

The Papers of James Madison: Presidential Series, Vol. III: *3 November 1810-4 November 1811*. Edited by J.C.A. Stagg, Jeanne Kerr Cross, and Susan Holbrook Perdue. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996. Pp. xlii, 584. \$55.00.)

With the publication of this third volume of the presidential series of *The Papers of James Madison*, the editors continue the important work, begun more than a decade ago, of providing a complete documentary record of James Madison's presidency. This volume covers the twelve-month period beginning in November 1810. Most of the documents in the volume, like those in the preceding one, deal with foreign policy, the overarching problem of Madison's presidency.

On November 2, 1810, after Napoleon claimed that France had repealed her trade restrictions against the United States, Madison announced his controversial decision to enforce the provisions of Macon's Bill No. 2: he would impose nonintercourse with Great Britain at the end of three months unless that nation in the interim repealed her orders in council. The volume details the consequences of that decision. Madison clearly was puzzled by contradictions and ambiguities in French policy. Publicly he insisted that France had repealed her decrees and that the United States was obligated to impose the nonintercourse sanction against Great Britain, but privately he may have shared the doubts of Secretary of State Robert Smith, congressional leader John Wayles Eppes, and others that Napoleon really had repealed the Berlin and Milan decrees. The documents reveal Madison's disappointment that Great Britain refused to buckle under America's coercive pressure. They also suggest that as early as mid-1810 the president understood that the diplomacy of commercial restriction that he and Jefferson had pursued doggedly as an alternative to war was a failure. Great Britain's unyielding diplomatic posture, the embarrassing disclosure of the full dimensions of Napoleon's deception, and increasing pressure from segments of the American populace to defend American neutral rights with force, left Madison with no apparent alternative to submission except war. Over the summer he prepared his war message for Congress when it met in November.

Although difficulties with Great Britain and France commanded most of Madison's attention, he had to deal with other foreign policy issues. Denmark precipitated a diplomatic crisis when it detained and confiscated large numbers of American vessels on the pretext that they were not American ships but British vessels sailing under the United States flag. At home, the Spanish-American empire continued to disintegrate. The volume chronicles West Florida's declaration of

independence from Spain in September 1810, Madison's extension of American jurisdiction over portions of the province, and his preparations for handling the probable diplomatic consequences of annexing Spanish Territory.

On the domestic front, the volume illuminates the tensions within Madison's cabinet, especially the animosity between Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin and Secretary of State Robert Smith, and traces the deterioration of the relationship between Madison and Smith, culminating in the President's painful decision to dismiss Smith and replace him with James Monroe.

The editors of the volume have maintained the high standards of excellence that characterize *The Papers of James Madison*. Their editorial scholarship is careful, thorough, and impressive.

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