Machiavellian character of European diplomacy, which it is our boast has been the cardinal principle and most distinguished characteristic of American diplomacy ever since.

Had Washington been led by Hamilton into the old-world practice of avoidance of treaty obligations on technical grounds, the essential character of our diplomatic tradition would be the reverse of what it is.

CHAPTER II

FEDERALIST DISRUPTION UNDER ADAMS


The first open battle between two great political parties in the United States began when Washington positively refused to serve another term. His declaration referred only to inclination and duty; nothing was said against a third term in general, nor any reference made to reason or principle.

There were no nominations by caucuses, conventions or legislatures, and no party platforms. Hamilton and Jay had champions among the Federalists and Hamilton rather favored Patrick Henry as a candidate, but the party soon centered on John Adams. Jefferson was the only Republican (Democrat) thought of. Thomas Pinckney was given second place on the Federalist ticket, and United States Senator Aaron Burr was Jefferson's running mate. Burr, a Republican, had defeated Philip Schuyler, Federalist, for the Senate although the New York Legislature was Federalist, a victory never clearly explained, but it and geographical considerations gave Burr his place on the ticket.

The Federalist Party was earlier and better organized than its opponent. Its strength lay largely in towns and cities, and among business men, already associated in chambers of commerce and used to organized effort. More widely scattered and among men living far apart, not coming into frequent contact with their fellow men and unaccustomed to concerted action was Democracy's strength. The issues really involved between the parties were the fundamental question of constitutional construction and our foreign policy.

Adams was denounced for having represented as attorney the British soldiers concerned in the Boston Massacre; was criti-
of each were thoroughly convinced before the people and the
result may safely be taken as reflecting their judgment, not their
folly or ignorance. The two men bore themselves toward each
other and the public as gentlemen and statesmen. Jefferson had
said of Adams: "He is as disinterested as the Being who made
him," and Adams had spoken as highly of Jefferson.

The vote in this election showed Washington's warning against
geographical parties justified. All the northern states were
Federalist, and Pennsylvania and all states south Republican
(Democratic). Economic determinism had much to do with
this. In 1795, $1,181,000 was disbursed in interest and capital
payments on the public debt. The four original New England
states received $440,800 of this. Massachusetts alone received
much more than all states south of the Potomac; Connecticut
more than Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia combined.

Adams received 71 electoral votes, Jefferson, 68; Pickney, 59,
and Aaron Burr, 30. Old Samuel Adams was given 16 of Vir-
ginia's votes; Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut received 11
Federalist votes but none from his own state.

Rumors of a plot among some Federalists to supplant Adams
for first place with Pickney resulted in the defeat of the latter
for second place, probably; for Adams' friends, to foil this, threw
some of their votes to Ellsworth. It seems probable, too, that
some of Jefferson's friends were suspicious of Burr and gave their
votes to Sam Adams and Clinton. One of Virginia's Republican
(Democratic) votes went for Washington—surely a gesture
against Burr.

It was a very narrow victory—three electoral votes. One of
these votes came from Virginia and one from North Carolina,
the people of which states were overwhelmingly for Jefferson.
These two votes cast according to the popular will would have
given Jefferson 70 and left Adams with only 69. The Electoral
College saved the day for the Federalists.

Under the Constitution Jefferson became Vice-President, an
incongruity soon cured by the Twelfth Amendment.

Adams began his administration with a strong and radical
Federal Senate majority, and a small and moderate majority
in the House. Foreign relations largely dominated politics the
next four years. The party in power wanted peace and trade
with England; it was anti-French and came later, largely induced
by political and military ambitions of some of its leaders, to
favor a war with France, to be blocked only by their titular
leader and President.
Adams had made a great initial political mistake. He kept Washington's cabinet instead of having one of his own. Pickering, Secretary of State, Wolcott, of the Treasury, and McClennen, of War, all owed their positions to Hamilton and were completely under his domination. They looked on him not as Adams as their chief; later, when the rupture between the two became complete, they were Hamilton's spies on Adams.

Monroe, who had been recalled from his mission to France, asked the reasons for his recall; Pickering crisply declined officially to state them; Monroe published a vindication, moderated in tone by Jefferson's advice, and however much criticised he and it were, he became Governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, and finally President. Resulting from the attack of Monroe was the making public of charges against Hamilton which brought forth his confession of the Hamilton-Reynolds scandal. There were no state statutes, rule or other regulations governing political fighting of that day.

Taking advantage of the war spirit the Federalists sought to crush all opposition and extemely themselves in power. The emigrants to this country, the majority being Irish, were haters of arbitrary government in general and England in particular. They threw them into the Republican (Democratic) Party. The Federalists increased the requisite residence here before naturalisation from five to fourteen years and in other ways made naturalisation difficult. It passed the Alien Act which practically gave the President power to deport any alien he thought dangerous or undesirable. Then came the Sedition Act, aimed largely at the press. Adams did not enforce the Alien Act, but it drove many Frenchmen from our shores, among them Volney. Hamilton, himself an exote, did not urge its enforcement. Under the sedition law many newspapermen were prosecuted and ten of them convicted, all being Republican (Democratic).

Matthew Lyon, Republican (Democrat) member of Congress from Vermont, was fined $1,000, imprisoned four months under the sedition law, for language used in canvassing for re-election. He had charged the President with "unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation and selfish avarice." Friends visited Lyon in prison and paid his fine; Vermont sent him back to Congress.

One humble citizen of Newark was fined $200 and sent to prison for two months, for saying that he wished some of the wadding from the cannon being fired in honor of the President's passing through his village, would hit the honoree "in the broadest part of his trousers." One wondered what his punishment would have been had he said, as the daughter of one President said of one of her father's successors that the President looked like he had been weaned on a pickle; or called him a Byzantine Logothete.

This was the only attempt in our history by law to muzzle the press of the country except when we were actually at war. The federal authorities in 1805 attempted to have the New York World prosecuted for what might be called seditions ulterances but the case was thrown out of court.

The Federalist leaders engineered a great war scare in 1798. The army was increased and only the faithful Federalists were given commissions. Propaganda that the French Directory, in spite of England's and our own navy, would subdue America as it had European countries was broadcast. It afterwards developed that there was much under the surface in all this. Hamilton and his cabal were deep in the Miranda plot, to join with England in an attack on French and Spanish possessions in this hemisphere. England was to furnish the navy, we the army; England was to have all the West Indies and South America as markets; we to gain the Floridas and all Spanish Louisiana east of the Mississippi. Here was a Federalist policy the very reverse of the Monroe Doctrine until later to be enunciated.

Adams was not in the plot, and silently disowned the whole scheme. He was cool toward the army and strong for the navy. He told his Secretary of War that there was no more prospect of seeing a French army here than in Heaven; he grumbled at the cost of the military preparations, and wondered why any man of sense should join the army in preference to the navy. But great public feeling had been aroused and the people demonstrated great loyalty. Resolutions from meetings all over the country and offers of $1,000,000 and imprisonment four months under the sedition law, for language used in canvassing for re-election. It was flood tide with the Federalists the spring and summer of 1798. They flew high and the term "High-flying Federalists" applied to Hamilton and his clique became as common as "Old Guard" or "Stand-patters" were in 1912. The French cockade disappeared from America and the black cockade of old Revolutionary days reappeared.

The spring state elections reflected the popular feeling. Jay defeated Chancellor Livingston for Governor in New York, but the Republicans (Democratic) secured six out of ten Congressmen, among them Edward Livingston. The Federalists gained
in New England, New Jersey and Delaware. Newspapers lutheran neutral or independent came out strongly for the administration, and the Republican (Democratic) press greatly lost in circulation.

But very soon a gradual reaction set in. Adams' opinion, especially in matters concerning war, carried much less weight than had Washington's, and his quick temper was known. There were many who bore the plan matured between the French Directory and the French people and thought gratefully of France's aid during the Revolutionary War. The alien and sedition laws were unpopular and numerous petitions against them were sent in. The war taxes were greatly resented, especially that on dwelling houses; the War Department was badly handled; the soldiers inadequately clothed, provisioned and equipped; enlistments were slow, it being charged that while before the passage of the War Act there were on file 16,000 applications for commissions, after its passage scarce 3,000 soldiers could be enlisted; many of these deserted and ten dollars reward was advertised for the apprehension of a deserter. Yet they did not dare execute one when recaptured. The idea got out that France would not make war on us unless forced to.

Elbridge Gerry, who had remained in Paris after his colleagues had left, in spite of insults and neglect had managed to impress the Directory to some extent, and a decree was issued restraining deprivations to our commerce. Then Dr. Logan, a volunteer emissary from our country to France, returned with peaceful news. France released Americans held as prisoners and gave other friendly assurances.

Adams began to see a light. He had resented being overruled, by the interposition of Washington, in fixing the relative rank of Hamilton and Knox in the new army and also that all control of army appointments and management was taken from him. He became less trustful of, and less managed by his cabinet. He cut from his message the cabinet had prepared the arrogant paragraph dealing with suspension of diplomatic relations with France and inserted a milder one of his own. A caucus of High-flying Federalists was called to override him but the plot did not receive enough support. Then without consulting his cabinet he in February, 1799, named Murray, our representative at the Hague, minister plenipotentiary to France.

With this assertion of himself in opposition to his cabinet and party leaders a new epoch began in Adams' administration. His cabinet and their associates in the cabinet began to look around for a Presidential candidate other than Adams in the next year's campaign. They planned to have Washington run again, but he died before the plan matured.

The partisan attitude and violent and abusive conduct on the bench of some of the federal judges in prosecutions under the sedition act were features of the politics of the day. They copied the manners and bearing of the infamous Jeffries, and were about as popular with the people. But the political effect of their conduct was not felt until the Presidential election. Chase's going his circuit in 1800 was a political campaign, and a disastrous one for his party.

The Senate all during Adams' administration was strongly Federalist, a relief to that party since Jefferson had the casting vote. Still sitting behind closed doors, it does not figure so largely as the House in the political picture. Of this Senate Andrew Jackson was a member. Congress passed all the administration bills for defensive measures, but the House held the Senate down on war vessels and army increases. The debates were bitter, and made the parties, long intimate friends, cross streets to avoid meeting.

The first session of the Sixth Congress, the last held in Philadelphia, met in December, 1799. The laws passed by this Congress at its first session, and in its last which was held in Washington, were of little if any political significance. William Henry Harrison took his seat as territorial delegate from the Northwest Territory, and laid part of the foundation for his future Presidency by getting laws passed enabling settlers to buy small tracts of government owned land direct from the government and not through land companies. John Randolph was another new member destined to fame.

The bill of the House of Representatives in Washington was small and the Speaker denied the stenographers reporting the debates permission to sit within the bar. The Republicans (Democrats) took up cudgels in behalf of the press; the Federalists upheld the Speaker, but the vote was a tie, 45 to 45, and Speaker Sedgwick upheld himself, and the reporters were banished to the galleries.

The spring state elections of 1800 was a Democratic tidal
wave. The Federalists lost in New York. Adams suspected treason among the leaders of his party there as he had for some time suspected it in his cabinet. He asked for and obtained McHenry's resignation. He requested Pickering's and when he demurred, dismissed him. John Marshall was made Secretary of State, and Samuel Dexter given the War Department. Marshall was a Federalist but under the domination of no man; he frankly disapproved of the alien and sedition laws, and this incurred the distrust of the more bitter Federalists. "His character is done for," wrote Ames when Marshall's stand on these laws was made public. Marshall approved of the French mission, and refused to support the Federalist scheme to steal the next election under Senator Ross' bill.

Jefferson as Vice-President occupied a vantage point. He was placed where he could see and hear everything, but would bear no responsibility for the acts of the strong Federalist Senate. He was in the center of things political and in close touch with the leaders of his own party in the House. The Republican (Democratic) policy was to insist firmly on American neutral rights, steadily stand as friends of the French people and against English aggression. All that a strong and able minority could do they did, but they were ridden over roughshod many times.

The Federalists' chief target was Jefferson, and their choice maneuver was to represent every attack on the administration or their party as an attack on Washington. They met with little success in this. While in Washington's cabinet Jefferson had kept in touch by correspondence with Democrats in every state of the Union. He kept up this practice while Vice-President, and though his old friends Sam Adams and John Hancock had passed away, young men took their places. He cultivated Tammany, which he regarded as an offset to the Cincinnati.

The bitterness of politics was reflected in the social life of Philadelphia. Gentlemen such as Jefferson and Madison were not ostracized, but were plainly shown that their politics was socially unpopular. Their lesser brethren were smeared at and scorned. Men like Logan, whose horse had been often visited by Washington, lost social popularity if not caste by becoming Republicans (Democrat). This is amusing now, for the preference for a "Codfish" over a "Plantation" aristocracy is recognized to be a matter of taste rather than of judgment, and the distinction between a combination of merchant princes and a slave-holding oligarchy to be not a social one.

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Even the dead were not free from insult, and the statue of Benjamin Franklin was smeared with mud from the gutter because he had been a "filthy Democrat." Jefferson and his colleagues kept their heads, and held their tongues. But the Boston Chronicle was publishing letters signed "Benedict Arnold," containing offers of service in the war for England and congratulating the countrymen of New York, shaking off their delusion as he had predicted in the years ago they would. And it ran in its columns for days Josiah Quincy's speech of 1774 against standing armies. Tompkins' toast was that all the Tories who wanted the United States to engage in a war be placed in the front of the first battle.

Such was the political atmosphere under the Adams administration. They put through their war measures—but and humiliated. It pervaded the House debates, the newspapers, society, public and private meetings. Intolerance prevailed everywhere.

Jefferson was a master politician. Some say he was the first "Easy Boss." Unlike Hamilton he led rather than drove his party associates, nor was he given to belittling his opponents, to others or in his own mind; Hamilton's bust adorned the library at Monticello. He valued the press as Hamilton did, and used it, but did not resent the opposition papers' attacks on himself; he was a philosopher in more ways than one, calm, patient and resourceful, an opponent in politics, but working always toward a great and certain end.

The 1798 elections had some consolation for the Republicans. The Federalists elected eight Congressmen in Virginia, but the legislature and a senatorship were won by the Republicans. They elected a Senator in North Carolina and one in South Carolina, Charles Pinckney. They secured six Congressmen from New York, gained two in New Jersey, and had eight out of Pennsylvania's thirteen. Yet this left the Federalists still in control of both houses of Congress.

His opponents recognized the growing strength of Jefferson, and set out to stop it. The Federalist newspapers were full of abuse of him. The New England clergy and college were used; degrees were given prominent Federalists and sermons preached against Jefferson's atheism and his Jacobinism. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale, came to be called the "Pope of Federalism." The lesser fry was not neglected. Penn's Gazette advocated the discharge of all artisans engaged in manufacture of munitions who were Republicans (Democrats). It was now that the prosecutions under the sedition law
began. Some Democratic writers call this time the "Reign of Terror."

In the summer of 1798 the famous Kentucky Resolutions were framed at Monticello; W. C. Nicholas of Virginia and John Breckenridge of Kentucky were present, and possibly Madison too. Shortly afterwards Madison drew the Virginia Resolutions which closely followed them. Both documents were aimed at the alien and sedition laws. The Kentucky Resolutions were adopted November the 10th, the Virginia Resolutions December 21st.

The Virginia-Kentucky Resolutions are sometimes called the first party platform in American politics. They began with a strong assertion of loyalty to the Constitution, and to the government in all constitutional measures, and declared a warm attachment to the Union. They asserted that the Union was a compact between the states, and that the states had a right, and were in duty bound to maintain their liberties against unconstitutional violations. They declared the alien and sedition acts palpable infractions of the Constitution and expressly violative of the right of freedom of speech, of the press and of conscience. They appealed to other states to join in declaring these acts unconstitutional and in maintaining the rights and liberties of the states and the people, and unite in requesting Congress to repeal the obnoxious acts. Copies were sent to the legislatures of all the other states, accompanied by an argumentative address, urging united action by all the states.

The resolutions were approved or censured according to the political complexion of the legislative houses of the various states. The Democrats laid themselves open to a charge of disloyalty, but the Federalists were forced to endorse the unpopular laws.

It seems that the Resolutions would have been better political propaganda for the Republicans (Democratic) had less been said of the compact theory of government and the whole case rested on the iniquity of the alien and sedition laws. Possibly the drafters thought that the gravity of the situation would be enhanced by showing the fundamental issue involved. At any rate a patriotic handle was afforded the Federalists and they used it.

The day that Adams asserted himself and sent our new envoy to France the Federalist Party became a house openly divided against itself. A division had long been in process between those Federalists who, despairing of perfecting under

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the Constitution such a government as they favored, and indeed believed essential, hoped that through a war or some great crisis the government might be altered, and those moderate Federalists who believed a strong enough government could be built upon the Constitution.

The division now came. The Hamiltonian cabinet remained, but with diminished powers, for Adams no longer trusted it, nor gave his Secretaries the free hand he had before allowed them. Washington's death weakened the anti-Adams faction. Young Pinno, successor to his father, gave up the Gazette of the United States in disgust, and Cobbett's return to England ended Porepina's Gazette. Marshall, the Federalist leader in Congress, was a moderate. The High-Flying Federalists were in desperate straits.

Then it was hatched a scheme to debase Jefferson of the Presidency should he win it. Senator Ross fathered a bill which in effect would give Congress power to name the President in case of any contest. This law had the support of many Federalist leaders and passed the Senate 16 to 12. In the House it had hard sledding. Marshall criticized it in the hall and out, and when finally dissuaded from open opposition he offered an amendment; other amendments followed and the bill died between the two Houses. Marshall lost more ground with the Federalist cabal for he was blamed for the defeat. Marshall thus aided Jefferson in reaching the Presidency as Hamilton was to do later.

All during the sessions of Congress Jefferson had met his lieutenants almost nightly at his hotel, the Indian Queen. Now he returned to Monticello, but wrote many letters. Republican (Democratic) artillery was trained on the alien and sedition laws, the direct tax, the cost of the army and navy, the usurping interest charged the government, the violation of the constitutional rights of the states, the standing army and the multiplication of offices. Congress' right to its constitutional share in the government, frugality in government and the payment of the national debt, free commerce with all nations, political connections with none, the liberty of speech and the press were all advocated. The Democrats in Congress in their speeches, and in great numbers of letters sent to their constituents spread these doctrines abroad. Democratic newspapers were fostered and new ones established. An aggressive campaign was in full force.

Pennsylvania was whole then Democratic, but the Federalists controlled the Senate. The best the Democrats could do was
to get eight of the fifteen electors. This made New York the pivotal state and both parties exerted their utmost efforts there for the electors were to be chosen by the Legislature and a solid block of twelve votes was involved. The Federalists were under direct management of Hamilton, Burr commanding their opponents.

Tammany for the first time loomed large in a national contest; up-state New York was regarded as equally divided, and the city would decide the matter. This contest between Hamilton and Burr was a battle of giants, for no one can question Burr's ability as a politician, especially in a narrow field.

Hamilton wanted Federalist electors, but such men as he could control, with the idea of supplanting Adams with Pinckney. Calling a secret caucus of his intimate followers they framed a slate made up of mediocre controllable men. Burr, by some means, found out immediately their program and ticket.

Using Tammany as his center, Burr threw out flanking forces of young men devoted to him or strong in their faith in Jefferson. He persuaded the Tammany men to postpone their factional fights, put off personal quarrels, ignore local considerations, subordinate everything to carrying the state for Democracy. His candidates were the opposites of Hamilton's. He prevailed on General Horatio Gates, ex-Governor George Clinton, Ogden, ex-Congressman 3 and ex-Postmaster General, and the distinguished Brockholst Livingston, to run for the General Assembly. To induce such men to make such a race required that Burr was art, finesse, logic and eloquence, but Burr accomplished it, and the Federalists were paralyzed. The other men on the Republican ticket were strong by reason of local reputation or popularity and brought more strength to the ticket.

The two tickets in parallel columns was an unanswerable argument. They presented the most obvious and striking contrast. Who would believe the charges against Jefferson when such men stood for him? Jefferson a visionary, an enemy to the Constitution and government, and such men supporting him? It was to laugh.

To elect these men and their colleagues on the Republican (Democratic) ticket, Burr conducted a most intensive campaign, a card-indexed, individual voter's campaign, as well as having precinct, ward and mass meetings addressed by orators. The result was a sweeping victory. Hamilton's disciples ascribe this defeat to Burr's mastery of political intrigue and trickery, but the clearly apparent facts are that in this particular contest, both during and after the election, it was Hamilton who intrigued and schemed while Burr played an open game.

Then in Philadelphia there was a secret meeting of the High-flyers, and Hamilton, seeing how Pennsylvania had been kept out of the enemy's column, wrote Governor Jay a letter proposing that he call an extra session of the existing New York Legislature, which was Federalist, and change the law governing the choosing of electors. But Jay, who had been burned in effigy all over the country for his Hamiltonianism, balked at this. At his death the letter was found among his papers annotated in his own handwriting thus—"Proposing a measure for party purposes which I think would not become me to adopt."

There was bad news for the Federalists from other states—Republican (Democratic) gains in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, new papers started and a great activity among the enemy forces from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to Savannah, Georgia.

Accepting the inevitable, the Federalist caucuses met in Philadelphia and nominated Adams and Pinckney, but still with the card up the sleeve of substituting Pinckney in the first place if possible. They adopted no platform.

No one was mentioned or thought of for first place on the Republican (Democratic) ticket but Jefferson. A few days after the New York election, at a Democratic caucus in Philadelphia Burr was nominated for Vice-President. It was agreed that to New York was due this prize. When Adams was named, it being decided that to him rather than to Clinton belonged the credit for the New York victory which practically assured success to the party that fall.

The Republican (Democratic) congressional caucus adopted the first national party platform at the meeting in Philadelphia in 1880. Jefferson is credited with drafting it.

Section 1 declares for an inviolable preservation of the Constitution in the sense it was adopted by the states; 2, opposes monopolizing its features; 3, maintains states rights; 4, favors frugal administration, liquidation of public debt, not its increase or continuance as a public blessing, and opposes multiplication of offices; 5, declares for reliance on internal defense solely on militia until actual invasion, and only a protective naval force; 6, favors free commerce with all nations, political connection with none; 7, neutrality; 8, freedom of religion; 9, freedom of speech and press; 10, liberal naturalization laws; 11, encouragement of science and art.
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Federalist support to Burr. Hamilton wrote a pamphlet defending himself and his friends and bitterly attacking Adams. A month later he again wrote to Adams and again his letter was ignored. On October 1st he sent a signed pamphlet, as bitter as gall against Adams, to the New York Gazette to be printed, not for general circulation but for distribution among leading Federalists.

Burr had known Hamilton’s Assembly slate an hour after it was made; he knew of Hamilton’s post-election caucus and letter to Jay the day of the event; somehow he secured a copy of this pamphlet even before Hamilton himself had seen it in print. It is said he obtained it from the delivery-man who was taking the printed copies to Hamilton. He straightway gave it to the world through the Democratic newspapers.

Hamilton’s pamphlet rocked the political world and shook the foundations of the already divided Federalist house. Hamilton was lashed by the Democratic papers and the Adams part of the Federalist press. The anti-Adams Federalists became indifferent to party success.

Most of the arguments and charges against Jefferson were “old stuff” but one new one was pulled on him in this campaign. He had taken much interest in the flora and fauna of the trans-Mississippi country and had written about them; “Was a man who called a woodchuck a prairie-dog fit to be President?” it was asked.

A plot, which John Quincy Adams always considered the main object of Hamilton’s pamphlet, now developed in the South Carolina Legislature; this was to drop both northern candidates and give the state’s electoral votes to Jefferson and Pinckney. Pinckney was too honorable to countenance the scheme. If executed it might have brought about a tie between Jefferson and Pinckney, and the Federalist House of Congress would have elected Pinckney.

Marshall, as has been seen, saved Jefferson by defeating the Ross bill; Pinckney, another Federalist leader, rescued him now, and Hamilton is to work for his election later on.

In no provision of the Constitution did its framers depart so radically from existing and accepted practices, in nothing was its action so novel and original as the method prescribed for the selection of President and Vice-President, and twice in the first hundred years did it bring about a “disputed succession” and threaten to resort to arms by political parties—the Jefferson-Burr contest in 1800, the Hayes-Tilden contest in 1876.
It was not until the middle of December that the exact electoral returns were known, and two months later before the House decided the result. The Federalists carried Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, and had 7 votes from Pennsylvania, 5 from Maryland and 4 from North Carolina; all others were Republican (Democratic). The full vote was Jefferson and Burr 73 each, Adams 60 and Pinckney 64, one Rhode Island vote going to John Jay. The caucus nomination had worked well; every Republican (Democratic) elector voted for Jefferson and Burr. But under the awkward electoral machinery set up by the Constitution, the two men were tied for the Presidency and the election was thrown into the House of Representatives which the Federalists controlled.

Two plans were considered by the Federalists,—to elect Burr, or to have the House ballot without result until March 4th, and then have Congress pass a law and select a President pro tem, who of course would be a Federalist. This latter plan was abandoned; if carried out a new election must soon follow, and armed resistance to it was openly threatened.

Despite Hamilton’s active and bitter opposition to the plan some Federalists in Congress were determined to elect Burr. Hamilton was out of office and the defeat he had just suffered in the New York election lessened his political prestige. Despite his assertion that there was no man he had more cause to hate than Jefferson and that he “was well with Burr personally”—(they dined occasionally at each other’s houses) his opposition to Burr was attributed to local professional and political rivalry. And these Federalists in Congress had their own fish to fry, their own careers to push.

Some thought to elect Burr would divide and destroy, or at least greatly weaken the Republican (Democratic) Party. Some that Burr would be so antagonized by his own party that he would be forced to lean on “good men” i.e. the Federalists, even if he would not bind himself to them in exchange for the election.

Adams in a rage refused to interfere. Jefferson called on him to renounce the proposed temporary government. He quotes Adams as saying—“Sir, the event of the election is in your own power. You have only to say you will do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy and not disturb those holding offices and the government will instantly be put into your hands.” Jefferson replied that he would not come into power by capitulation.

Later, so Governor Morris wrote, he made a similar statement to him.

There is not a particle of honest evidence that Jefferson made any terms with the Federalists or with Burr though the charge has been unfairly made and unfairly adopted. So far as negative evidence is conclusive, there exists indubitable proof to the contrary. Much of the correspondence of the Federalist leaders, Pickering, Cabot, Griswold, Otis, King and others between themselves has been published. In this they accuse Jefferson of every political wickedness and crime imaginable (except this one) and they repeatedly condemn his removals from office. Yet not once is he accused of breaking faith, of violating any promise to them or to any one else in this respect. It is unbelievable that any ground whatever for such a charge existed or they would have made the welkin ring with it. The charge that Jefferson made terms with the Federalists was trumped up long after the event.

On February 11, 1801, the Federalist House took up the cluster of making an unwilling choice between two Democrats. Nine states were necessary to elect. Jefferson received the votes of 8, Burr of 6. Maryland and Vermont were tied. Jefferson received the votes of 55, Burr of 49 Representatives. It was six days later, on Monday’s second ballot that the end of the agonizing suspense came. On the thirty-sixth ballot Bayard voted a blank; the Vermont Federalist, Morris, withdrew and Matthew Lyon cast Vermont’s vote for Jefferson; the Maryland Federalists cast blank ballots and that state went into the Democratic column. Jefferson was elected; the Federalist Party’s brief rule was over and the Virginia Dynasty began its twenty-four years of government.

The latter days of the Adams administration were not glorious. When Pickering and McHenry were dismissed charges were made that great defalcations existed, supported by publication of accounts obtained from a clerk in the Treasury. Wolcott denied any wrong and promised that the accounts would be shown correct as soon as the office opened in Washington. But early in November every book and paper in the War Department was burned; then in January the office of Dexter, now Secretary of the Treasury, was burned under most suspicious circumstances. Wolcott’s private belongings there were saved, but the government papers all burned.

The last day of the administration was spent by the Senate in confirming the twenty-three judiciary appointments, by Adams in signing the commissions, and by Marshall in countersigning and sealing them. At midnight the Secretary of State was still
engaged in his task, and did not have time to complete it. Sunrise saw Adams driving out of Washington, avoiding the inaugural ceremonies of his successor. The law forbade the appointment of members of Congress to offices created during their term of office. Adams transferred existing judges to the new judgeships and appointed members of Congress to the old places—a shifty evasion of the law.

Yet Adams was an able, a great and good man. His temper was his weakness and Heaven knows he lately had had enough to arouse the fury of the most patient man on earth. Treachery in his cabinet, treachery in his party, and gross ingratitude and humiliation from those from whom he had every right to expect honor and appreciation.

Adams and Jefferson had been together in the Continental Congress, in Paris together with Franklin. "Prompt, frank, explicit and decisive—not even Samuel Adams was more so," Adams had written of Jefferson in the Continental Congress. The old friendship came to be renewed in time. "I have always loved Jefferson and always shall," said Adams, and in 1824, when his son John Quincy Adams was elected President, he wrote Jefferson—"I call him our John because when you were at the Cул de Sac at Paris, he appeared to me to be almost as much your boy as mine." His last words were "Jefferson still lives." About the finest thing in American partisan politics is this friendship between these two great and good Americans. It has been the cult of many writers to exalt the Federalist Party into a brilliant body which established this government, molded its form, fixed its principles and started it on its great career. This encomium needs to be revised.

That Hamilton, Ames, Morris and many of their associates were brilliant men of great ability and that they accomplished much that was wise and much that has endured is thoroughly true. But only a part of what was accomplished was their work and even that was greatly affected by their opponents.

The beginning of our national fiscal policy may be set down as a Federalist achievement, but that was modeled much after that of England, and, could Hamilton have had his own way entirely, it would have been still more English. Moreover, one of its main features, the Bank of the United States, was later discarded and the decided rejection of and continued antipathy toward such an institution by the people of the United States has been a distinguishing characteristic of our national finances since 1836.

FEDERALIST DISRUPTION UNDER ADAMS

The three great policies established during Washington’s administration were our foreign policy, our territorial policy and our fiscal policy. All were determined while Jefferson and Hamilton were in the cabinet. No fundamental question was solved, no major precedent established by Washington after his two great aides left the cabinet. Jefferson’s, not Hamilton’s ideas prevailed as to our foreign policy and our public domain.

Our foreign policy established under Washington was as much Jefferson’s as was our fiscal policy Hamilton’s, and is to be credited to the Republican (Democratic) Party. John Bassett Moore, John Sharp Williams and John H. Latane all agree in the opinion that Jefferson’s influence in our foreign policy has been greater than that of any other man. This policy was a more original and purely American one than could be said of our treasury methods, and directly opposed to England’s course at the time, and before and after. England came, nearly a century later, to follow it, and glorified it into “Splendid Isolation.”

On the one and only Federalist administration, that of John Adams, must that party base its claims and we have seen that with all the brilliance and brains of Hamilton, Ames, Cabot, Pickering, the Pinckneys and others, they had not the political ability to get along with their own President or party, or with the people. They were saved from embroiling us in a war with France only by Adams’ independent action contrary to the wishes of the party chiefs. Sated in the saddle with every department of the government under their control and a majority of the states Federalist, they accomplished little lasting good to the country and wrecked their party quickly and completely. Adams rather than his party can claim credit for the good accomplished by his administration. As Van Buren points out in his Origin and Cause of Political Parties, the Federalists were in auspicious control of the government and had they accepted the Constitution in the sense in which it was known to have been understood by those who framed it and the people who adopted it, they might have long, if not continually, remained in power instead of for only one brief, inglorious administration.