding light; the adherence to a plan of surprize and deception. Nor need we desire any fuller proof of that spirit of party which has stimulated the opposition to the treaty, than is to be found in the circumstances of that opposition.....

Camillus

Letter Available in: *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (Federal Edition) (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). In 12 vols. Vol. 5

Document C2:

To James Monroe

Dear Sir

Monticello Sep. 6. 95

..... In political matters there is always something new. Yet at such a distance and with such uncertain conveyances it is best to say little of them. It may be necessary however to observe to you that in all countries where parties are strongly marked, as the monocrats and republicans here, there will always be desertions from the one side to the other: and to caution you therefore in your correspondencies with Dawson who is now closely connected in speculations as we are told with Harry Lee with Steel become a consummate tory, and even Innes who has changed backwards and forwards two or three times lately.—Mr. Jay's treaty has at length been made public. So general a burst of dissatisfaction never before appeared against any transaction. Those who understand the particular articles of it, condemn these articles, those who do not understand them minutely, condemn it generally as wearing a hostile face to France. This last is the most numerous class, comprehending the whole body of the people, who have taken a greater interest in this transaction than they were ever known to do in any other. It has, in my opinion, completely demolished the monarchical party here. The chamber of commerce in New York, against the body of the town, the merchants in Philadelphia, against the body of their town, also, and our town of Alexandria have come forward in it's support. Some individual champions also appear. Marshal, Carington, Harvy, Bushrod Washington, Doctor Stewart. A more powerful one is Hamilton under the signature of Camillus. Adams holds his tongue with an address above his character. We do not know whether the President has signed it or not. If he has, it is much believed the H. of representatives will oppose it as constitutionally void, and thus bring on an embarrassing and critical state in our government.—If you should recieve Derieux' money and order the wines, Mr. Fenwick ought to ship them in the winter months. Present my affectionate respects to Mrs. Monroe, and accept them yourself. No signature is necessary.

**Letter Available in:** *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Federal Edition (New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5). Vol. 8

Document C3:

To Thomas Pinckney

Dear Sir

Monticello Sep. 8. 95

.....The noise of the day in the political field, is Mr. Jay's treaty. But no body is so little able as myself to say what the public opinion is. I take no newspaper and by that device keep myself in a much loved ignorance of what people say at a distance. And I never go from home, so that my knolege does not even extend to the neighborhood. I am entirely a farmer, soul and body, never scarcely admitting a sentiment on any other subject, except when I have occasion to communicate with my friends, and to convey to them expressions, as I now take the liberty of doing to you, of the sentiments of esteem & respect with which I have the honor to be Dear Sir Your friend & servt

Th: Jefferson

*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. Barbara B. Oberg and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008.

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Document C4:

To James Monroe

Dear Sir

Mar. 2. 96.

I wrote you two letters in the course of the last twelve months to wit May 26 & Sep. 6. 95 and have recieved from you those of Sep. 7.94. & June 23.95. Neither of which were late enough to inform me if either of mine had got to hand in those I gave you all the details public & private which my situation enabled me to do. In the last I asked the delivery of a note to Frouillé for some books, particularly the sequel of the Encyclopedia, come out since he last furnished me. I hope these have got to hand.

The most remarkeable political occurrence with us has been the treaty with England, of which no man in the US. has had the affrontery to affirm that it was not a very bad one except A.H. under the signature of Camilus. It's most zealous defenders only pretend that it was better than war. As if war was not invited rather than avoided by unfounded demands. I have never known the public pulse beat so full and in such universal union on any subject since the declaration of Independence, the House of representatives of the US> has manifested its disappointment of the treaty. We are yet to learn whether they will exercise their constitutional right of refusing the means which depend on them for carrying it into execution, should they be induced to lend their hand to it will be hard swallowing with their constituents, but will be swallowed from the habits of order & obedience to the laws which so much distinguish our countrymen.

Letter Available at [memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov)