

The Addington Ministry and the Interaction of Foreign Policy
and Domestic Politics, 1800-1804.

by

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Abstract

Historians have generally dismissed the ministry of Henry Addington as an absurd interlude in the political career of William Pitt, the Younger, and the few attempts to rehabilitate Addington have been unable to overcome the weight of this negative historiography. The focus of contemporary and historical criticism has centred on the foreign and war policies of the ministry, but this has failed to take into account the serious and interrelated diplomatic, military, social, and political problems faced by the government. Social unrest caused largely by high prices of grain, political pressure from interests that had been hurt by the closure of European markets to British trade, and a poor diplomatic and strategic position meant that peace was highly desirable but that concessions were necessary to obtain it.

While the end of the war helped to resolve the social pressures upon the government and enabled it to implement some useful reforms, continued French aggression created new diplomatic problems and led to the resumption of war. The disadvantageous terms of the peace treaty and the difficulties that the ministry faced preparing for a French invasion when the war resumed fostered political opposition to the government within Parliament. These opponents of the ministry had unrealistic expectations of what the British government could accomplish because they did not understand the complexity of the problems that it faced. Lacking sufficient debating and parliamentary management skills, however, the ministry was unable to restrain a political assault led by the most talented and influential men in Parliament. Thus despite pursuing policies that were largely sensible considering the various political pressures and several of which were continued or reintroduced by future ministries, Addington chose to resign to avoid defeat in the House of Commons.

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Abbreviations

Add. MSS	British Library, Additional Manuscripts.
Adm.	Admiralty Office Archives, Public Record Office.
AE	Correspondance Politique, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.
<u>AKV</u>	<u>Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova</u> , ed. P. I. Bartenev (40 vols, Moscow, 1870-97).
Aspinall	<u>The Later Correspondence of George III</u> , ed. Arthur Aspinall (5 vols, Cambridge, 1961-70).
BT	Board of Trade Archives, Public Record Office
<u>Colchester Diary</u>	<u>The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons 1802-1817</u> , ed. Charles, Lord Colchester (3 vols, London, 1861).
<u>Dropmore Papers</u>	<u>Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, esq. Preserved at Dropmore</u> (10 vols, London, 1892-1927).
FO	Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office.
<u>Glenbervie Diaries</u>	<u>The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas, Lord Glenbervie</u> , ed. Francis Bickley (2 vols, London, 1928).
HNSA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.
HO	Home Office Archives, Public Record Office
<u>Malmesbury Diaries</u>	<u>The Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury</u> , ed. Third Earl of Malmesbury (4 vols, London, 1844).
MS Loan	British Library, Manuscripts Loan.

- Parliamentary Debates Hansard's Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time, Published under the Superintendence of T. C. Hansard. First Series (41 vols, London, 1803-1820).
- Parliamentary History Parliamentary History of England: From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803 (36 vols, London, 1806-20).
- Pellew George Pellew, The Life and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth (3 vols, London, 1847).
- SIRIO Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva (140 vols, St Petersburg, 1867-1916).
- Stanhope Earl Stanhope, Life of Pitt (3rd edition, 3 vols, London, 1879).
- VPR Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka: Dokumenty rossiiskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del, ed. A. L. Narochnitskii et al, first series, (15 vols, Moscow, 1960-).
- Ziegler Philip Ziegler, Addington: The Life of Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth, 1757-1844 (London, 1965).

Introduction

Henry Addington became Prime Minister of Great Britain in March 1801 owing to a peculiar combination of events, and he governed in very difficult circumstances before resigning in 1804. Consequently, his ministry received a reputation as one of the most incompetent and ill-suited for office in British history. But that judgement is unjust. For most modern historians have been unable to escape the influence of contemporaries, nineteenth-century biographers, and early twentieth century historians who expressed contempt for the ministry. The earliest literature consisted of biographies, collections of letters, and memoirs of William Pitt the Younger and those associated with the political opposition, specifically the cliques centred at Holland House and Stowe.¹ These presentations contained considerable bias, as each work attempted to justify the political beliefs and actions of the man with whom it was concerned. Similar works on Addington, Lord Hawkesbury, and the Earl of St Vincent appeared, but because they were not well written and their subjects not considered very colourful, they have received less attention.² Over the years, works of Addington's opponents such as the Malmesbury Diaries and

¹George Pretyman Tomline, Memoirs of the Life of William Pitt (3 vols, London 1821), a fourth volume was printed privately in 1904; The Journal of Elizabeth, Lady Holland, 1791-1811, ed. the Earl of Ilchester (2 vols, London, 1908); Henry Richard, Lord Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party during my Time, ed. Henry Edward, Lord Holland (2 vols, London, 1852); Lord John Russell, Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox, (4 vols, London, 1853-7); Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III (4 vols, London, 1853-5); Dropmore Papers; The Diary of the Rt. Hon. William Windham, 1784 to 1810, ed. Mrs Henry Baring (London, 1866); The Windham Papers, (2 vols, London, 1913).

²Pellow; Charles Duke Yonge, The Life and Administration of Robert Banks, Second Earl of Liverpool (3 vols, London, 1868); E. P. Brenton, Life and Correspondence of John, Earl of St. Vincent, (2 vols, London, 1838).

the Dropmore Papers have been quoted far more often than the biographies of Addington and Lord Hawkesbury written by George Pellew or Charles Yonge and sometimes even when the topic under study concerns the Addington ministry.¹

The conclusions drawn from these rather anti-Addington sources have been that the ministry was quite inept and should never have been appointed in the first place, and this view was adopted by historians writing during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The standard view of the Addington ministry has been derived from the works of John Holland Rose and Arthur Bryant.² Holland Rose's intention seemed to be to glorify Pitt. But in trying to justify a place for Pitt alongside St George, Marlborough, Wellington, and Nelson in Britain's Pantheon of heroes, Holland Rose presented a very unbalanced view of events. Pitt had to be justified in forcing his successor out of office, and so Holland Rose showed Addington as incompetent and the continuance of his ministry as a threat to national security. Writing during the Second World War, Arthur Bryant seemed more concerned about boosting patriotism and morale than presenting balanced history. In his works, Napoleon Bonaparte and the revolutionaries masqueraded as Hitler and the Nazis, with Addington miscast as Chamberlain and Pitt as Churchill. Bryant agreed with Holland Rose that Addington was not fit for the task and had to make way for the only man who could rally the country.

¹For example see A. D. Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century (London, 1978); Keith Feiling, The Second Tory Party, 1714-1832 (London, 1938); A. S. Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, 1714-1832 (Oxford, 1964); R. E. Willis, 'The Politics of Parliament, 1800-1806' (PhD, Stanford University, 1969).

²John Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War (London, 1911) and 'The Struggle with Revolutionary France', and 'The Contest with Napoleon 1802-1812', in The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, ed. A. Ward and G. P. Gooch (Cambridge, 1922), i. 216-392; Arthur Bryant, The Years of Endurance, 1793-1802 (London, 1942) and The Years of Victory 1802-1812 (London, 1945).

Criticism of the ministry has centred largely on foreign policy, and the most controversial aspect was the decision to negotiate the Treaty of Amiens of 1802. Critics accused Addington and Hawkesbury of rushing into an ill-advised peace settlement, sacrificing hard-earned conquests in their haste. The general consensus was that it would have been in Britain's interest to have continued the war retaining the conquests rather than to have accepted the terms of the treaty. This criticism begged the questions as to whether continuing the war was a viable option and whether the ministers' choice was unfettered by other considerations.

There were strong diplomatic and military motives for the British to seek peace in 1801, but there were even stronger domestic reasons. The historiography of social unrest in Britain during the French Wars is extensive, and the debate has often centred around the question of whether popular agitation contained the capacity for social revolution.¹ The focus of most historians has been largely upon the lower classes: what they thought, what they did, and what they had the potential to do. Very little attention has been paid, however, to the impact of fear of social

¹Ian Christie, Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution (Oxford, 1984); E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963); Peter Holt and Malcolm I. Thomis, Threats of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848 (London, 1978); J. R. Dinwiddy, 'The "Black Lamp" in Yorkshire, 1801-1802', Past and Present, lxiv (1974), 113-135; Roger Wells, Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire, 1793-1802 (York, 1977) and Insurrection: The British Experience, 1795-1803 (Gloucester, 1983); J. Ann Hone, For the Cause of Truth: Radicalism in London, 1796-1821 (London, 1983); J. L. Baxter and F. K. Donnelly, 'The Revolutionary Underground in the West Riding: Myth or Reality', Past and Present, lxiv (1974), 113-135; Alan Booth, 'Food Riots in the North West of England, 1790-1801', Past and Present, lxxviii (1977), 84-107; John Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810 (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); John Stevenson, 'Popular Radicalism and Popular Protest, 1789-1815', in Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815, ed. H. T. Dickinson (London, 1989), pp. 61-82.

revolution upon the formulation of government policy, and the correspondence of Cabinet ministers demonstrates that it did indeed play an important role. Addington and his colleagues attributed social unrest largely to consequences of the war and believed that the financial and military resources required to sustain order detracted seriously from the war effort. Addington would have rather rejected the peace terms but felt compelled by domestic considerations to end the war.

The relationship between foreign policy and domestic politics remained strong even after the peace. Once the war had ended, Addington concentrated on restoring the government finances, reviving the economy, and alleviating social tension. Afterwards, however, the focus of the government shifted to foreign policy, and the option of declaring war in 1803 was only made possible by the success of Addington's domestic policies.

Set within the context of both the external and internal pressures faced by the government, the policies of the Addington ministry appear quite reasonable. The conflict between British overseas interests and domestic considerations made the formulation of policy more complex and difficult than most historians have granted. If Addington's policies were justified, the question remains as to why his ministry collapsed under pressure from the opposition in Parliament. The answer lies in the consequences of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the resignation of Pitt and the ascension of Addington.

My thesis provides an explanation of the rise and fall of the Addington ministry through an examination of the interaction of foreign policy and domestic politics. By the term domestic politics, I mean both parliamentary politics and extra-parliamentary political relations between the central government, local government, and local communities. The first chapter outlines the military and domestic position of Britain during the last few months of 1800 and the first few of 1801. The second chapter describes the difficulties that Addington faced while forming a ministry after Pitt's resignation. The following six

chapters examine the formulation of the major policy decisions within the context of the various internal and external pressures. I have included a chapter on the ministry's military policies because they were necessary corollaries of the diplomatic decision to declare war and they had an important impact on party alignments in Parliament. The final chapter gives an alternative explanation of the influences that eventually undermined the political support of the ministry. My intention is to demonstrate that traditional presentations have treated Addington unfairly because they have failed to take into account the wider context of the domestic pressures in the formulation of foreign policy and have mistakenly concluded that the decline of his support in Parliament vindicated the charges of the opposition.

Chapter One

Military and Social Background, September 1800 to March 1801

'We are however fiddling whilst Rome is burning. Within, & without the prospect lowers, & it will not be owing to our own Wisdom, & Exertion if it does not burst upon our Heads.'

Henry Addington¹

The resignation of William Pitt in 1801 and the reconstruction of the government under the leadership of Henry Addington, the Speaker of the House of Commons, was a singular event in the history of British parliamentary politics. To contemporaries it was sudden, inexplicable, and almost unbelievable. Nevertheless, the formation of the new ministry and the shift in direction which it took, particularly in foreign affairs, were not sudden aberrations but the results of a culmination of external and internal developments that had been perceptible to many observers for some time. The difficulties of pursuing an unsuccessful war and the social pressures caused by the scarcity and high price of grain left the succeeding ministry with few policy options. Therefore, an examination of the military and social background is necessary to understand the ministerial manoeuvres of February 1801 and the subsequent foreign policy of the government.

The Course of the War

Rather than having weathered the storm, Pitt resigned in 1801 when Britain faced the worst military and diplomatic crises of the war, which since the beginning had been largely unsuccessful as it

¹Addington to Hiley Addington, 13 Sept. 1800, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1800/OZ48.

had comprised a series of defeats on the Continent interspersed by victories at sea that had little effect.¹ The signing of the Franco-Austrian Treaty of Lunéville on 9 February 1801, signaled the failure of a second coalition of great powers to defeat the French. In addition, Portugal, Naples, and Turkey, Britain's only remaining allies, were more liabilities than assets. Rather than being able to attack France, Portugal was on the defensive, as Bonaparte had ordered Spanish troops to invade for the purpose of forcing the Portuguese to close their ports to British shipping and to grant a more favourable boundary to the French in Guiana. The French, having already occupied the Kingdom of Naples, controlled all the Atlantic and Mediterranean ports, preventing British access to European markets through these outlets. Naples also gave Bonaparte an excellent base from which to attack the Morea, which, if undertaken, could have precipitated the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.

Historians who have argued that this represented a stalemate between the predominant sea and land powers with neither being able seriously to threaten the other have overlooked some important points.² French control of western and southern Europe posed a considerably greater threat to British interests than British command of the sea did to French, as was proved by Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition. The Battle of the Nile was fought only because Nelson had failed in his assigned task to prevent Bonaparte from reaching Egypt. Thus with the invasion Bonaparte had taken the initiative by threatening Britain's position in the East so much as

¹Edward Ingram, Commitment to Empire: Prophecies of the Great Game in Asia, 1797-1800 (Oxford, 1981), p. 2.

²A. B. Rodger, The War of the Second Coalition: A Strategic Commentary (Oxford, 1964), p. 277; Holland Rose, 'The Struggle with Revolutionary France', p. 304; Paul Langford, The Eighteenth Century, 1688-1815 (London, 1976); Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery (London, 1976), pp. 133-43; Ian Christie, Wars and Revolutions: Britain, 1760-1815 (London, 1982), p. 258; J. Steven Watson, The Reign of George III, 1760-1815 (Oxford, 1960), p. 403.

to provoke a defensive response.¹ Closer to home, it was clear that the French had a better chance of successfully invading Britain, than the British did of invading France. The French were also threatening to occupy George III's electoral dominion of Hanover. Consequently, far from having fought France to a stalemate, Britain was at a considerable strategic disadvantage.

Moreover, Britain's diplomatic and military problems also concerned states other than France. Searching neutral ships to seize contraband of war destined for the enemy was one of Britain's most important naval weapons but was often implemented arrogantly and insensitively, causing bitter resentment. Denmark and Sweden tried to acquire the belligerent powers' carrying trade that the war had interrupted, and by 1800 they had become extremely annoyed because the British continually interfered. Consequently, they turned to the Russian Tsar, Paul I, to revive the League of Armed Neutrality in order to prevent the British from searching their ships.² Paul complied because he wished to take revenge on the British, whom he blamed for the failure of the War of the Second Coalition and resented for refusing to fulfill the terms of the Anglo-Russian agreement on Malta.³ The convention signed between Russia, Denmark, and Sweden on 16 December 1800, to which Prussia also later acceded, had two important consequences. First, the League denied Britain access to Baltic supplies of naval stores such as masts, tar, pitch

¹Ingram, Commitment to Empire, pp. 57-64 and 'The Failure of British Sea Power in the War of the Second Coalition, 1798-1801', in In Defence of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East, 1775-1842 (London, 1984), pp. 67-77.

²Ole Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, 1800-1801 (Copenhagen, 1980), pp. 17-54.

³Rescript to Kolychev, 16 Feb. 1801, (Note: all Russian dates given in new style) SIRIO, lxx. 37; Rostopchin to Grenville, 10 Jan. 1801, FO 65/48; Adam Gielgud, Memoirs of Prince Adam Czartoryski and His Correspondence with Alexander I (London, 1888), i. 270; Hugh Ragsdale, Detente in the Napoleonic Era: Bonaparte and the Russians (Lawrence, Kansas, 1980), p. 77; Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, pp. 70-1; Norman Saul, Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807 (Chicago, 1970), pp. 142-8.

and hemp (which were vital to the Royal Navy already in poor repair), Swedish iron (upon which the British steel industry depended), and grain. This caused the price of grain to rise even higher and, more important, led to severe shortages in some areas. Second, Britain was virtually in a state of war against all of Europe, with the spectre of having to face the combined navies of France and the northern powers.¹ If the diplomatic situation had not been altered, the strain on Britain's military and naval resources could have become unbearable.

These military crises were not so much the results of mismanagement or faulty strategy as of the limitations on Britain's ability to wage war against a Continental power. Considerable wealth and overwhelming naval superiority did not provide the means to strike an effective blow at French power on the Continent. For naval battles and blockades were ineffective in forcing the French army to relinquish the territories that it occupied, and the French were equally reluctant to exchange territory in Europe for Britain's colonial conquests. In addition, financial subsidies to Continental allies failed to give the British control over allied military strategy. Therefore, it is important to recognize that British ministers were grappling with problems for which they were not equipped with the proper tools. They had very little influence on the course of events in Europe which did, however, have serious political and commercial effects in Britain. Thus they were obliged to wait on events and seize opportunities which came along, and their success or failure were most often at the whim of Continental politics which dominated the course of the war. In early 1801, the course of Continental politics left the British in a very dangerous situation indeed.²

¹S. Vorontsov to A. Vorontsov, 22 Mar. 1801, AKV, x. 89.

²Charles John Fedorak, 'Maritime Versus Continental Strategy: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon', Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850, (1989), forthcoming.

The Social Context

Besides these diplomatic concerns, the war had also caused serious domestic consequences by January 1801. Granted, to many 1797 had seemed worse with the naval mutinies and the run on the banks resulting in the suspension of cash payments, and Lord Grenville later emphasized this argument when contrasting his peace proposals of 1797 with the terms of the Preliminaries of London of 1801. Nevertheless, in 1801 the social and diplomatic situations were much more serious.¹ The naval mutinies had involved relatively small numbers and had been rather easily suppressed, but the problems of 1801 were not so easily resolved, as there was general war weariness verging on violent dissatisfaction, with the rich pinched by high levels of taxation and the poor by the high price of grain.²

The crop of 1799 had been seriously deficient owing to heavy rain, cold winds, and late frosts. During 1800, the price of wheat per quarter rose from 49s. 6d. in January to 93s. 10d. in December.³ The crop of 1800 had looked better for most of the year, but rain in the late summer ruined the harvest. This caused a domestic shortage that was compounded by a deficient crop in Prussia, Britain's largest foreign supplier, and the price of wheat increased rapidly, peaking in March 1801 at 152s. In many communities, the greatest problem was not the price but the scarcity: inadequate transportation and communication left some localities with very low supplies. As the diet of the bulk of the population was comprised of bread, some were unable to obtain enough food to survive and distress became widespread.

¹Annual Register 1801, 'History of Europe', p. 117.

²Clive Emsley, British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815 (London, 1979), pp. 65-90; Watson, pp. 406-9.

³W. F. Galpin, The Grain Supply of England during the Napoleonic Period (New York, 1925), p. 10.

Consequently, beginning in September 1800 food riots spread across Britain.¹ These disturbances often compromised attempts to fix maximum prices for food, action which the masses considered justified by the principles of the popular marketing code, the 'moral economy'.² Mobs demanding a fair price for bread tried to intimidate bakers, corn factors, and farmers. This was not only out of desperation but also anger, as many had seen the grain growing in the fields throughout the year and had expected a good harvest. They did not believe the reports that the crop was deficient but rather suspected the existence of a pacte de famine by which corn factors and farmers were hoarding to fix prices. Consequently, a serious debate arose as to whether the scarcity was real or artificial.³ Justified complaints were registered against rural farmers who followed the prices set in London at the corn market in Mark Lane, which as supplier to the army had the highest prices in the country.⁴ An anonymous letter to Hawkesbury complained that 'Mark Lane governs all England for that Old Son of a Bitch of a farmer dont consider the demand in his neighbourhood but simply what London sells for.'⁵ This appeared to corroborate the accusation that the farmers and the corn factors were cheating their customers.

¹For regional studies of unrest see Bohstedt; Booth; Andrew Charlesworth ed., An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain, 1548-1900 (London, 1982); Marianne Elliott, Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France (London, 1982); Hone; George Rudé, Hanoverian London, 1714-1808 (London, 1971); J. Stevenson, 'Food Riots in England, 1792-1818', in R. Quinalt and J. Stevenson ed., Popular Protest and Public Order, (London, 1974); Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class; Wells, Dearth and Distress in Yorkshire and Insurrection.

²Wells, Insurrection, p. 181; E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', Past and Present, 1 (1971), 76-136.

³Liverpool to Portland, 9 Oct. 1800, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 83.

⁴Rose Diaries, i. 285.

⁵A volunteer to Hawkesbury, 11 Oct. 1800, Add. MSS 38237, fo. 28.

Protest against high prices often merged with protest against the war, as many blamed the war for the prices and refused to accept arguments to the contrary.¹ These criticisms were indeed valid, as the consequences of the war did cause higher prices and exacerbate distress.² For while bad weather was responsible for the failure of the domestic crop, the war prevented the importing of adequate supplementary supplies from the Continent. The war with France blocked French exports of grain, limited the number of ships which could be used to obtain supplies from other markets, and required the government to purchase large quantities to feed the army. More important, however, the Russian embargo of November 1800 led to the closure of British access to Baltic supplies of grain, which hitherto had comprised more than seventy-five percent of British imports.³ Therefore, an end to the war would certainly have led to greater availability and consequently lower prices of grain.

The grain crisis also precipitated an economic recession, as the average worker having to spend most of his money on food caused the domestic market for British commodities to collapse.⁴ This coincided with the loss of major overseas markets owing to the war. At the local level, this led to industrial and commercial decline and greater unemployment, thus increasing the ranks of the destitute. These developments also had adverse consequences for the middle and upper classes. For the poor and working classes began to default on their rents, and from this declining revenue base, the wealthier classes were expected to pay higher prices for goods, higher taxes to finance the war, and higher poor rates to prevent a severe famine. Consequently, a rate crisis developed as thousands of the middle class were unable to pay, while others who could pay

¹Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, p. 519.

²Wells, Insurrection, pp. 183-4.

³Watson, p. 407.

⁴Wells, Insurrection, pp. 178-80.

refused, hoping that the distress of the poor would exert greater pressure on the government.¹

On the international level, by 1801 Britain was running a trade deficit and the pound was severely depreciated on the exchange markets of Spain and Hamburg.² Government borrowing to finance the war, especially through exchequer bills, also restricted short term credit available to commerce and industry and the incentives to purchase government stocks drove up long term interest rates.³ While economic historians might argue whether the experience of the war helped or hindered British industry, there were many industrial and financial interests in 1801 who believed that Britain required peace, and the stock market fluctuated in relation to the expectation of peace.⁴

The government was aware of these concerns, for in the autumn of 1800 the grain crisis dominated discussion in several departments.⁵ According to the minutes, every meeting at the Board of Trade between 24 September and 7 November was entirely concerned with increasing the import of grain.⁶ Officials at the Board of Trade investigated and initiated schemes for importing grain from Naples, Sicily, and the Barbary States, while Newfoundland was given special permission to import food from the United States.⁷ By March 1801, the government was so desperate for grain that, despite its

¹Wells, Insurrection, p. 183; Emsley, p. 86.

²Watson, p. 407; Henry MacLeod, The Theory and Practice of Banking (London, 1876), i. 465, ii. 2.

³Arthur Gayer, W. W. Rostow, and A. J. Schwartz, The Growth of the British Economy, 1790-1850 (Oxford, 1953), p. 145.

⁴Glenbervie Diaries, i. 151, 204; Yorke to Abbott, 18 Aug. 1801, PRO 30/9/120, fos. 3-6; The Times, 7 Feb. 1801.

⁵Rose Diaries, i. 281-5.

⁶Board Minutes, BT 5/12.

⁷Unwin to Fawkener, 27 Oct. 1800, and King to Fawkener, 20 Dec. 1800, BT 1/19; Fawkener to Hammond, 22 Dec. 1800, BT 3/6; Board Minutes, 27 Dec. 1800, BT 5/12.

dispute with the League of Armed Neutrality, it granted exemptions from seizure to Prussian ships delivering grain cargoes to Britain.¹

These were extraordinary measures, as the government had rarely interfered in the international grain market before, but they were clearly insufficient to resolve the crisis. Consequently, considerable controversy arose within the Cabinet over whether to take further steps. One of the major obstacles was that few believed that the general welfare of the people was the responsibility of the government. There were no precedents for large scale intervention in the market or a comprehensive system of poor relief, and many local officials would have interpreted such measures as dangerous innovations that would have increased the power of the executive. Moreover, many in the evangelical movement felt that the subsistence crisis was a result of divine retribution and ought to be endured.² Among the politically powerful classes, however, there was no consensus to guide the government.

Grenville was the most vociferous critic of any government interference. For he held stubbornly to the principles of Adam Smith, arguing that the only certain method of increasing the production of grain in times of scarcity was to raise the price to the point at which it would provide incentive to farmers to grow more. Conversely, he felt that any attempts to decrease the price, either directly or indirectly, would have the opposite effect.³

On the other side of the question, the Earl of Liverpool, President of the Board of Trade, tried to convince the Cabinet that Grenville's position could have caused dangerous consequences:

From long Experience, as well as from deep Reflection, I have convinced myself that Dr Adam Smith has pushed his Principles to an extravagant Length, and, in some respect, has erred. If, however, I should grant that Dr

¹Hervey to Fawkener, 3 Mar. 1801, BT 1/19.

²Boyd Hilton, The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865 (Oxford, 1988).

³Grenville to Pitt, 24 Oct. 1800, Dacres Adams Papers, PRO 30/58/3/85, also in Stanhope, ii. 373.

Adam Smith was in all respects right, I am persuaded that it is absolutely impossible to convince the common People, who suffer so greatly, that these Principles are well-founded ... ¹

Liverpool had received letters from across the country claiming that many were already starving and that others would freeze to death during the winter for lack of raiment. He feared that the manufacturing towns were ready to rise against the landed interests and that the yeomanry would not stop them:

If these Insurrections should unfortunately happen, it will indeed be very singular, that the French Philosophers, by their wild principles in favour of political Liberty, should have destroyed the Government of their own Country; and the French Oeconomists [sic] (from whom Dr Adam Smith has borrowed all his Doctrines) should, by Principles in favour of the Liberty of Trade, carried to as great an Extravagance, shake the Foundations of the Government of Great Britain.²

Liverpool acknowledged that war was not necessarily the cause of high prices, as corn was sometimes as cheap in times of war as in peace, but government acquisitions to feed the military services did drive up the price.³

Pitt had greater sympathy for Liverpool's position than Grenville's, as he was indeed alarmed by the scarcity and the consequences of the high prices. He spent several weeks at Woodley discussing the price of grain with Addington and Treasury Secretary George Rose, who both supported intervention.⁴ Addington had financed and administered soup kitchens in the neighbourhood surrounding his estate in Upottery, Devon.⁵ He was also preoccupied

¹Liverpool to Dundas, 11 Oct. 1800, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 84.

²Idem.

³Liverpool to Grenville, 9 Nov. 1800, Add. MSS 58935, fos. 103-6.

⁴Pitt to Rose, 25 Oct. 1800, Add. MSS 42772, fos. 124; Rose Diaries, i. 279, 282.; Pellew, i. 266-7.

⁵Addington to Hiley Addington, 1 Sept. and 4 Oct. 1800, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1800/F8 and F10; Cooke to Addington, 11 Mar. 1800, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1800/OG22.

by the debate over the cause of the crisis, watching closely the price of grain and arguing that the alarm of scarcity was justified and that the government should interfere in the market.¹ Consequently, Pitt decided that the government ought to act to ameliorate the distress, even if only to demonstrate that it was not neglecting the issue.² A strong nation-wide petition movement was demanding the emergency recall of Parliament to deal with the crisis and he acquiesced.³ He recalled Parliament prematurely in November 1800 to pass several acts of legislation to limit excess consumption of grain and to promote importing of rice, fish, and other foodstuffs.⁴ He also demonstrated an interest in devising a national census to determine the size and distribution of the population and how this related to local supplies of grain.⁵

Nevertheless, the concern of the government over the grain crisis was not entirely humanitarian. For throughout British history high grain prices and food riots had occurred often without causing serious alarm. The revolutionary context of the 1790s, however, provided an added dimension, as the example of the French Revolution and the radical writings of Thomas Paine gave an ideological impetus to criticism of and protest against the existing system of government. In response to the threat posed by the political organization of the corresponding societies, Pitt's ministry had passed legislation curbing their activities, and went so far as to arrest the leadership for treason in 1794. The examples of the Navy Mutinies of 1797 and the Irish Rebellion of 1798 seemed to confirm the government's suspicion of the existence of a revolutionary

¹Henry Beeke to Addington 23, 31 Oct., 8 Nov., and 9 Dec. 1800, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1800/OG1, 3,4 and 5; Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1800/OG8-23.

²Pitt to Addington, 9 Oct. 1800, Pellew, i. 264; Rose Diaries, i. 282-5.

³Wells, Insurrection, p. 182.

⁴Galpin, pp. 22-26.

⁵Colchester Diary, i. 209.

spirit. The problem was particularly acute in Ireland, where Lord Lieutenant Marquess Cornwallis believed that as long as the war continued the natives would have to be considered as enemies.¹ Throughout the war, Irish rebels had corresponded with the French government, and there was a general belief that another rebellion would coincide with a French invasion. Consequently, the government believed that it could not afford to let these developments continue unchecked.

Ministers and local officials believed that there was an important connection between food riots and revolutionary insurrection.² While they were certain that the great majority of the lower classes were loyal and that most of those involved in food riots were only responding to the distress of the moment, they believed that a small group of revolutionaries, who aimed to subvert the social order, were trying to use scarcity as an excuse to incite general discontent.³ With slogans such as 'Peace and Large Bread or A King without a Head' the radicals demonstrated their appeal to the masses and the danger to the authorities. The government's assessment was probably close to the mark. The historiographical debate over the threat of insurrection is well argued on both sides, but there is no conclusive evidence for historians as there was none for contemporaries. Nevertheless, there probably was an organized revolutionary movement that was presented with opportunities by the problems of the scarcity of grain as described by Roger Wells, but at the same it is unlikely that it could have obtained sufficiently widespread support to render an insurrection successful and, as Ian Christie has noted, there were many other social factors that worked

¹Cornwallis to Portland, 2 Sept. 1800, Memoirs and Correspondence of Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, ed. Marquess of Londonderry (12 vols, London, 1848-54), iii. 374.

²Simcoe to Addington, 9 Apr. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OM34.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1279; N. G. Cox, 'Aspects of British Radicalism: The Suppression and Re-emergence of the Constitutional Democratic Tradition, 1795-1809' (Ph. D., Cambridge, 1971), p. 29; Wells, Insurrection, pp. 184-7.

against the likelihood of a British revolution.¹ In the heat of the moment, however, the government could not have been so confident as to dismiss completely the threat of insurrection.

While the government responded to the scarcity problem by ordering magistrates to act to protect food movements to urban areas where most of the unrest was expected to occur,² on the whole it treated the symptoms rather than the causes of the unrest. The Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, took a very high-handed approach to the food riots of 1800, by insisting unwaveringly that acceding to the demands of the rioters to lower the price of food magistrates only exacerbated the problem and that the only viable solution was to punish the rioters severely.³ Nevertheless, as the Home Office did not possess either the power or the resources to take an active role in suppressing the riots, he could do little more than play the role of a glorified cheerleader, imploring the local officials to enforce existing laws and to make examples of offenders and reproaching them when they failed to act with sufficient vigour.⁴ He considered the 'moral economy' of the mob as a direct attack on the rights of property which had to be resisted with the full force of the law, and he was keen to order regular troops to assist the civil powers when necessary. For,

as much as the cause of the present disturbances is to be lamented, it is evident that the attention due to the general interests of the Community unfortunately render such an alternative absolutely unavoidable, and require that the further progress of the rioters should be arrested in the most prompt and efficacious manner.⁵

¹Wells, Insurrection; Christie, Stress and Stability.

²Charlesworth, p. 104.

³Portland to Haden, 30 Sept. 1800, and Portland to Corbett, 30 Sept. 1800, HO 43/12.

⁴Portland to Fortescue, 18 Feb. 1801, and Portland to St. Aubyn and Williams, 4 Apr. 1801, HO 43/12.

⁵Portland to Watson, 5 Sept. 1800, HO 43/12.

He was also determined to punish those who wrote seditious pamphlets and attended seditious meetings because he believed that unlawful assemblies were planning insurrections, especially in Nottingham and Yorkshire.¹ These regions, where along with Lancashire and Norwich the most serious unrest occurred, were also the centres of skilled artisan labour and the most extensive activity of the United Irishmen and United Englishmen.² This mixture of radical ideology, underground organization, unstable industrial relations, and widespread grievance over the grain crisis appeared a possible recipe for social revolution.

The problem with Portland's response to unrest was its reliance on armed force. With crises erupting in every region of the kingdom, there were insufficient resources to meet all the requirements, and employing more to quell unrest left fewer to fight the war against France. Ireland had been relatively quiet since the rebellion of 1798, but the uncertainty which lingered required 16,000 regular infantry and 10,000 cavalry just to maintain order.³ Even then, the British could never be completely confident that they would be able to handle another rebellion, especially if it coincided with another French landing. Therefore, Portland's policy tied up such a large proportion of British troops that Dundas was able to muster only 18,000 to drive a French force of more than 30,000 out of Egypt.

To release more regular troops, the government often employed the volunteer regiments as police forces. The experience of the food riots of 1800, however, brought this whole process under question. The problem was that the volunteers, who often lived within the communities where they were ordered to suppress riots, sometimes found that they had conflicting loyalties and consequently disobeyed

¹Portland to Smith 18 Sept. 1800, and Portland to Fitzwilliam, 20 Jan. 1801, HO 43/12; Fitzwilliam to Portland, 21 Apr. 1801, HO 42/66.

²Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, p. 517; Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century, p. 78.

³Littlehales to Castlereagh, 2 Sept. 1800, Castlereagh Correspondence, iii. 377.

their officers. Thus they were highly unreliable.¹ Even worse, there were several instances in Devon, where members of the volunteers played a major role in such riots. For example, in March 1801 members of the Exeter volunteers, some even in uniform, aided the mob involved in a food riot.² A number of officers in the Brixham volunteers also led a riotous procession which forced farmers to sign a paper binding them to sell wheat at a particular price, and later acted as delegates to a committee protesting against the high price of grain established at Dartmouth.³ In addition, members of the corps at Exmouth were spreading seditious pamphlets. These incidents alarmed Portland because he believed that 'Nothing can afford a more dangerous and destructive example than that those who are entrusted with Arms for the maintenance and security of the publick tranquility, should be left at liberty to use them for its destruction.'⁴

With these words Portland underlined a very frightening prospect. In the event that radicals used the scarcity to exacerbate considerable social unrest, Britain's military resources might not have been able to cope if members of the security forces refused to fight and some joined the mob. J. R. Western argues that the governing classes were an active minority surrounded by an indifferent multitude, and during a crisis the government was likely to be deserted by high and low alike.⁵ Such a scenario was possible, if the social, commercial, and military crises were left unresolved for an extended period. Having refused to interfere in the grain

¹Clive Emsley, 'The Social Impact of the French Wars', in Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815, ed. H. T. Dickinson (London, 1989), p. 219.

²Wright to Northcote and Fenshaw, 31 Mar. 1801, HO 43/12.

³Taylor to Fortescue 12 Apr. 1801, enclosed in Brownrigg to Nepean, 16 Apr. 1801, Adm 1/433.

⁴Portland to Rolle, 24 Dec. 1800, HO 43/12.

⁵J. R. Western, 'The Volunteer Movement as an Anti-Revolutionary Force, 1793-1801', English Historical Review, lxxi (1956), 603-4.

market, the government was required to take alternative measures, and the most obvious was to pursue peace. Many among the governing classes were convinced that only peace could bring general contentment.¹ For example, in October 1797 Addington had remarked on the prospects of peace that he believed, 'the state of the country as to its interior to be so bad that we cannot, in strict duty venture to reject the offer, which may at least give us some interval of rest for doing what we have to do at home'.² An end to the war would have restored Britain's access to Continental supplies of grain and naval stores, released large numbers of troops for service in Britain, decreased the government's financial burden thus permitting it to decrease taxes, and eliminated the prospect of a French invasion that was sustaining the hopes of many British and Irish revolutionaries. One stroke of the diplomatic pen could have resolved many of the dangers facing the government. There were few alternatives, as Pitt confided in Addington on 8 October 1800 that 'After all, the question of peace or war is not in itself half so formidable as that of the scarcity with which it is necessarily combined, and for the evils and growing dangers of which I own I see no adequate remedy.'³ The next day Grenville was told by his brother Thomas that 'the scarcity of bread and the consequent distress of the poor, if it continues, will, I believe, force you whether you will or no to make your peace with France'.⁴

Thus both Pitt and Thomas Grenville admitted the essential connection between the foreign policy of the government and social unrest. The decision of the government to pursue the war had crippled certain sectors of British industry and inflated the price

¹J. G. Rogers, 'Addington and the Addingtonian Interest in Parliament, 1801-12' (B. Litt. Oxford, 1952), p. 77; Pellew, i. 363.

²Addington to Pitt, 8 Oct. 1797, Chatham Papers PRO 30/8/140.

³Pitt to Addington, 8 Oct. 1800, Pellew, i. 263.

⁴T. Grenville to Grenville, 9 Oct. 1800, Dropmore Papers, vi. 343-4.

of grain. This had exacerbated the distress of the poorer classes, convincing many that the only means of feeding themselves required the use of violence. The economic strain of the war and widespread distress had hampered the government's ability to finance the war effort, while the military resources required to quell the unrest had weakened the forces available to fight. As time passed, the social strains had become greater and the prospects of winning the war had diminished. Moreover, the war had become generally unpopular. While it is difficult to speak with certainty about popular opinion on the question of peace and war, and it was clear that different people had different opinions, what evidence there is suggests that opinion on the whole opposed the war. Addington certainly thought so.¹ Even the French agent sent to London to negotiate an exchange of prisoners of war, Louis Otto, was convinced that the British public was universally in favour of peace, and he attributed this sentiment to unpopular levels of taxation and the interruption of British trade with Europe.² Consequently, peace was the only solution. The Annual Register of 1801 claimed:

Though the difficulties and dangers, that encompassed Great Britain, from the commencement of the war, had been very great, the situation of this country in the three first months of 1801, had become critical and alarming almost beyond any former example. ... It was now quite apparent, that the country was plunged into a situation of difficulty and distress, from which nothing but a speedy peace could relieve it.

Quite unexpectedly, however, at the height of the crisis Pitt handed over the responsibility for negotiating peace to Addington.

¹Pellew, ii. 2n.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 6 and 9 Germinal IX (27 and 30 Mar. 1801), AE Angleterre/594; 'Coup d'oeil politique sur l'Angleterre', in same to same, 4 Floréal IX (24 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

Chapter Two

The Formation of the Ministry, January to March 1801

^That some parts of the new Administration are greatly inferior in Talents & Abilities to those of the former no man living can doubt; that it is to be deplored & regretted but it must be formed as it is, or Messers. Sheridan, Grey, & Tierney sent for. Honesty, right intentions, & true Patriotism will be found, & for the rest we must put ourselves on God & our Country.'

Charles Yorke¹

The Accession of Addington

Pitt's resignation had serious and enduring consequences for the course of British politics that he did not anticipate at the time because his complete personal ascendancy during his seventeen years in office meant that there was no clear candidate who could take his place. Even if it might be more accurate to say that Pitt stayed in office that long because there were no alternatives, the point remains that there was no one in Parliament who was generally assumed to be the next Prime Minister. Pitt had no rivals within his ministerial party because he had built it himself. He had attained office in 1783 largely because he was aloof from party and had to construct his Cabinet out of the remnants of former ministries. Nevertheless, as his position strengthened he replaced some of the ministers with his relatives and friends, many of whom were entirely dependent on him for their political careers and most were so personally devoted to him that they would never have dared to challenge his position. The problem was, however, that Pitt had not groomed a successor. Despite the fact that he was only forty years old, he

¹Yorke to Mrs Hardwicke, 11 Feb. 1801, Yorke MS Eng. lett. c. 60, fos. 3-4.

must have realised that the day would come when he would no longer be Prime Minister, yet he failed to prepare someone to take the reins of power. In fact, he gave none of his younger colleagues sufficient opportunity to let their talents shine or to establish any degree of independence based on their own character and abilities. He was also constantly interfering with the work of his subordinates when his energies would have been better employed elsewhere. By taking on too much responsibility for himself he robbed others of chances to bring themselves forward as talented speakers. Lord Glenbervie, when considering why there were so few men of talent around, pondered, 'Is it a real dearth of great abilities, or is it not because Pitt with the exception of only one or two among his favourites has universally, and in all lines and branches, discouraged and repressed those who might have come too near himself?'¹ The answer probably contained an element of both.

Resigning apparently over the single issue of Catholic Emancipation even though he retained an almost unassailable parliamentary majority also caused further problems.² For most of his closest adherents and the ministers with the most experience resigned with him, and of those who remained, there was no one of the necessary calibre to run the government. Dundas suggested Portland as the most acceptable to the country.³ The Duke had filled the office in 1782-3 and would fill it again 1807-9, but in both instances he was supported by strong ministerial teams. The situation in 1801 was quite different, however, as the

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 150, 189-90.

²I am inclined to accept Piers Mackesy's argument that serious divisions within the Cabinet and the poor state of Pitt's health played a large role in his decision to resign. See War without Victory: The Downfall of Pitt, 1799-1802 (Oxford, 1984), pp. 174-7.

³Dundas to Pitt, 7 Feb. 1801, in Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War, pp. 440-1.

ministry was expected to be very weak and requiring strong leadership. Portland, who had once been talented and industrious, had become physically and mentally exhausted and could not fulfil this role.¹ Moreover, the party that he had once led had been split by his decision to join Pitt's ministry in 1794, and those whom he brought into the government with him--Fitzwilliam, Windham, and Spencer--had resigned or been dismissed over the Catholic issue.

Apart from Pitt's adherents and the Portland Whigs, the Foxite Whigs were the only other group that was recognized as possessing the talents and abilities required to run the government. Charles Fox along with the Earl of Moira, Richard Sheridan, Thomas Erskine, and Charles Grey possessed remarkable debating talent, and the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire wielded considerable patronage. Nevertheless, the King would have refused to appoint them owing to Fox's vehement opposition to the war, support for the ideals of the French Revolution, and unwavering animosity towards him. Moreover, Pitt certainly did not wish to see his rival succeed him, and so he had to find someone to keep Fox out of office.

The decision to appoint the Speaker of the House of Commons was unusual but not unprecedented. Robert Harley was promoted from Speaker to 'prime minister' in 1710, although he did have previous experience as Secretary of State. The selection of the Speaker in 1801, however, can only be explained on other grounds. Ten years in the role of Speaker had given Addington the stature and the degree of independence that was required of Pitt's successor in the circumstances, as it was clear that the new Prime Minister could be neither a close adherent of Pitt, for then he would have felt obliged to resign, nor a member of the opposition. On the other hand, without a solid party behind him he required the respect of both sides of the House of Commons to

¹Ziegler, p. 99.

sustain a parliamentary majority. Although he owed his position as Speaker to Pitt, he had also won the respect of the opposition through the fair and impartial way he had managed the business of the Commons. In fact, he was not considered an ardent Pittite but was one of the few MPs who were on good personal terms with all leading politicians.¹ For example, he had been seen on different occasions walking arm in arm with Pitt and Fox, and developed friendships with both the Prince of Wales and the King. Moreover, his position as Speaker enabled him to develop such a close relationship with George III that he was the first to whom the King turned to form a new government.

Addington was also Pitt's first choice as his successor. Pitt had long sensed that Addington possessed parliamentary abilities, and he was the first to persuade the reluctant Addington to speak in the Commons in 1786 and promoted him as a candidate for Speaker in 1791.² He also thought enough of Addington to offer him the Home Office when Dundas expressed a desire to retire in 1793.³ More significant, however, in 1796 and 1797, when the state of affairs was such that Pitt had serious thoughts of resigning because he believed that the French might make peace with another ministry but not with his, he suggested that Addington take the government.⁴ Thus when informing his brother, the Earl of Chatham, of his decision to resign, Pitt

¹Ziegler, p. 55.

²Ziegler, pp. 46, 58.

³Pellew, i. 108.

⁴Mrs Tomline's Notes, 10 Nov. 1801, Stanhope of Chevening Papers, UB/590/S5; Mary Anne Addington's Notes on Lord Sidmouth's Career, Sidmouth Papers, Box 51 Public Office 2; Pellew, i. 332n.

declared that he had long expected that Addington would succeed him.¹

There were further reasons for selecting Addington. For throughout the war Addington was one of the best informed on all major foreign and domestic developments. Indeed he was virtually an honorary member of the Cabinet, although he did not attend any of the meetings,² and Pitt told him more about policy than he told even some of his Cabinet colleagues. Addington also conversed regularly with other members of the Cabinet and corresponded with naval officers and imperial administrators. Thus no one outside of the Cabinet knew more about events or the formulation of policy. Moreover, Pitt and other members of the government often asked for Addington's advice, especially during the latter stages of the ministry. Pitt almost always confided in and relied on the advice of one or two of his closest friends, usually Dundas or Grenville, but by 1800 he had become a little estranged from these two and had come to rely on Addington as his sounding board. During the autumn of 1800, he had asked for Addington's input on the issues of war, peace, and the grain scarcity, and when he had become ill he had gone to Addington's Berkshire estate at Woodley to recuperate.³ Therefore, although Addington had never held Cabinet office, he knew more about the state of foreign and domestic affairs than anyone else who might have been Pitt's successor.

Regardless of these qualifications, however, Addington did not want the position.⁴ If ever anyone was made Prime Minister

¹Pitt to Chatham, 5 Feb. 1801, Edward, Lord Ashbourne, Pitt: Some Chapters of his Life and Times (London, 1898), p. 311.

²Ziegler, p. 66.

³Pellew, i. 260-7.

⁴Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III, iii. 137; J.H. Jesse, Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III (London, 1867), iii. 246.

against his will, it was Addington. As mentioned, he had previously declined promotions on at least two occasions. For in the first place he was extremely pleased with his position as Speaker to which his mild, even temperament was well suited. In addition, his performance as Speaker was unanimously acclaimed, and the salary and other perks provided him with a comfortable living. Taking the premiership, however, meant sacrificing this comfort and security for onerous responsibilities and an insecure future.¹ It also meant that he was bound to make personal and political enemies for the first time, a prospect that Addington, who cherished being on good personal terms with everyone, found particularly distasteful. In the second place, the diplomatic and political situation of early 1801 made the premiership unappealing, as a term in office at that time seemed more likely to ruin than to improve a career.

Addington initially tried hard to avoid taking office. When the King first wrote to him explaining the nature of the crisis on 29 January, he went directly to persuade Pitt to accommodate the King. Whatever passed between them appeared to have convinced Addington that he had succeeded in resolving the impasse, and he told the King that the crisis had been averted.² Two days later, however, when Addington arrived at Kew the King said that Pitt had decided to persevere with the Catholic question and that, therefore, the Speaker had to take the government. Instead of complying, he returned to Pitt but could not move him. Rather Pitt, like the King, pressed Addington to take office. After the King had said, 'lay your hand upon your heart, and ask yourself where I am to turn for support if you do not stand by me', at a

¹Ziegler, pp. 94-5.

²Colchester Diary, i. 222.

separate meeting Pitt added, 'I see nothing but ruin, Addington, if you hesitate.'¹ This indeed placed tremendous pressure on him.

After obtaining promises of support from Pitt, Dundas, Grenville, and Windham, Addington felt that he had no choice but to comply,² but he did so reluctantly and mostly out of a sense of duty to the King. He explained:

I have done no more than my duty; and being actuated by that alone, and having no object but the good of my country, I have sought no political connections; but shall steadily pursue those measures which my own mind approves, and which I therefore venture to hope will be approved of and supported by parliament and the public.³

He also held back until he had obtained a promise from Pitt to advise the new ministry, because he did not wish to find himself opposed to Pitt, who was both his political mentor and close friend.⁴

The atmosphere surrounding Addington, his family, and friends was surprisingly downcast considering that he had just acceded to the highest office. One of his sisters told another:

You may guess how he feels both the arduousness of the undertaking and the sacrifice of private comfort: but what is for the best in the present crisis can be the only consideration, and of that all seem perfectly agreed. His own struggle is over, and he seems calm and collected, and to look forward with confidence, though not without anxiety. The great thing is to keep up his spirits, to carry him through what he feels it his duty to undertake.⁵

¹Pellew, i. 285-88; Stanhope, ii. 292-5; Colchester Diary, i. 222-3, 233; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 161, 278.

²Colchester Diary, i. 223.

³Addington to Simcoe, 23 Feb. 1801, Pellew, i. 331.

⁴Pellew, i. 330; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 333.

⁵Mrs Bragge to Mrs Goodenough, 5 Feb. 1801, Pellew, i. 297.

One politician told Addington, 'Sir, I cannot do as others are doing, give you joy; for I pity you sincerely.'¹ Another said he was sorry that Addington had taken the government.² Glenbervie commented that within a few days of agreeing to take office Addington looked pale and agitated.³ The point to note here is that Addington was just as disturbed by the recent turn of events as anyone else, and he had not, under a delusion about his own abilities, taken advantage of the situation to advance his career, as Rose and George Canning accused him.

The reaction to the news of Addington's accession was more mixed than has usually been acknowledged. The response of the opposition was shock, disbelief, and derisive laughter. Fox was confused and believed that Pitt was playing a trick, while Sheridan told his wife that the new arrangement was ridiculous. In addition, several in the Holland House set thought it was a joke.⁴ Nevertheless, historians have often overlooked the fact that, there were others who agreed that Addington was the best man in the circumstances. For example, the Earl of Eldon rejoiced at Addington's elevation as a man of strong Protestant principles.⁵ Chatham felt that, 'the King could not have acted more wisely, than in having recourse to the Speaker, on every account, and on none more than that, I am sure, no one man, will feel a more sincere concern than himself, for the occasion which

¹Colchester Diary, i. 230.

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 160.

³Glenbervie Diaries, i. 161.

⁴Fox Correspondence, iii. 320-1; Sheridan to Mrs Sheridan, 10 Feb. 1801, The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, ed. Cecil Price (Oxford, 1966), ii. 149; Lady Holland Journal, ii. 130.

⁵Campbell, ix. 218.

has called him forth.'¹ Even Marquess Wellesley, who showed contempt for the other members of the new ministry, expressed great respect for Addington:

I never can conceive any system to be tainted with the least touch (of public or private dishonor or incorrectness) which is conducted by Addington, in whose virtues & talents I place the most cordial reliance; I therefore wish him to succeed in his Enterprise, if success be attainable with such instruments, & under such strange circumstances.²

Some backbench MPs seemed to prefer Addington's personality and manner to Pitt's. One even thanked God for a ministry 'Without one of those confounded men of genius in it'.³ This is not to say that Pitt's resignation was not regretted, but that the scathing comments of a vocal few overshadowed the alternative view that Addington was the only suitable candidate to fill Pitt's place. In the words of Edward Cooke, Addington was 'not only the best but the only man that could be found'.⁴ Granville Leveson Gower, who was by no means an admirer of Addington, told his mother, 'there is no alternative but Mr. Addington or Mr. Fox'.⁵ This was an argument that Addington's opponents failed to address, as they put forward no candidate as an alternative.

¹Chatham to Pitt, 6 Feb. 1801, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/122/2, fos. 151-2.

²Wellesley to Pitt, 6 Oct. 1801, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/188/1; Wellesley to Grenville, 21 Oct. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vii. 63-4.

³ Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century, pp. 122-3; Ziegler, p. 103, Watson, p. 404.

⁴Cooke to Castlereagh, 9 Feb. 1801, Memoirs and Correspondence of Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, ed. Marquess of Londonderry (London, 1848-54), iv. 28.

⁵Leveson Gower to his mother, 13 Feb. 1801, Lord Granville Leveson Gower: Private Correspondence, 1781-1821, ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (London, 1916), i. 296.

Forming the Ministry

The process of forming the ministry was also extraordinary. Since the accession of George III, the designated first minister in consultation with those taking the highest Cabinet posts usually selected almost all of the candidates to fill the remaining government offices. This ministry, however, was constructed by Addington, Pitt, and the King. Pitt's role, moreover, was highly unusual. Ministers usually left office in circumstances which drove them into the political opposition or complete retirement, but Pitt both promised to support the ministry in the Commons and actively recruited men for it. In fact, there would have been no ministry but for his assistance. For having resigned at the height of his power and without losing his majority in Parliament, he still commanded the following of a solid block in the Commons which was important for the survival of a new ministry.

To describe the new government as the King's ministry is an exaggeration, but his role in building it was extremely active, as he not only proposed several candidates but also personally pressed them to accept. In other cases, Addington was very concerned that his own selections would be agreeable to the King. The reasons for this renaissance in the King's power owed something to Addington's inexperience and attachment to his sovereign but also to the awareness, made explicit by the Catholic crisis, that a government had to avoid fundamental differences of opinion with the King in order to survive. His active participation in the formation of the ministry made this less likely.

Addington required the help of Pitt and the King because filling the vacancies in the government was very difficult, as Grenville, Dundas, Spencer, Windham, and Camden--all the Cabinet members who supported the Catholic measure--had resigned. This exodus meant that there were fewer qualified people with whom to

reconstruct the ministry, and the problem was compounded by the resignations of Pitt's friends and adherents from the lesser government posts. Rose and Charles Long (Secretaries of the Treasury), Canning (Paymaster of the Forces), William Huskisson (Undersecretary for War), Viscount Castlereagh (Chief Secretary for Ireland), and Cornwallis, along with the ministers in Berlin and Vienna, the Earls of Carysfort and Minto, either resigned immediately or expressed a desire to be relieved at a convenient time. This left Addington an even smaller pool of talent to choose from and more posts to fill.

In the initial stages, Pitt acted quite fairly, considering the onerous ordeal that he had imposed on Addington, by promising his full support to the new ministry and imploring his friends to remain in office. Chatham, Portland, Liverpool, and the Earl of Westmorland agreed to remain in the Cabinet, while Thomas Steele and Dudley Ryder consented to remain as Joint Paymaster and Treasurer of the Navy respectively.

Addington's dilemma was to build a ministry upon the foundations of the rump of the less talented of the previous ministers with very few experienced and able candidates available. By 6 February, he had drawn up a provisional list which included Thomas Pelham as Secretary for War, Steele as Secretary at War, Ryder as Foreign Secretary, and Lord Macartney as President of the Board of Control,¹ but within a few days, Addington was very distressed to find that each had refused. For the Duchess of Devonshire had convinced Pelham that the ministry would be short-lived, and Macartney's doctor had warned him that his health could not stand the strain of office.²

The only appointments he was able to make with little difficulty were the law officers, probably because they were

¹Colchester Diary, i. 224.

²Duchess of Devonshire to Pelham, 9 Feb. 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fos. 12-4; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 163.

proposed by the King and considered somewhat independent of the political side of the ministry. The King had suggested that Eldon become Lord Chancellor and be replaced as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas by Sir Richard Pepper Arden. Addington was able to convince Sir John Mitford to vacate the post of Attorney-General in favour of Sir Edward Law by becoming Speaker of the House of Commons. Sir William Grant agreed to become Master of the Rolls, after turning down an offer of a more political office, leaving that of Solicitor-General to Spencer Perceval.

Addington's main problem remained filling the more important political offices after his first choices had all refused. In this he relied heavily on Pitt, with whom he consulted almost daily during this period. Pitt suggested several of the candidates who finally accepted office, but, more important, in personal interviews with each he persuaded them, largely against their own inclination, to join the government.¹ For example, Lord Hobart told Dundas that 'No man can lament more than I do the circumstances which have led to my succeeding to the War Department.'² Nicholas Vansittart, who was to be appointed joint Secretary of the Treasury, also stated that he would go to Botany Bay if it would help to bring back Pitt's ministry.³ Most of these men were reluctant to take office after Pitt's resignation probably because they considered him to be their political leader, felt that they should follow him either in or out of office, and preferred not to shift their allegiance to another. As with Addington, they were persuaded only by a declaration from

¹Yorke to Mrs Hardwicke, 11 Feb. 1801, Yorke MS Eng. lett. c. 60, fos. 3-4; Memorandum 1801, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B7; Memorandum on Speakership, Redesdale Papers, D2002/X11; Letters of Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl of St Vincent, 1801-1804, ed. David. B. Smith, Navy Records Society (London, 1922), i. 14; Rose Diaries, i. 299; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 295.

²Hobart to Dundas, 14 Feb. 1801, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/62.

³Colchester Diary, i. 230.

Pitt that he desired them to take office and that it was their public duty to accept.

Hawkesbury, although not a first choice as Foreign Secretary, was a reasonable selection in the circumstances, as Addington had lately taken him into his confidence and considered him one of the few good candidates for Cabinet office.¹ For Hawkesbury had a variety of experience in minor government offices, as member of both the Board of Control and the Board of Trade, and on several occasions had demonstrated a talent for speaking competently in the Commons.² He was also on very close terms with Pitt and it is likely that he was destined for higher office if Pitt had not resigned.³ An efficient administrator, he was praised by Pitt, during one of his first speeches in the Commons after resigning the seals, as second only to Fox as a man of business.⁴ Hawkesbury also had a close connection to the King through his father, Liverpool, who had long been a royal favourite. On giving the seals to Hawkesbury the King had said that he had never given them away with such pleasure.⁵ As to being qualified to conduct foreign affairs, he had spoken in the Commons on them on several occasions, demonstrating some grasp of the field, though he was by no means an expert. His father did, however, have considerable experience in foreign affairs,

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 14 Feb. 1801.

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 222.

³J.-M. Alter, 'The Early Life and Political Career of Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool, 1790-1812' (Ph. D., University College Wales, Aberystwyth, 1988), pp. 53-136; Patrick Polden, 'Domestic Policies of the Addington Administration' (Ph. D., Reading, 1975), p. 72.

⁴Judith Brown, 'The Early Career of Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool, 1790-1812: The Making of the Arch Mediocrity' (Ph. D., University of Delaware, 1980), p. 106; Parliamentary History, xxxv. 1113.

⁵Glenbervie Diaries, i. 179.

particularly relating to trade, and he was able to provide valuable guidance and advice, while the poor state of his health precluded him from managing the Foreign Office himself.

Owing to Hawkesbury's inexperience, Addington could not permit him considerable latitude, such as was later exercised by Castlereagh, Canning, or Palmerston. In fact, Addington had been kept more fully abreast of foreign affairs during Pitt's ministry. Addington and Hawkesbury thus kept in close personal contact, facilitated by the proximity of the Foreign Office to 10 Downing Street. Moreover, Addington's complete grasp of his government's foreign policy was demonstrated in his conversations with ambassadors and foreign ministers, and it was he and not Hawkesbury who conversed with influential political figures on the subject of foreign affairs.¹ The Cabinet also took a greater role in formulating policy than under Pitt.² Foreign affairs were the subject of frequent, long, and grueling meetings at which Hawkesbury had to justify every step he made. Dissent was rare in the end, but several of the ministers took a great deal of persuading before they would accept some policies.

The circumstances of Hobart's appointment as Secretary for War were similar to Hawkesbury's. Addington had first offered the post to Pelham at the insistence of the King and the Duke of York, but after Pelham refused he offered it to Hobart. He had first considered Hobart for the Presidency of the Board of Control but Dundas objected and during his years in India Hobart had alienated the Court of Directors and Wellesley.³ Hobart had five years' experience each as Secretary for Ireland and Governor of Madras and a strong anti-Catholic disposition, which was

¹Malmesbury Diaries iv. 205-12, 226-8; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 266-7; Dundas to Addington 4 May 1801, Melville Castle Muniments GD 1/556/2.

²Polden, p. 19.

³Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 20 Feb. 1801; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 8; Aspinall, iii. 505n.

pleasing to the King.¹ Addington also believed that he would work well with St Vincent, who had agreed to take the Admiralty, and it was vital for a successful war effort that the War Office and Admiralty coordinate strategy without serious disagreement.² Nevertheless, Hobart was very uncertain about taking office, and only accepted after consulting Pitt.³

With a new minister coming into the War Office, Addington had decided that it would be better to separate it from the Presidency of the Board of Control, as the work load of both was too great for one official. Dundas had found it onerous. A new problem arose, however, in that, with the likelihood of peace being negotiated in the near future, Hobart was worried that his post as Secretary for War would become redundant.⁴ Addington was determined to make the office permanent, however, because he believed that the business of the government would require a third Secretary of State. The solution was to transfer responsibilities for the colonies from the Home Office to the War Office. In 1794, Pitt had intended to keep the colonies in Dundas's hands when he created the office of Secretary for War so as to accommodate the Portland Whigs, but Portland had refused to accept the Home Office unless it retained all its former responsibilities. With the expectation that Portland would be shuffled out of the Home Office to facilitate the new Cabinet arrangements and that the Home Office would acquire more business as a result of the Union with Ireland, Addington felt that a transfer of the colonies would be appropriate. This was only

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 10 Feb. 1801.

²Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 19 Feb. 1801.

³Auckland Correspondence, iv. 128; Memorandum 1801, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B7.

⁴Memorandum 1801, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B7.

delayed by the unexpected tenacity with which Portland clung to the Home Office for another six months.¹

After Hawkesbury had refused the Admiralty, Addington consulted Pitt who suggested both St Vincent and Admiral Hood.² Spencer also recommended St Vincent and the King agreed that he would be the best choice.³ Everyone was aware that professional seamen tended to make poor political administrators, but St Vincent had a record of success in battle and maintaining ship discipline, and with the war having taken a desperate turn with the likelihood of further naval action, the Admiralty required an administrator of vigour and ability.⁴ He also possessed a detailed knowledge of the workings of the Admiralty and expressed a fervent desire to reform many of the apparent abuses in the system and improve the supplying and maintenance of the fleets at sea. As Addington saw a need for reform in many branches of the government, he was keen to appoint men who would fulfill these tasks.⁵

St Vincent's relationship with the rest of the ministry was, however, somewhat peculiar. First, he was more renowned for his career as an officer than as a politician. Second, his closest political ties were with Charles Grey and the Foxite opposition, and he certainly was not one of Pitt's followers. Third, in the circumstances of Pitt's resignation, St Vincent's avowed support

¹Addington to Pelham, 2 Aug. 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fo. 212; Aspinall, iii. 589-91.

²Pellew, i. 300n.

³Charles B. Arthur, The Remaking of the English Navy by Admiral St. Vincent--Key to Victory over Napoleon: The Great Unclaimed Naval Revolution, 1795-1805 (London, 1986), iv; The King to Addington, 9 Feb. 1801, Aspinall, iii. 494.

⁴Addington to the King, 9 Feb. 1801, Aspinall, iii. 491-3.

⁵John R. Breihan, 'The Addington Party and the Navy in British Politics, 1801-1806', in Craig L. Symonds, ed., New Aspects of Naval History, (Annapolis, 1981), pp. 164-5.

for abolition of the Test Acts would seem to have ruled him out for any office. Nevertheless, it was quite clear that he was not a party man and did not take a strong interest in political questions. This gave him a certain degree of independence and facilitated his being admired by members from both sides in Parliament, but also meant that he felt able to work within the ministry only by separating his administration of the navy from the political administration of the ministry. After consulting his close friend, the Marquess of Lansdowne, and Pitt, he decided that he could accept office despite differences of opinion with ministers on the condition that he did not to become involved with political questions and that the rest of the ministry did not interfere with his administration of the navy.¹ As a consequence, he chose to attend only those Cabinet meetings at which matters relevant to the navy were discussed. But this type of independence had drawbacks, as it prevented cohesiveness within the Cabinet and meant that Addington had to act as a liaison between the administration of the navy and the rest of the government.

Addington had better fortune filling the office of Secretary at War, even though the position was stripped of the Cabinet rank that had been granted to Windham. Charles Yorke was a hard-working, although unimaginative administrator, well suited to the role of implementing the policies of the War Secretary and coordinating the supply of men, equipment, and food between the different military departments. He possessed no experience of high office, but was very active in the Cambridgeshire militia and was the brother of the Earl of Hardwicke, who possessed a modest degree of patronage and descended from a family with considerable political and administrative experience. Nevertheless, like several others in the ministry, Yorke accepted

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 15 Feb. 1801; St Vincent to Lloyd, 19 Feb. 1801, Add. MSS 31170, fo. 16; Ziegler, p. 101; Polden, p. 42.

office reluctantly and with reservations. For he was a follower of Pitt and much regretted his resignation. He consulted Pitt after Addington offered the post and only accepted after Pitt assured him of continuing support to the ministry. Indeed he spoke for many others including Addington when he told his mother:

the consenting to fill the Breaches ... is considered by us all as a matter of necessity & Duty, not of Choice, as a means of preventing the country from falling into the very worst hands & the K[ing]. from being delivered up to some of his worst enemies. For my own part, I reflect upon it as a most arduous, responsible & difficult task which I have undertaken; that my situation is equally unlooked for, & precarious; & that one ought not to calculate upon remaining in it for six months, perhaps not for six weeks. But I think as a great and terrible conflict may be expected that it is more glorious to combat in the front Ranks than in the Rear.¹

Addington also appointed Hardwicke to replace Cornwallis as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The King originally suggested Chatham for the post, and Addington was obliged to ask several others, including the Earl of Winchelsea and the Duke of Montrose before offering it to Hardwicke.² Addington knew that Hardwicke supported the repeal of the Test Acts, but believed that this would not interfere in the administration of Ireland, as long as the Lord Lieutenant realized that the issue had been shelved indefinitely. Hardwicke might even command more respect from the Catholics in Ireland because of these sentiments, while his military experience prepared him for dealing with violent unrest. Therefore, he seemed to possess the right balance of attributes to manage the difficulties of Ireland. In support, Addington sent Charles Abbot as Chief Secretary. Abbot had considerable experience in minor law offices and was a personal friend of

¹York to his mother, 11 Feb. 1801, Yorke MS. Eng. lett. c. 60, fos. 3-4.

²Pellew, i. 303, 346-7; Colchester Diary, i. 240-2.

Addington. He had also demonstrated some skill in debate, and Addington hoped that he would spend time in London when Parliament was in session to help the ministry in the Commons, particularly on Irish issues.¹

Addington had more trouble filling the post of President of the Board of Control. After Macartney, Pelham, Grant, and Glenbervie had refused, Addington offered the post to Lord Lewisham at the request of Pelham.² Lewisham had little experience in administration, but had worked on the Secret Committee of Indian Affairs, had been offered the post of Governor-General of Bengal,³ and was also a close friend of the King and Pelham. He was not a renowned speaker and he did not even possess a seat in either of the Houses of Parliament,⁴ but this was resolved by promoting him to the Lords as Baron Dartmouth (though shortly after he succeeded to his father's title of the Earl of Dartmouth). Addington was not concerned about placing a weak candidate at the Board of Control because he thought Dundas would continue to play a large role in both Indian and Scottish affairs, and felt that he could handle Indian affairs in the Commons along with his other responsibilities. Moreover, he was in considerable haste to fill all the positions and did not have the time to search for better candidates after so many had refused.⁵

The influence of the King and Pitt in these arrangements, while providing many advantages, was also detrimental in some ways. The King had decided as early as 1799 that he wanted Eldon

¹Colchester Diary, i. 237.

²Cyril Philips, The East India Company, 1784-1834 (Manchester, 1940), p. 112.

³Philips, p. 242.

⁴Lewisham to Pelham, 12 Feb. 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fo. 17.

⁵Aspinall, iii. 503n; Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, vii. 2 September 1802.

to be the next Lord Chancellor and had extracted a promise from him that he would accept the post if it were ever offered.¹ Eldon had a distinguished legal career, having under Pitt climbed the ladder from Solicitor-General to Attorney-General and then to Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. Thus from his experience, he was certainly the best qualified for the office of Lord Chancellor. Nevertheless, he was content with his post at the Common Pleas and was very reluctant to give it up for fear of being left out in a future Cabinet shuffle, if Addington's ministry did not last.² He was also a devoted follower of Pitt and did not wish to transfer his allegiance to a new leader. But Addington and the King pressed him to fulfill his promise, and after consulting Pitt and obtaining a promise of a pension of £4,000 if he were dismissed as part of an arrangement to bring Pitt back into office, he complied.³ These circumstances, however, created some ambiguity in his relationship to Addington, as Eldon felt that he had been appointed by the King and was, therefore, 'indebted to the King himself, and not as some supposed, to Mr Addington'.⁴ He believed himself to be the King's Chancellor, not Addington's, and consequently responsible for his actions only to the King. From this point of view he assumed a degree of independence, which in the end was to undermine Addington's leadership.⁵

The most difficult member of the new Cabinet was Pelham, and that he was in the Cabinet at all was entirely the King's responsibility. He was not Addington's first choice but both the

¹Horace Twiss, The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon, with Selections from his Correspondence (3 vols., London, 1844), i. 367.

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 201.

³Rose Diaries, i. 310.

⁴Twiss, i. 368.

⁵See below, chapter 9, p. 292.

King and the Duke of York, insisted that he be included in the Cabinet.¹ Pelham, like St Vincent, did not have strong political ties, as he was neither a follower of Pitt nor a member of the opposition, and his closest political connection was the Earl of Malmesbury. He was, however, a cousin of the Duke of Newcastle, whose patronage Addington probably hoped would be an asset to the ministry, which apart from Portland was short on magnates. Like Hobart, Pelham had official experience as Secretary for Ireland. Therefore, he was not unqualified for office, and his political independence would help the ministry to be less dependent on Pitt.

However, Addington found making a satisfactory arrangement for Pelham almost impossible. He first offered him the War Office, at the behest of the King and the Duke of York, who as Commander-in-Chief of the forces had to work closely with the Secretary for War,² but fearing that the ministry would not last, Pelham twice refused. Afterwards, the King pressed both Addington and Pelham to come to an arrangement. Addington was exasperated by all the pressure to conciliate a man who could hardly be considered a great asset to the ministry and had appeared so adamantly opposed to joining it. He asked Lord Sheffield, 'Would you have me go on my knees to him?'³ Nevertheless, he reluctantly recommenced negotiations, but as he had already granted the War Office to Hobart after Pelham's second refusal, this left only the Board of Control open. Pelham insisted, however, on a Cabinet office.

Addington would have preferred to let the matter rest there, but the King and the Duke of York continued to insist that some provision be made for Pelham, and the new Prime Minister wanted

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 14 and 16 Feb. 1801; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 6.

²Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 6.

³Glenbervie Diaries, i. 164.

to avoid making political enemies at such an early stage. He convinced Hobart to relinquish the War Office in return for the Home Office by shifting Portland to Lord President of the Council held by Chatham, who was to become Master General of the Ordnance upon Cornwallis's resignation.¹ Pelham then decided that he wanted the Home Office instead. This meant that the arrangement could not be made for several months until Cornwallis returned from Ireland. In the meantime, Addington promised Pelham a peerage and the leadership of the House of Lords on his accession to the Home Office. Addington and Hawkesbury later tried to shuffle Pelham off to the embassy at St Petersburg, when diplomatic relations resumed with Russia in April,² but after consulting Malmesbury, Pelham insisted that he receive his appointment to the Home Office before setting out for St Petersburg.³ As that would have defeated the purpose of sending him, Addington dropped the subject.

Contemporaries and historians both unfairly ridiculed Addington for employing some of his friends and relations in minor posts in the ministry. This was common practice, as every Prime Minister since Robert Walpole had promoted such connections. Pitt, for example, brought his brother Chatham and first cousin Grenville into the Cabinet along with university friends like Earl Camden. Addington's use of personal patronage was quite mild, however, in comparison with previous ministries. He appointed his brother Hiley as Secretary to the Treasury, which was not out of line considering that as early as January 1800 the King had expressed a desire to see him appointed to higher office and Pitt had promised him a post at the Treasury in

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, v. 17 Mar. 1801; Aspinall, iii. 499n.

²Hawkesbury to Pelham, 17 Apr. 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fo. 31.

³Pelham to Hawkesbury, 18 Apr. 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fo. 43; Malmesbury Diary, iv. 54.

September.¹ Addington also promoted school friend Nathaniel Bond to a Lord of the Treasury, and after Long and Ryder resigned appointed Vansittart as the other Secretary of the Treasury and his own brother-in-law Charles Bragge as Treasurer of the Navy. Neither had previous experience, but Vansittart had an interest in and aptitude for finance. Addington can hardly be accused, therefore, of filling important offices only with his friends, and it is important to note that he never brought any of them into the Cabinet.

The strain of filling vacancies in the government in these circumstances was immediately overshadowed by the difficulty of obtaining the seals of office. Hawkesbury, St Vincent, and Yorke kissed hands on 20 February, but Pitt was to remain in office until Addington had made all the arrangements, which were expected to be completed during the next week.² On 22 February, however, the King began to suffer a renewed attack of porphyria, and his physical and mental health deteriorated to such a state that he was unable to conduct the business of government.³ This caused confusion over whether the old or new ministry was really in power. As far as the business of government was concerned, the problem was resolved by having both the old and new ministers attend Cabinet meetings together.⁴ Pitt continued to control policy, as Addington was perfectly willing to defer to his decisions, but only Addington had personal access to the King.

The King's illness caused several administrative problems as well. Addington had resigned his parliamentary seat to facilitate

¹Pitt to Addington, 29 Sept. 1800, and Addington to Hiley Addington, 2 Jan. 1800, Sidmouth Papers 152M/c1800/OZ1 and OZ47.

²Colchester Diary, i. 224.

³Willis Manuscript Diary, Add. MSS 41692, fos. 4-21.

⁴Cabinet Minutes, Aspinall, iii. 510-11n.

the reelection required on his accepting office, but with the King unable to hand over the seals before the date of the by-election, he had to repeat the whole process after the King recovered.¹ In addition, Hobart had practically taken control of the War Office although he had not received the seals, but owing to the state of uncertainty, had to return the office and the dispatch boxes to Dundas.² Hobart became so exasperated with the delay that he offered to wager Glenbervie £100 if the latter would give him a guinea for every day until Addington became minister.³ The financial business of the government was also stalled as the King was unable to sign any of the money bills.

As the King's condition deteriorated towards the end of February, it became clear that the government would probably have to prepare for a regency as it had in 1788-89. Consequently, the Prince of Wales and the Foxite opposition stirred immediately into action. Convinced that the King would not recover, they set about preparing to distribute the spoils of office among themselves.⁴ The Prince sent for Addington on 22 February to discuss the conduct of affairs, but Addington, unsure about his status, replied that he did not consider himself empowered to make such arrangements. The Prince then sent for Pitt, who cooperated on the condition that he would not repeat what passed between them to Fox and his friends. He then offered a regency bill on terms similar to those of 1789.⁵

¹Pellew, i. 345.

²Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, iv. 15 Feb. 1801; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 24.

³Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, v. 10 Mar. 1801.

⁴Fox to Lauderdale, 4 Mar. 1801, Add. MSS 47564, fo. 87; The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770-1812, ed. Arthur Aspinall (8 vols, London, 1963-71), iv. 183-4.

⁵Colchester Diary, i. 246; Malmesbury Diary, iv. 24; Stanhope, ii. 409-10.

The scene then took another sudden turn, as Addington fell dangerously ill with rheumatic fever during the first week of March, while the King began slowly to recover. Having heard that the King blamed his madness on the distress caused by the Catholic issue, on 6 March Pitt told George III's physician to assure the King that he would never again raise the question.¹ When Pitt's friends heard of this pledge, they believed that he was no longer obliged to step down and tried to restore his ministry. Canning, Rose, Dundas, and others convinced Pitt to stay in office,² but he was very concerned how his actions would look to the public. He wished to appear to be a man of principle and, therefore, did not want to seem to be grasping at office. He believed that the only solution was to make it appear that he had been compelled by both Addington and the King to remain in his position.³ This meant, however, that Addington would have had to agree to suffer public humiliation and the loss of his position as Speaker without adequate compensation. Thus he was supposed to pay the price of Pitt's carelessness and vacillation. Pitt could have avoided all this trouble, however, if he had merely agreed to shelve the Catholic issue at the end of January in the same way he was willing to do at the beginning of March.

Dundas and Canning devised a plan to inform Addington of Pitt's change of sentiments and implore him to sacrifice his position, so that Pitt could retain office. Addington heard of these deliberations and agreed to step aside if asked by the King, but refused to make the first move. Pitt's friends knew that the only way that their scheme could succeed was if Addington did move first, so they arranged for Portland to press

¹Willis Manuscript Diary, Add. MSS 41692, fo. 41.

²Colchester Diary, i. 258-9; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 26-7, 34-6.

³Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 39.

him once again.¹ Pitt heard of these plans by 10 March, however, and told Dundas to stop Portland.² Unlike his followers, Pitt realized how unfair this would have been to Addington, who had only agreed to take office at his insistence. Pitt had only stated a willingness to return to office, if Addington and the King truly desired it, and he must have realized how it would have looked if these underhanded dealings were discovered by the public.

By 14 March, the King was well enough to receive the seals from Pitt and Addington was well enough to accept them. The King's health, however, continued unstable, and he was not well enough to take a full part in Council meetings and he could only deal with limited government business.³ To ease the strain on the King, Addington acted as the sole intermediary between him and the Cabinet, causing Glenbervie to remark that this rendered Addington a first minister the way it was understood formerly under the French system.⁴ This restriction was relaxed later in the life of the ministry,⁵ as both Eldon and Hawkesbury held private meetings with the King, but direct access to the King was not nearly as free for other ministers as it had been under Pitt.

The King's faltering health continued for a few months to cast a shadow over the future of the ministry. Fox and the Prince of Wales continued to prepare for a regency, and Eldon refused to accept the seals until he was sure the King was fully recovered. While no longer driven to fits of madness, the King sometimes made peculiar statements which worried the ministers about his

¹Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 41.

²Dundas to Pelham, 11 March 1801, Add. MSS 33107, fos. 27-8.

³Colchester Diary, i. 267.

⁴Glenbervie Diaries, i. 220.

⁵Polden, p. 42.

sanity. But by 14 April, Eldon felt that it was finally safe to take office, and after May the King's health ceased to be a matter of concern and more people began to believe that the ministry might last. At first, many had believed that it was merely a temporary expedient. This is not to imply that Addington considered himself a locum tenens, for despite Leveson Gower's allegation, everything Addington said on the subject indicated that he believed that Pitt had resigned for good, and his refusal to make things easy for Pitt's return in March belied the notion that he was merely a stop-gap. Nevertheless, many in political circles did not believe that the ministry had either the ability or strength to survive.

The Prospects for the Ministry

Although Pitt bequeathed to Addington a large government majority in Parliament, the new ministry was not properly equipped to maintain it. Glenbervie remarked that 'The new Government seems to me to want the sufficient proportion of three things--brains, blood, and gold, i.e. abilities, family and property.'¹ The new ministers did not lack ability in administration, but Glenbervie was probably referring to debating talent, and this was the ministry's greatest drawback. For no one on the front bench was a truly eloquent and convincing speaker. Every day the House was in session the ministry was on trial, and some MPs measured its fitness for office by its ability to promote and defend its measures in debate. During the first few months of the ministry, Pitt provided valuable assistance in this area, but Addington could not rely on Pitt forever.

The problem was not so much that Addington had appointed poor speakers, but that, as mentioned, the best debaters were not

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 170-71.

available for the job. Addington and Hawkesbury could speak effectively at times, but they were very inconsistent, as were Eldon, Hobart, and Pelham in the Lords. Nevertheless, Addington had not overlooked any talented speakers when forming his ministry. Regardless of whom else he might have chosen the problem would have remained.

On the other hand, it should also be stressed that many MPs were tiring of the elaborate eloquence of Pitt and Fox. Sidney Smith remarked that, 'At the close of every brilliant display an expedition failed or a kingdom fell. God send us a stammerer!'¹ According to Robert Southey, some MPs found Addington's simple and more direct manner more reassuring.²

Glenbervie's comment about blood and gold referred largely to parliamentary patronage. The ministry was short on landed magnates who commanded control of parliamentary seats. While Portland had a considerable pedigree and several members in his pocket, he was the only one in the Cabinet. Hardwicke's patronage was modest, and while Pelham, being a cousin of the Duke of Newcastle, helped to a certain extent he did not control the seats himself. Of the biggest magnates, Fitzwilliam, Bedford, and Devonshire were in the opposition, while Lauderdale, Buckingham, and Rutland were independent.

As to blood, Addington and the rest of the ministry were of little or short pedigree, and this may have made the magnates less disposed to support him. Liverpool explained:

There is no man who holds nobility without Talents, in greater Contempt than I do; But nobility joined to Talents, produces a wonderful Effect upon the Minds of men; and Talents, where there is no Nobility, must be very conspicuous, to compensate for the Want of it;-- This is exactly the State of Mr Addington: a worthy and good man, and with a certain Degree of Talents, but not

¹Ziegler, p. 11.

²Robert Southey, Letters from England, ed. Jack Simmons (London, 1951), pp. 71-4.

sufficient to hold him up, against the Aristocratic Feelings of Mankind ... ¹

Addington would have required extraordinary talents to overcome his lack of pedigree in the eyes of many in the aristocracy.² Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the greatest concentration of talents and magnates was in the Foxite opposition whose parliamentary support was nevertheless small and whose hopes of attaining office appeared non-existent as long as the King lived.

Addington also lacked a strong foundation in the Commons. He had no personal following because he himself had been a follower of Pitt. Moreover, his dependence on Pitt during the early months of 1801 created an ambiguity over the allegiance of the ministry which Addington should have clarified from the start. Most contemporaries and historians were confused over whether Pitt was a minister behind the curtain, pulling all the strings or Addington was really in charge. Fox was justified in supposing that the whole arrangement was merely a juggle or a 'dessous des cartes'. In fact, Addington was in control. For from the start, he was determined to be the effective head of the government with complete direction over government policies, which he intended to pursue even if Pitt differed with them.³ When preparing to discuss the major questions facing the government at the end of February with his colleagues, Addington noted that they had to be ready for tough debates and could not rely on the support of the previous ministers.⁴ Nevertheless, Addington continued to meet almost daily with Pitt. For Pitt was both his political mentor

¹Liverpool to Hawkesbury 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 259.

²Ziegler, p. 110.

³Cooke to Castlereagh, 7 Mar. 1801, Castlereagh Correspondence, iv. 78.

⁴Colchester Diary, i. 248.

and personal friend, and he probably would have felt it more out of place if he had not consulted him. The regularity of their conduct and Addington's tendency to lean on Pitt for support, however, demonstrated to the public a considerable degree of dependence. At the time, Addington did not seem to mind because he had accepted office against his own inclination, and only found it bearable because Pitt had promised to support him. Thus he probably expected that he would never find himself fighting against Pitt in the Commons.

Addington was also deficient in some of the qualities of leadership. His calm, temperate, and conciliatory nature permitted him to get along well with everyone, but he lacked dynamism and assertiveness. For example, while he dealt with Loughborough sternly enough,¹ it took him five months to get Portland to vacate the Home Office for Pelham, and he never adequately resolved the dispute between Pelham and Hardwicke over Irish patronage. Addington was also so concerned to sustain personal friendships with everyone, that he had difficulty making some of the tough decisions required for the survival of his ministry. Malmesbury remarked that Addington in desiring to please everyone would end up by pleasing no one, and Wilberforce added that he was `not qualified for such rough and rude work as

¹Loughborough saw no reason why he should not continue in office but it was clear that the Chancellor had betrayed Pitt's ministry by advising the King on the Catholic issue without the concurrence of his fellow ministers. Addington, who knew that he could not command the personal loyalty of the majority of the Cabinet in the way Pitt had done, could not afford to have any of his ministers pursuing a different course of policy behind his back. Therefore, he shuffled Loughborough out of the Cabinet with an earldom as compensation. When Loughborough continued to attend Cabinet meetings after his resignation, Addington quickly made it clear that he was not welcome. See Colchester Diary, i. 228-9 and Addington to Loughborough, 25 April 1801, Campbell, vi. 327.

he may have to encounter'.¹ Being a successful Prime Minister required ruthlessness and a tough skin which Addington did not possess.

The unusual composition of the ministry meant that it did not work well together, as several of the ministers did not interact well on a personal or administrative level. For example, St Vincent wanted to manage the navy on his own, consulting only with Addington and occasionally with Hobart, but this meant that the other members of the ministry, including its best debaters, Hawkesbury and Eldon, were not well informed about naval affairs. In addition, Pelham was constantly in dispute with his colleagues over the jurisdiction of his office. He tried in vain to retain and increase as many responsibilities as possible, and this put him at odds with Hobart over the colonies and the leadership of the House of Lords and with Hardwicke over Irish patronage. Consequently, Addington had to work hard to avoid resignations at different times by both Hardwicke and Pelham. Therefore, the ministers were not able to defend each other in Parliament as well as they might have been, if they had worked more closely together and possessed a greater sense of loyalty to the ministry and its leader.

These deficiencies should not overshadow the ministry's several important attributes. Primarily, it had the confidence and support of the King which no other party in Parliament could claim. Moreover, the ministers were also both competent and businesslike, certainly no less so than many who had preceded them.² While they would not have been promoted so high so soon if Pitt had continued in power, it is clear that at least Hawkesbury and Eldon were destined for the Cabinet eventually. The most

¹Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 12; R. I. and S. Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, (London, 1838), iii. 2.

²Robin Reilly, William Pitt the Younger, (New York, 1979), p. 392.

important point once again is that at the time there were no better alternatives to these ministers.¹

As many politicians looked back on Pitt's ministry as an ideal example of a strong ministry, in using it as a touchstone by which to measure the new government they were misleading themselves. While it had included several experienced and talented individuals, the ministry as a unit had lapsed into a state of virtual paralysis. For it was so racked by dissent over policy that the administration of government had become seriously affected, and the strain on Pitt's health had rendered him an ineffective leader.² The new ministry, on the other hand, was healthy and, at least at the beginning, united in terms of policy, which was quite surprising considering the different backgrounds of the ministers.

In summary, the prospects for the ministry were not as gloomy as many contemporaries believed. Historians appear to have concluded from hindsight that because the ministry eventually collapsed it was destined to do so. In fact, after it survived the series of initial crises, more people began to think that the arrangement might continue. Lady Holland wrote, 'The first laugh over people begin to think this Administration may last, and if they commence a negotiation they will even become popular.'³ Pitt and Grenville believed from the start that even though Addington was not a great orator, the ministry could survive, if it were well supported.⁴ Even though Addington did not have a strong following of his own, this did not matter as long as Pitt

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 195; Stanhope, ii. 404; Ziegler, p. 102.

²Mackesy, War without Victory, pp. 174-7.

³Lady Holland Journal, ii. 130.

⁴Glenbervie Diaries, i. 160; Grenville to Carysfort, 17 Feb. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vi. 450.

continued to support him. Glenbervie even prophesied that if Addington could

stand up firm for a few weeks while attacked by all the invective, vehemence, sarcasm, virulence, menaces, affected contempt and ridicule which will be used in order to bully or laugh him out of his place, the Opposition or the House will get tired of that sort of warfare, and men of property, rank, and talents will then cling to him.¹

The greatest threats to the ministry were the military, diplomatic, and political dangers left over from Pitt's government, and in the short term, the survival of the ministry depended on the effectiveness of its policies in extricating the country from the problems which arose under its predecessor.

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 174.

Chapter Three

The Pacification of Europe: Foreign Policy February-October 1801

'Le but principal du Cabinet de Londres est de tout tenter pour détacher la Russie de la France ...'

Count Starhemberg¹

Upon hearing of the impending change of ministries in early February, many assumed that Addington would seek peace immediately.² Liverpool even expected that the French would consider the new ministry pledged to it.³ Nevertheless, Addington did not have a 'thirst for peace'.⁴ Although he was alarmed by the diverse consequences of the war, he consistently supported Pitt's policies, and claimed that even though Britain had arrived at a great crisis

... it is only by measures wisely concerted and vigorously executed, and by steadiness and firmness in the government, in parliament, and in the feelings and opinions of the public, that its difficulties can be surmounted.⁵

The reason so many expected him to make peace was that they thought that the critical state of Britain's internal and diplomatic positions gave any new ministry little option: without the experience of the existing ministers, a new government could not continue the war. For example, when the rumour that Pitt might

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 19 Mar. 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

²Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 28; Morley Manuscript Diary, Add. MSS 48247, fo. 5.

³Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 25 Mar. 1801, MS Loan 72/51, fo. 23.

⁴Feiling, p. 225.

⁵Addington to Sir William Scott, 14 Jan. 1801, Pellew, i. 277.

resign reached the City on 2 February, the stocks rose two percent on the expectation that any new ministry would make peace.¹ These prophecies were correct but were based on the false assumption that there was a substantial difference in attitudes or policy options between Pitt and Addington.

Pitt was in fact just as eager as Addington to end the war, but he had failed owing to two major obstacles. First, his Cabinet was so divided that it could not agree on terms.² Grenville's attitude both prior and subsequent to the Treaty of Amiens indicated that he would never have consented to terms which the French could accept.³ Second, the French did not trust Pitt because they perceived him as the arch enemy of the revolution, the mastermind behind the royalist cause. This was to a great extent a result of war propaganda, but even as sharp a man as Louis Otto, the French representative, was convinced that Pitt's ministry could never make peace.⁴ Therefore, in seeking to end the war Addington was following a policy of which Pitt approved but had been unable to implement himself.⁵

The pressure for peace came not from an inherent pacifism on Addington's part but from the desperate nature of the political and economic environment into which the new ministry was thrust. Addington and Hawkesbury had to unravel a dangerous diplomatic tangle, while the government's ability to finance the war was becoming exceedingly hampered. This along with popular dissatisfaction with the war and the revolutionary threat posed by social unrest convinced the administration that Britain required an

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 151; The Times, 7 Feb. 1801.

²Mackesy, War without Victory.

³Grenville to Auckland, n.d. 1801, Add. MSS 34455, fos. 462-3.

⁴'Coup d'oeil politique sur l'Angleterre' in Otto to Talleyrand, 4 Floréal IX (24 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/595; Otto to Talleyrand, 7 Fructidor IX (25 Aug. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

⁵H. M. Bowman, Preliminary Stages of the Peace of Amiens (Toronto, 1901), p. 68.

interval of peace¹ and the only reasonable course was to negotiate with all of its enemies. Unfortunately, obtaining peace was very difficult. For previous attempts to resolve the dispute with the League of Armed Neutrality had failed, and finding terms which were honourable, conformable to British popular opinion, and acceptable to the French was a difficult and delicate task.

The League of Armed Neutrality

When Hawkesbury took the Foreign Office in February 1801 Britain was in a dreadful diplomatic position. As mentioned, the war with France was at its lowest point, but, more important, the dispute with the Northern Powers over the League of Armed Neutrality had become even more pressing. The closure of the Sound, which cut the vital Baltic supplies of grain and naval stores, and the alliance formed to enforce the rights of neutral shipping posed a greater threat to British wealth and naval power than did France. Furthermore, British naval supremacy was threatened by the union of the strongest navies of Europe. Thus the new ministry had to respond quickly to avoid a major military and economic disaster.

Britain's dispute with Denmark and Sweden concerned the rights of belligerent and neutral powers on the seas. As maritime law was not codified, but governed by precedent and convention, each side interpreted the law in its own favour. The neutrals supported two main principles to which the British could never consent: that neutral flags protected all goods but contraband of war--referred to as 'free ships make free goods'--and that convoys of ships of war protected merchant ships from search and seizure. As British power was based on maritime and commercial dominance, the government could not accept any principles of maritime law that would undercut its economic weapons. For example, blockades of the enemy's coast would be ineffective, if neutral powers could carry on the enemy's trade

¹Ziegler, p. 77.

uninterrupted. On the other side, the neutral countries were affronted by the high-handed manner in which the British carried out search and seizure, and appalled by the obvious pro-British bias in the Admiralty Courts, particularly those in the Caribbean. Thus, the dispute was a matter of national prestige as well as maritime power.

In response to the professed determination of the League of Armed Neutrality to resist by force of arms search and seizure, Pitt had decided to send a fleet to Copenhagen to secure passage of The Sound and to coerce the Danes into renouncing the treaty. Consequently, a large force under Sir Hyde Parker with Admiral Lord Nelson as second in command assembled at Yarmouth in February 1801 under orders to proceed to the Baltic as soon as it was free of ice, as the fleet had to arrive before the Swedes and Russians could send their navies to support the Danes. As the British approach to the League of Armed Neutrality was to deal with one member at a time, once the Danes had surrendered, the fleet was to sail to Revel and Kronstadt to attack the Russians.

Addington and Hawkesbury had no alternative policy and were convinced by Pitt and Grenville that this aggressive action was absolutely necessary.¹ Nevertheless, a few days before Grenville resigned the seals, the Foreign Office received an anonymous letter, believed to have been sent by Prince Charles of Hesse, father-in-law to the Prince Royal of Denmark, that indicated that the Danes wished to settle the dispute.² These sentiments were supported by dispatches from William Drummond, the British minister in Copenhagen.³ Grenville was skeptical of the truth of the assertions in the letter, but Addington and Hawkesbury wished to take advantage of this opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully.⁴ For if

¹Addington to Sir William Scott, 14 Jan. 1801, Pellew i. 277.

²Hawkesbury to Carysfort, 10 Mar. 1801, FO 64/60.

³Drummond to Grenville, 9 and 20 Jan. 1801, FO 22/40.

⁴Hawkesbury to the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty, 23 Feb. 1801, inclosed in Hawkesbury to Drummond, 25 Feb. 1801, FO

negotiations were successful, war would have been averted; if not, having demonstrated a desire to resolve the dispute peacefully would have rendered the British position more justified in opinion both at home and abroad. Moreover, as the fleet could not reach Copenhagen until at least the end of March, nothing could have been lost in the attempt.

Addington and Pitt chose Vansittart as special envoy.¹ At the Foreign Office on 17 February, Addington, Hawkesbury, and Grenville briefed Vansittart on his mission. They instructed him to meet Prince Charles of Hesse in Schleswig to determine whether satisfactory negotiations with the Danes were possible. If his interview with Prince Charles indicated that the mission had a reasonable chance of success, he was then to proceed to Copenhagen to join Drummond in negotiating directly with the Danish government. The goals of the mission were first to persuade the Danes to abandon their position of hostility to Britain (and even to form an alliance if possible), and second, to regulate permanently the question of neutral law. On the two main issues of the maritime dispute, Vansittart was given permission to negotiate on the convoy question, but in no circumstances was he to agree that free ships made free goods. In addition, if at any time during his discussions with Prince Charles or the Danish government it appeared that the mission would fail, he was to return immediately to London.²

While Addington and Hawkesbury wished to appear conciliatory, they wanted to convince the Danes that they were not acting out of weakness. Britain could accept nothing less than the termination of the League of Armed Neutrality. In order to present a position of

211/6.

¹Hawkesbury to Grenville, 15 Feb. 1801, Add. MSS 58936, fos. 7-8. Hawkesbury had asked Lord Hervey, one of his under secretaries, who refused owing to the chance that his wife might miscarry, and had also considered William Wallace and Charles Arbuthnot, but appears to have been overruled by Addington and Pitt.

²Grenville to Vansittart, 17 Feb. 1801, FO 22/40.

firmness prior to the negotiations, Hawkesbury sent a stern note on 25 February to the Danish government via Drummond, warning that, if it did not accommodate the British, they would take strong action in response to their grievances.¹ That same day he sent an order to the Admiralty 'to capture or destroy the Navy & weaken as much as possible the Maritime Resources of Denmark in the Port of Copenhagen, or wherever they may be found and can be attacked'.²

Vansittart left for Cuxhaven on 21 February and arrived at Gottorp Castle, the residence of Prince Charles, on 4 March, but his reception was not encouraging. For Prince Charles had very little influence on Danish policy, and it was clear that European opinion did not believe the British would attack. Nevertheless, Vansittart proceeded to Copenhagen (contrary to his instructions), because he believed that the difficulties could be overcome: 'I ... consider the moment of the arrival of a British fleet in the Sound, as extremely critical; & that it may probably be turned to the greatest advantage, even if no previous appearance of accommodation should exist.'³ Thus he hoped that gunboat diplomacy would grant success to his mission.

Vansittart arrived in Copenhagen on 9 March and concerted with Drummond for several days before meeting with Christian Bernstorff, the Danish foreign minister for two hours on 14 March. Bernstorff, however, was exceedingly difficult. He first demanded that the British remove the embargo and release all Danish ships before he would even accept Vansittart's credentials. When the two British agents offered to agree to these demands on the condition that Bernstorff would guarantee to accept Vansittart's credentials and begin negotiating, he refused, claiming that he could not enter into an arrangement without the agreement of Sweden and Prussia. He

¹Hawkesbury to Drummond, 25 Feb. 1801 and inclosure, FO 22/40.

²Hawkesbury to the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty, 23 Feb. 1801, inclosed in Hawkesbury to Drummond, 25 Feb. 1801, FO 211/6.

³Vansittart to Grenville, 26 Feb. 1801, FO 22/41.

nevertheless reiterated his demand that the Danish ships be released unconditionally.¹

Bernstorff was merely stalling for time because he had decided before Vansittart had arrived not to consent to separate negotiations.² It is unfair, however, to accuse him simply of trying to cheat the British. For Denmark was also in a very dangerous diplomatic position. As one of the lesser powers of Europe, it was subject to the influence of the great powers, especially Russia, the predominant Baltic power which also exercised influence over Sweden and Prussia. Thus the Danish government could not afford to alienate the Russian government on the issue of the League of Armed Neutrality, especially with the apparently volatile Paul I on the throne. In addition, as a signatory of the convention with Sweden and Prussia, Denmark would not only have lost face if it abandoned the League, but would also have created considerable animosity among two of its closest neighbours. The Danes particularly did not want to give the Swedes an excuse to invade the Danish province of Norway which they coveted. The consequences of the Danes willingly abandoning their allies on Britain's terms, therefore, would have been much greater than the price to be paid by war.³

Hawkesbury sent Drummond an ultimatum with his note of 25 February stating that, if the Danes did not come to agreement within forty-eight hours of receipt of the dispatch, the entire British mission in Copenhagen was to depart for London.⁴ As the Danes could not comply, Vansittart left on 21 March, but Drummond chose to remain, claiming that the British should have a representative on the spot in case the Danes changed their minds before hostilities

¹Drummond to Hawkesbury, 14 Mar. 1801, and Drummond and Vansittart to Hawkesbury, 19 Mar. 1801, FO 22/40.

²Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, p. 135.

³Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, pp. 102-65.

⁴Hawkesbury to Drummond, 25 Feb. 1801, FO 22/40.

began.¹ The fleet which had left Yarmouth on 12 March arrived off Copenhagen eight days later. After some preliminary scouting, the British attacked Danish shipping and artillery in Copenhagen harbour on 2 April thus commencing the first Battle of Copenhagen.²

From this point, Hawkesbury and Addington lost all control of events and the outcome of the dispute was left to the navy. After a successful naval engagement Nelson and Parker obtained an agreement with the Danes on 9 April which deviated considerably from the one that Vansittart had been instructed to obtain. It did not comply with the terms set out by Hawkesbury, as it was merely an armistice of fourteen weeks which provided for direct negotiations between Copenhagen and London on the condition that the British fleet be allowed to obtain provisions in Copenhagen and free passage of the Sound, and that the Treaty of Armed Neutrality be suspended during the negotiations. Addington, Hawkesbury, and St Vincent were not completely satisfied with the terms as they had expected a Danish capitulation not a ceasefire, but chose to accept them despite an unfavourable public reception.³

At this point the focus of British foreign policy shifted towards Russia where it was often to return during the course of the ministry. British historians of the period have often treated Anglo-French diplomacy in isolation, under the assumption that because Britain and France were the only combatants left in the war, France had become Britain's absolute diplomatic priority.⁴ This has

¹Drummond and Vansittart to Hawkesbury, 19 Mar. 1801, FO 22/40.

²A naval account of the battle can be found in Roger C. Anderson, Naval Wars in the Baltic during the Sailing Ship Epoch, 1522-1850 (London, 1910), pp. 302-12, and Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, pp. 144-65.

³Thomas Grenville to Spencer, 22 Apr. 1801, Althorp Papers G42; Starhemberg to Colloredo, 28 Apr. 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

⁴The most recent example of this is John C. Clarke, British Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, 1782-1865 (London, 1989)

distorted the picture, however, because it ignores the particular care and attention Hawkesbury gave to cultivating Russian friendship. Although Addington and Hawkesbury had to deal with Denmark first for tactical and strategic reasons, they knew that Russia was the power behind the League of Armed Neutrality and the real threat. Only Russia had the power to close the Baltic to British trade, and the size of Russia's navy and army enabled it, if allied with the navies of the north, to challenge British power on the seas or, if allied with the French army, to expel British influence from the Continent. Consequently, in early 1801 Russia posed a greater threat to British interests, than did France. Therefore, a rapprochement with Russia to strengthen Britain's political and military position was both a necessary prerequisite to peace with the French,¹ and an end in itself.

While the new Cabinet was deliberating over whether to propose peace to the French, it also decided to make an overture to the Russians. As there had been no British representative in Russia since the expulsion of Lord Whitworth in June 1800, Hawkesbury sent the offer on 24 March via the British minister in Berlin, Carysfort, who was in contact with Russian representatives in Prussia. Hawkesbury sent Carysfort full powers and instructed him:

to endeavour, in the first instance to negotiate a Treaty on Maritime Law, similar to that which Mr. Vansittart is instructed to negotiate with the government of Copenhagen, but if you should find the Russian Government unwilling to enter into Engagements of this nature, His Majesty will be satisfied with a formal Renunciation of the Convention signed at [St] Petersburg on the 16th: of December, and will, on this Condition, and on that of the

who appears to have overlooked Ole Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality and 'The Anglo-Russian Rapprochement of 1801: A Prelude to the Peace of Amiens' Scandinavian Journal of History iii (1978), 205-27. In both works, Feldbaek demonstrates clearly the primacy of Russia and the Armed Neutrality in the foreign policy of the first few months of Addington's ministry.

¹Feldbaek, 'The Anglo-Russian Rapprochement', p. 208.

Embargo being immediately taken off, consent to the Terms which have been proposed respecting Malta.¹

This intended overture to the Russians has often been overlooked, probably because it was superseded by new developments while still in transit. For on the day that Hawkesbury wrote the dispatch, Paul I was murdered in St Petersburg. The new Tsar, Alexander I, was more favourably disposed to Britain, because he did not have the personal stake in the questions of Malta and the League of Armed Neutrality which his father had, and he was determined to turn away from foreign entanglements to concentrate on retrenchment and reform in Russia.² This did not mean that he wished to reverse Russia's foreign policy and align himself with Britain but rather to make peace with all powers and withdraw from Europe. To this end he sent indications through Count A. P. Pahlen, his chief minister, and Count Simon Vorontsov, former ambassador to London, that he desired to reestablish diplomatic relations and resolve Russia's outstanding disputes with Britain.³

This news, received on 13 April, stirred the British government into a frenzy of activity. That evening, Addington interrupted Pitt at dinner at Dundas's in Wimbledon to tell him, and the next day, Addington arrived at Pitt's home in Park Place to consult further on the change in Britain's diplomatic situation. Addington and Hawkesbury continued to discuss Russian diplomacy with Pitt

¹Hawkesbury to Carysfort, 24 Mar. 1801, FO 63/60. Hawkesbury was probably referring to the Anglo-Russian agreement of May 1799 which stipulated that the island would be garrisoned jointly by British, Russian, and Neapolitan troops until the peace when it would be restored to the Knights of Malta. On 3 April Hawkesbury changed his mind for a reason he never explained and instructed Carysfort in a private letter to withhold temporarily the offer concerning Malta. Hawkesbury to Carysfort, 3 Apr. 1801, Jackson Papers, FO 353/44.

²Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825 (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 1969), pp. 66-103.

³Pahlen to Hawkesbury, ? Mar. 1801, FO 65/48; Hawkesbury to Pahlen, 19 Apr. 1801, FO 65/48.

throughout the spring and summer. Although it is not clear precisely what advice Pitt gave during this period, it is reasonable to assume that it coincided with the policy followed by the government. Hawkesbury also consulted Grenville but ignored much of his advice, as Pitt suggested throwing many of his cousin's written recommendations into the fireplace.¹

Hawkesbury and Addington then took pains selecting an ambassador to St Petersburg to congratulate the new Tsar on his accession and to begin negotiations to resolve the dispute over the League of Armed Neutrality. On 21 April, at the direction of Vorontsov Hawkesbury ordered Benjamin Garlike, Carysfort's chargé d'affaires at Berlin and a personal acquaintance of Count N. P. Panin, the Russian foreign minister, to proceed immediately as a temporary representative to St Petersburg.² For ambassador, Addington and Hawkesbury chose Lord St Helens, who was the most experienced diplomat after Malmesbury and Whitworth,³ having been envoy extraordinary to the Court of Catherine the Great, and a personal friend of George III. The ministers evidently believed that he carried both sufficient weight to flatter the new Tsar and the diplomatic expertise to negotiate a treaty favourable to British interests.

Britain's diplomatic position having improved considerably since the Battle of Copenhagen and, more important, the death of Paul,⁴ Hawkesbury and Addington felt that they did not have to make as many concessions to gain an agreement from the Russians. Nevertheless, they could not by any means bully the new Tsar as Grenville seemed to suggest. He strongly opposed any concessions

¹Glenbervie Diaries, 220-1, 295; Starhemberg to Colloredo, 28 Apr. 1801, HNSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

²Hawkesbury to Garlike, 21 Apr. 1801, FO 63/61.

³These two could not have been considered for the post because Malmesbury was in poor health and Whitworth had recently been expelled from Russia.

⁴Ragsdale, pp. 101-2; Ingram, 'The Failure of British Sea Power', p. 69.

being made to Russia on behalf of Denmark, thought British interests were 'very much concerned in leaving at Copenhagen a strong impression of the certain loss which Denmark incurs when she embarks in any such confederacy as the present', and believed that the Russians had no intention of supporting the Danes, if the British kept the issue off the table.¹ Addington and Hawkesbury wisely ignored this advice. For when the Tsar first heard of Carysfort's overture, while being prepared to postpone the question of Malta in order to concentrate on the issue of the League of Armed Neutrality, he was determined to fight the British if they demanded unreasonable terms.² As he wished to sustain Russian prestige with the Baltic powers by appearing to arrange the resolution of their dispute with Britain,³ he required as many concessions as he could obtain for his allies before abandoning the League of Armed Neutrality. Thus for the British, there was much to lose by adopting Grenville's position.

Addington and Hawkesbury were prepared to compromise, provided that their primary goals were achieved. As a peace settlement was the first priority, Hawkesbury instructed St Helens

to propose an arrangement which shall place every thing between the two Countries on the same footing on which it was, previous to the Departure of Lord Whitworth from Petersburgh; or at any other Period subsequent to the expiration of The Armed Neutrality of 1780, and antecedent to the signature of the Convention of Armed Neutrality of December last, which may be preferable in the Estimation of the Russian Government.⁴

The next priority was to resolve the question of maritime law in a way that would permit British ships to continue to use effectively

¹Grenville to Addington, 8 May 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OZ8.

²Alexander I to Krudener, and Alexander I to Pahlen, 20 Apr. 1801, VPR, i. 13, 16-7.

³Alexander I to S. Vorontsov, 6 April and 2 May 1801, AKV, x. 252, 255, 257; Nelson to Addington, 27 May 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/ON6.

⁴Instructions to St Helens, 30 Apr. 1801, FO 65/48.

their most potent weapons, including the blockade and search and seizure of enemy property on neutral ships. This required that the Russians abandon the Treaty of Armed Neutrality, but as a concession, Hawkesbury was willing to grant that the right to search a merchant vessel under convoy of a ship of war be restricted to ships of war of a belligerent state excluding privateers, and that the British follow a set of regulations in the process of searching to prevent it becoming a source of disagreement in the future. He also agreed to return ships and colonies captured from Denmark and Sweden. As to Malta, Hawkesbury hoped that any discussion could be postponed, but if the Russians refused, he instructed St Helens to offer to restore the property and privileges of the Knights of Malta, as long as British troops continued to occupy the island, because the Knights could not protect it from the French.¹

St Helens arrived in St Petersburg via Denmark on 18 May, and the Russians immediately demonstrated a willingness to establish cordial relations by granting him the first audience with the new Tsar given to any foreign minister.² On 2 June, St Helens met for the first time with Count Panin, the Russian negotiator, who agreed to acknowledge the rights of searching neutral vessels sailing under convoy and seizing contraband of war. Nevertheless, a few days later, he presented a counter proposal which qualified the right of search to such point that it would have lost all its value. His project also proposed that the Anglo-Russian convention include an transcript of the Treaty of Armed Neutrality with only slight modifications. He then demanded that the British fleet leave the Baltic before the Convention were ratified.³

¹Idem.

²St Helens to Hawkesbury, 31 May 1801, FO 65/48.

³St Helens to Hawkesbury, 5, 9, and 18 June 1801, FO 65/48.

Fortunately Panin did not prove intransigent, and after two weeks of bartering, signed an agreement with St Helens on 17 June.¹ The treaty granted the British as favourable terms as they could have hoped to achieve. For the convention recognized the rights of search and seizure, subject to restrictions the British had been willing to make all along. St Helens also obtained a relatively loose definition of blockade, while the Tsar had even consented to ignore temporarily the question of Malta so not as to impede the agreement.² On the other side, the Russians' main concern was to end hostilities with their most important trading partner, and they were pleased to obtain enough concessions from the British to be able to save face with their Baltic allies.³ Agreement was reached so quickly because both dreaded war. Moreover, the Russians were concerned mostly about how the convention appeared to the rest of Europe, while the British cared more about how it would work in practice, and each was willing to sacrifice one for the other.

On the whole, the British government was very pleased with the treaty that St Helens had concluded. When Hawkesbury perused it on 14 July with Sir William Scott, judge of the Admiralty Court, however, three points arose which worried them. First, although St Helens's explanation of the article on coastal trade was satisfactory, the wording was rather ambiguous. Therefore, Hawkesbury hoped that the Russians would agree to add an explanatory article that declared that 'the trade of one port of an Enemy to another was not to be considered as free'. Second, there was no reference to colonial trade in the treaty. Although this was of little concern to Russia, it was essential that France's colonial trade should not be open to Denmark and Sweden. Thus, as any arrangement between Britain and them was likely to be influenced by the contents of the Russian treaty, it was necessary to include some

¹A copy of the terms of the treaty is in Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 18-25.

²St Helens to Hawkesbury, 18 June 1801, FO 65/48.

³Czartoryski Memoirs, i. 272.

reference to colonial trade. Third, Hawkesbury and Scott were worried that, as the enumeration of contraband of war did not include naval stores, it might be interpreted that the British were acknowledging this as a principle of international law. Therefore, Hawkesbury suggested that a simple declaratory article should state the contrary. After discussing these alternations with Vorontsov, Hawkesbury concluded that the Russians would have no objections, but he directed St Helens to state that the British government would not delay the ratifications on account of these proposed alterations.¹

Hawkesbury was very disappointed to learn on 6 September that St Helens did not believe that the Russians would consent.² Fortunately for the British, however, the Russians were only holding back for purposes of public opinion. They felt that their relations with Denmark and Sweden would be hurt, if they made any further concessions in the treaty itself, but when the ratifications of the treaty were exchanged in St Petersburg on 15 August, the Russians told St Helens that they would accept the British interpretation of the articles concerning coastal trade and contraband.³ They refused, however, to make this acknowledgement public for two months, but on 23 October, St Helens signed a new convention which corresponded to the British interpretation of the original articles.

With the Anglo-Russian convention of 17 June the League of Armed Neutrality was effectively terminated, but in order to avoid future disputes it was still important that the other signatories of the Treaty of Armed Neutrality recognize the British interpretation of maritime law. Although, the Danes and the Swedes were determined to obtain some concessions before they acceded to the Anglo-Russian convention, the British were in a strong position. For example, Bernstorff tried to take advantage of Nelson's armistice to reach a compromise with the British government. On 23 May, he left Copenhagen to negotiate directly with Hawkesbury in

¹Hawkesbury to St Helens, 14 and 18 July 1801, FO 65/48.

²St Helens to Hawkesbury, 7 Aug. 1801, FO 65/48.

³St Helens to Hawkesbury, 19 Aug. 1801, FO 65/48.

London, hoping to obtain an agreement without renouncing the Armed Neutrality. At their meetings that commenced on 15 June, Hawkesbury grew impatient with Bernstorff's unreasonable demand of an immediate return of the Danish colonies. He was content to ask that the Danes accept the British interpretation of maritime law, or to wait until the outcome of the Russian negotiation, which he was confident would conform to British interests. Thus Bernstorff was unable to make Hawkesbury budge on any issue. The British Foreign Secretary held all the high cards--Danish ships and colonies in British possession and the large British fleet still in the Baltic--and was in no hurry to play them. When the news of the Anglo-Russian convention arrived on 11 July, Bernstorff's mission was effectively over. Hawkesbury was content to leave to the Russians the job of pressing the Danes to accede to the convention. The Danes held out for a few months, but under increasing Russian pressure eventually acceded to the convention on 23 October.¹

The Anglo-Russian reconciliation was a laudable achievement, made more remarkable by the customary difficulties in communicating with St Petersburg. Dispatches could take from four to six weeks to arrive depending on the weather. This meant that from the time of sending the dispatch, the answer could take two or three months. Consequently, British ministers were not able to monitor the success or failure of their Russian policies and adopt new ones, as they were with courts closer to London. Despite this success, however, Hawkesbury was unable completely to reverse Russian policy. The reason that Addington and Hawkesbury wanted to was because they realized that Britain could not curtail French expansion without the help of European allies, and as it had proved impossible to get all of the European powers to join forces against France, it was necessary to concentrate diplomatic efforts on one of the major powers and build a coalition around it. Russia was the strongest power, but it required the permission of Austria or Prussia to put its troops into central Europe. Austria was closer to the centre of

¹Feldbaek, Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, pp. 189-201.

the conflict, but wished to avoid committing all of its military resources in the war against France because it had to monitor Russian and Prussian activities in eastern Europe and by 1801 it had become financially and militarily exhausted.¹

Hawkesbury and Addington chose to pursue a close Russian alliance, after the death of Paul I gave them the opportunity, because Russia was 'the only Power on the Continent capable of balancing the Influence of France'.² For on one hand Russia possessed enormous military potential, owing to a large population, and on the other it exercised considerable influence in Austria, Prussia, Turkey and the Scandinavian countries. Moreover, as these lesser powers could not become close allies of Britain if Russia were hostile, any coalition had to be built upon the foundation of Russian support.³

Hawkesbury had hoped that once the grievances which stood between good Anglo-Russian relations had been removed, Russia could be led back into the struggle against France. Holland Rose, citing instructions to Simon Vorontsov in November 1803, claimed that the Russians precipitated the first moves towards the Third Coalition, but H. Beeley, following Otto Brandt, countered that Hawkesbury concentrated on constructing an anti-French alliance immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Amiens and sent a proposal to Russia in September 1802.⁴ Brandt and Beeley were correct so far as

¹Karl Roeder, Baron Thugut and Austria's Response to the French Revolution (Princeton, 1987), pp. 107ff; Paul W. Schroeder, 'The Collapse of the Second Coalition' Journal of Modern History, lix (1987), 248-50; Michael Duffy, 'British War Policy: The Austrian Alliance, 1793-1801' (D.Phil. Oxford, 1971), pp. 13, 30-5, 187-8.

²Hawkesbury to St Helens, 11 Dec. 1801, Fitzherbert Papers, 239M/O630.

³Liverpool to Glenbervie, 25 Feb. 1802, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 121; Hawkesbury to Warren, 11 Sept. 1802, FO 65/51.

⁴John Holland Rose, Napoleonic Studies (London, 1906), appendix iv.; Otto Brandt, England und die Napoleonische Weltpolitik, 1800-1803 (Heidelberg, 1916), pp. 204ff; H. Beeley, 'A Project of Alliance with Russia in 1802', English

they went but overlooked evidence that Addington and Hawkesbury were thinking along these lines much earlier. Although, Hawkesbury did not consider a third coalition to be feasible in 1801, he hoped that the Russians would be willing to join the British in a defensive role.¹ Consequently, having received intelligence of a rupture in Franco-Russian relations, Hawkesbury and Addington decided to pursue the closest relations with the new Tsar. On 19 May, Hawkesbury instructed St Helens to inquire whether the Russians would guarantee jointly the province of Egypt to Turkey, stipulating the proportion of force each country would send, if Egypt were attacked by France in the future. To gain the consent of the Russians, Hawkesbury warned that it was important to 'impress on their minds, that His Majesty is actuated by no views of ambition and aggrandizement, but solely by a desire of restoring Peace to Europe on Terms which may insure its duration'.² Addington also expressed a desire for a strong alliance to Vorontsov.³ These and other examples of the courtesy and deference displayed by the ministry towards the Russians might be dismissed by critics as customary diplomatic practice or mere platitudes that meant nothing, but a comparison of the communications with other foreign diplomats demonstrates a considerable difference in tone that suggests strongly that the British genuinely wished to win Russian favour.

The successful negotiation of the Anglo-Russian Convention in June, raised the hopes of Addington and Hawkesbury that they could persuade the Russians to join them in imposing a peace settlement on France and the rest of Europe. Count Starhemberg, the Austrian minister in London, speculated that

le projet est certainement de s'entendre avec la Russie,
à fin de forcer les autres Puissances continentales sous

Historical Review, xlix (1934), 499.

¹Hawkesbury to Carysfort, 8 May 1801, FO 64/61.

²Hawkesbury to St Helens, 19 May 1801, FO 65/48.

³Addington to S. Vorontsov, 13 July 1801, Sidmouth Papers 152M/c1801/OF26.

le prétexte d'un concert à adopter en commun à proposer à la France, les armes à la main, les conditions de paix, dont le Cabinet Anglais voudrait être le principal arbitre.¹

Unfortunately for the British, the Russians refused. For while recognizing that Britain was one of their 'alliés naturels', owing to the benefits of their close commercial relations and common interests in Europe, the Russians wished to avoid new military commitments that might provoke a violent reaction from France.² Alexander I had not made peace with Britain to renew the war with France.³ In his own words:

Je m'étudierai surtout à suivre un système national, c[est] à d[ire] un système fondé sur les avantages de l'Etat, et non, comme cela est souvent arrivé, sur des prédilections pour telle ou telle autre puissance. Je serais, si je le jugerais utile pour la Russie, bien avec la France, tout comme ce même intérêt me porte maintenant à cultiver l'amitié de la Grande Bretagne.⁴

At that time, the Tsar's priorities were to promote agriculture and industry while reforming the administration of government, all of which required 'que le premier principe du système politique doit être le maintien de la paix.'⁵

France and the Preliminaries of London

Hawkesbury's initial overture to Otto came as no surprise. The new ministry did not discuss the peace proposal, however, until

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 24 July, 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

²'Du système politique de l'empire de Russie' 28 July 1801, VPR, i. 65-6; Instruction to Morkov, 9 July 1801, SIRIO, lxx. 214.

³Grimsted, pp. 66-103.

⁴Alexander to S. Vorontsov, 12 Nov. 1801, AKV, x. 300 and VPR, i. 60.

⁵'Du système politique', VPR, i. 63.

after all the administrative changes had been formally completed on 14 March. This was probably owing to the desire of the ministers to avoid discussing the topic in the presence of members of the previous government, particularly Grenville, whom they expected to be hostile to the measure.¹ The government was also preoccupied with Vansittart's mission and preparing the fleet to sail to the Baltic, and there might simply have not been enough time to discuss the war with France before the King became too ill to conduct business until the middle of March. For an important decision such as opening a negotiation for peace could not be made without the concurrence of the King. Nevertheless, Hawkesbury had already begun to lay the foundations of a general European peace in late February by advising Portugal and Naples to make peace with France on any terms they could, even if it involved accepting stipulations detrimental to British interests.²

The Cabinet made a final decision on 19 March, and Addington communicated the result to the King who, although previously the strongest opponent of treating with Revolutionary France, reluctantly granted his consent.³ The next day, Hawkesbury invited Otto to his home in Sackville Street on 21 March, when he offered to begin negotiations at Paris, or elsewhere, to conclude a treaty of peace.⁴ Otto relayed the offer to Bonaparte, who requested passports for an extraordinary courier to speed up the negotiations. Hawkesbury provided the passports immediately, having ordered Foreign Office spies to keep Otto under surveillance as of 24 March.⁵

¹Colchester Diary, i. 248.

²Hawkesbury to Frere, 27 Feb. 1801, FO 63/36; Hawkesbury to Paget, 28 Feb. 1801, FO 70/15.

³Addington to the King with a Cabinet Minute, Aspinall, iii. 512.

⁴Hawkesbury to Otto, 21 Mar. 1801, FO 27/66.

⁵FO 27/57. This volume contains a report of Otto's activities from 24 March to 2 Oct. 1801.

The two met again on 2 April, when Otto declared that Bonaparte was eager for peace and wished the negotiations to continue in London, to which Hawkesbury agreed. Hawkesbury then suggested that the negotiations should be frank, but that they should make written records only by mutual consent. For he wished to keep secret the deliberations of the negotiations as he was concerned that some of the peace proposals would leak out resulting in popular outbursts which might prejudice his bargaining position, and rumours of progress during the course of previous negotiations had caused considerable fluctuation in the funds. Considering the economic and financial circumstances of the time, Addington wished to preserve stability in the money markets.¹

Bonaparte had told Otto to suggest a maritime armistice as a preliminary to the peace, but Hawkesbury refused because it would have allowed the French to reinforce their army in Egypt and deprive the British of their strongest weapons, while the French would have continued unimpeded on the Continent.² As to the terms of the peace, Otto said that the main point would be Egypt 'and the question for discussion will be, whether France should relinquish Egypt, Great Britain relinquishing the whole, or some part of her Conquests; or whether France should retain Egypt, Great Britain preserving her Conquests'.³ Hawkesbury stated that the British could never allow France to keep Egypt because it would pose a threat to British India. Otto argued that this was foolish because it was evident that command of the sea was sufficient to protect India. As an example, Otto claimed that 'le commerce ancien et très solide des Venitiens par alexandrie [sic] avait été renversé complètement par la supériorité maritime des Portugais'. Hawkesbury replied that he could not discuss the matter any longer without the authorization

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 30 Ventôse IX (21 Mar. 1801), AE, Angleterre/594; The Times, 23 June, 2 July, and 2 Oct. 1801.

²Otto to Hawkesbury 2 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 13 Germinal IX (3 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

³Note of discussion 2 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66.

of his Cabinet, but asserted privately that, if the French wanted to keep Egypt, they would have to consent to Britain keeping all her conquests. He added that he would be willing to trade a French evacuation of Egypt for the return of some of the colonies that Britain had captured from France, Spain, and Holland.¹

This was Hawkesbury's first serious error, for although he was evidently using it as a bargaining ploy to get Otto to accept the second proposal, the first gave the French hope that the British would permit them to remain in Egypt. Consequently, it took longer for the French to give up the idea than if Hawkesbury had remained firm all along. Secondly, the first proposal was disadvantageous to the British, who did not want to keep all of the conquests anyway, because these colonies certainly could never compensate for a French presence in Egypt.

The British government would not have permitted France to retain Egypt, so Hawkesbury, even unofficially, should never have said that it would. Dundas had argued convincingly that a French presence was a threat to British strategic and commercial interests in the East. Consequently, the previous government had sent the Egyptian expedition at great cost to dislodge or at least to neutralize the French presence, so that the French Army would be removed as part of a comprehensive peace settlement.² However, the British did not intend to keep Egypt. As Hawkesbury explained to the Russians and the Turks, the British had always intended to restore Egypt to the Porte once a general peace was made.³ For any advantage to be gained by keeping Egypt, could not outweigh the costs of Russian and Turkish animosity.

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 14 Germinal IX (4 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

²Glenbervie, Diaries, i. 60; Charles John Fedorak, 'British Amphibious Operations during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815', Military Affairs, lii (1988), 144-5.

³Hawkesbury to St Helens, 5 May 1801, FO 65/48; Hawkesbury to Elgin, 19 May 1801, FO 78/31.

Hawkesbury and Addington were determined to restore Egypt through either war or diplomacy. As long as the French under General Menou held out against the British troops, Hawkesbury was content to offer many of Britain's overseas conquests. He hoped to keep most of the more commercially and strategically important posts, such as Ceylon, Trinidad, Tobago, Martinique, and Malta, but was prepared to return many of the rest. For the British had never planned to keep all the conquests: Dundas had always intended to use them as bargaining counters during the negotiations for a general peace,¹ and many were expensive and troublesome to maintain.

At their next meeting on 12 April, Otto responded to Hawkesbury's proposals with two very different alternatives. The first was that the French should keep Egypt and the British should keep their principal conquests in India, while Malta was to be restored to the Knights of St John and the Cape of Good Hope to the Dutch as a free port. In addition, Britain would relinquish the rest of her conquests in the West Indies and return Minorca and Trinidad to Spain, who would return to Portugal any conquests.² The second alternative was that France would evacuate Egypt if Britain returned all her conquests.³

These proposals constituted the starting point of the negotiations of the Preliminaries of London. Otto put forward an extreme case so as to leave room for concessions, but his correspondence with the French foreign minister, Prince Maurice de Talleyrand demonstrates that he was convinced both of the justice of the French offer and that accepting the terms Hawkesbury suggested unofficially would have been a betrayal of France. Thus the view that Bonaparte was merely trying to bully the British, fails to take the French position into account. Consequently, any

¹Michael Duffy, Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expedition to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France (Oxford, 1987), pp. 359-ff.

²Ingram, Commitment to Empire, pp. 153-191.

³Memorandum, 12 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66.

assessment of Hawkesbury's skill as a negotiator or the terms to which he agreed must consider how far the French were persuaded to move from their original position.

The course of the negotiations was immediately interrupted on 13 April by Pahlen's letter to Hawkesbury announcing the death of Paul I. Hawkesbury postponed further meetings with Otto, to give the government a chance to reconsider its diplomatic priorities because the friendly disposition of the new Tsar removed some of the pressure to make peace.¹

Nevertheless, the internal pressures remained, and according to Otto, the government seemed obsessed by Jacobinism.² Food riots continued in the West Country with dockyard workers involved in Plymouth and the Somerset militia abetting disturbances in Weymouth.³ In response on 1 April, Addington had moved in the Commons for a secret committee to examine evidence of disaffection in Ireland and England. By 13 April, the committee had concluded that there was a strong connection between Jacobinism and distress and that revolutionaries had been encouraged by the possibility of a French invasion and the expiry of the Suspension of Habeas Corpus. Therefore, it recommended that the government once again suspend Habeas Corpus and to renew the Act against Seditious Meetings.⁴

Consequently, the Cabinet decided to make a counter offer to Otto, which Hawkesbury presented on 14 April. He explained that the Cabinet had rejected the French offers because in the instance of France evacuating Egypt, Britain kept nothing to compensate for French territorial acquisitions. He then proposed that if France

¹Hawkesbury to Otto, 13 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 22-25 Germinal (12-15 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 3 Germinal IX (30 Mar. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

³St Aubyn and Williams to Portland, 31 Mar. 1801, HO 42/61; Portland to St Aubyn and Williams, 4 Apr. 1801, and Portland to Poulett, 15 Apr. 1801, HO 43/12.

⁴Wells, pp. 210-11.

restored Egypt to the Turks, Britain would return all conquests except Ceylon, Malta, Trinidad, Tobago, Guadeloupe, and Martinique on the condition that

In the event of other intelligence previously to the signature of preliminaries, of the evacuation of Egypt by the French forces or of a convention having been agreed to for that purpose, His Majesty will not consider himself bound to adhere to the above conditions in their full extent.¹

Otto understood that the accession of Alexander I and the news from Denmark, which arrived on 15 April, had considerably strengthened the British position, but he tried to find a new bargaining chip to counter the ones being played by Hawkesbury.² Thus on 15 April he said that the British proposal was unacceptable. The next day he accused the British of being involved in an attempt to assassinate Bonaparte and demanded the extradition of the royalists M. Dutheil and Georges Cadoudal, hoping to put the British on the defensive so that they might make concessions in the negotiations.³

At this point all meaningful negotiations were effectively suspended and did not resume until June. Hawkesbury and Otto continued to meet periodically but did not make any new proposals. Otto believed that this was because *'Tous les yeux sont fixés sur l'Egypte.'*⁴ This was confirmed by Starhemberg, who informed Colloredo that *'l'Egypte était le seul véritable objet, qui arrêtaient encore la négociation.'*⁵ The British were reconsidering their position, hoping that favourable news from Egypt might break the deadlock. This persuaded Otto that as long as the fate of Egypt was

¹Note of Hawkesbury delivered 14 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 22-25 Germinal IX (12-15 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

³Otto to Hawkesbury, 16 Apr. 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 26 Germinal IX (16 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/594.

⁴Otto to Talleyrand, 4 Floréal IX (24 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

⁵Starhemberg to Colloredo, 1 May 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

undecided it would be impossible to obtain better terms from them.¹ The first reports appeared favourable to the French for by 23 April unconfirmed rumours reached London that the British invasion had been defeated.² Otto continued to believe they were true until a contradictory message arrived on 30 April: Charles Locke, the British consul in Naples had just returned to London via Paris, where he had heard from Baron Lucchesini, the Prussian ambassador to France, that the French had been defeated and General Menou taken prisoner.³ Thus the British were slightly disappointed to learn on 14 May that on 21 March their army had won only a battle but not the war, and that the commander, General Sir Ralph Abercromby, had been killed. Nevertheless, the ministry appeared generally confident that the final defeat of the French in Egypt was only a matter of time, though privately Hawkesbury told his father on 15 May that 'The Chances of Success or Failure are perhaps equal. . . . The French army is represented as discontented. If they receive no Reinforcements & our army does not become sickly the Enterprise may still succeed.'⁴

Although peace with France had become less pressing, owing to the remarkable reversal in Britain's diplomatic position, Hawkesbury and Addington did not believe that continuing the war indefinitely was a viable alternative. Hawkesbury explained this decision to Minto, minister at Vienna, in a frank dispatch of 24 April. He stated that although prospects were brighter, the government was still determined to seek peace on 'fair and honourable terms',

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 7 Floréal IX (27 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 3 Floréal IX (23 Apr. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

³Hawkesbury to the King, 30 Apr. 1801, Aspinall iii. 523; Thomas Grenville to Grenville, 30 Apr. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vii. 11-12; Otto to Talleyrand, 11 Floréal IX (1 May 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

⁴Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 15 May 1801, Add. MSS 38235, fo. 89.

because Britain could not carry on the war alone and there was no prospect of another European power entering the war in the near future. He added:

It is impossible not to lament, for the Sake of Europe, that the Two great Confederacies of which this Country made a part, should have unfortunately failed in the attainment of the End which they had in view--but, to whatever cause their Failure may be ascribed, it is by no means probable, that, at this time, a third Confederacy could be formed, which would have the same Chance of success as the Two preceding ones; and, even if it could, the Difficulty of raising the necessary Supplies (notwithstanding the abundant Resources of the Country) is become so great [sic] from the long Continuance of the War, that it could not be wise, under existing Circumstances, to run the Risk of a Third Failure, unless we were forced to it by absolute necessity.¹

Failure was likely as the Russians were determined to avoid war because their country was in a financial and administrative mess, the Austrians could not fight because the discipline of their army had been shattered at Hohenlinden, and the Prussians had proved completely unreliable and untrustworthy. Nevertheless, Hawkesbury believed it important to cultivate good relations with these powers, even if they could not be of help in the immediate future, for

whatever their Sentiments may be respecting Peace, We ought never to forget that it is possible we may have no Choice, and that we may be reduced to the necessity of trying again the Chances of War; and, even if Peace should be concluded, the Power of France, on the Continent of Europe is become so formidable, that it is of the utmost Importance that a good understanding should subsist amongst the other Great powers of Europe.²

This line of argument demonstrates the different approach towards diplomacy taken by the Addington ministry and its predecessor. Grenville was far more impatient with the allies, and he rarely missed an opportunity to chastise them when their behaviour did not meet his expectations.³ Consequently, his

¹Hawkesbury to Minto, 24 Apr. 1801, FO 7/63.

²Idem.

³Starhemberg to Colloredo, 21 Oct. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144; Roeder, pp. 292-3.

attitude, combined with Dundas's policy of scooping up colonial conquests while their allies faced the brunt of the French army, caused jealousy and resentment, rendering Britain very unpopular in Europe.¹ Hawkesbury at least demonstrated some understanding of the limitations of the other European powers and diminished his expectations accordingly.

Addington and Hawkesbury were also more realistic in their approach to the negotiations with France. On 17 April, Grenville sent Addington a copy of a Cabinet memorandum of late 1800 on the subject of peace.² The project stated that Britain should keep the Cape, Ceylon, and Cochin, but that the other conquests could be bartered away for one of four proposals on a settlement of the Netherlands. That Grenville supposed that these terms could be used as a basis for negotiation demonstrated how little he understood the international situation. For colonial conquests were not equivalent to territorial acquisitions in Europe.³ On the contrary, the French had achieved their long sought 'natural boundaries' and would not sacrifice them for the small islands which the British could offer. Bonaparte might have ruined his political career, if he had accepted Grenville's plan. The French were willing to exchange colonial conquests for the evacuation of French and Spanish troops from the territories of Britain's allies, Portugal, Naples, and Turkey but nothing else. On the other hand, if the British refused to relinquish many of their conquests, France would have continued to hold Italy and Iberia, threatening British commercial and strategic

¹A. D. Harvey, 'European Attitudes to Britain during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era', History, lxxiii (1978), 356-65; Duffy, Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower, pp. 377-8, and 'British Diplomacy and the French Wars, 1789-1815', in Dickinson ed., Britain and the French Revolution, p. 137; Harold C. Deutch, The Genesis of Napoleonic Imperialism (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. 25.

²Pellew, i. 257-60.

³Edward Ingram-Ellis, 'British Policy towards Persia and the Defence of British India, 1798-1807' (Ph.D., London, 1968), p. 221.

interest in the Mediterranean. These then were the boundaries within which Hawkesbury could manoeuvre, and if he had taken Grenville's line he probably would have scuttled the negotiations.

It is easy to criticize Hawkesbury and Addington's negotiating tactics: they certainly granted more concessions than they received in return. Nevertheless, there were several good reasons to keep the negotiations alive despite the intransigence of the French. One important concern was improving Britain's image abroad and regaining the trust of its former allies, particularly Russia. British war policies, which strengthened their maritime superiority, expanded their commerce, and extended their empire, caused serious antagonism, and so if they continued the war, they ran the risk of being perceived as war mongers. Therefore, it was necessary to demonstrate a real desire to make peace, and in the event of a rupture in the negotiations, they had to be able to direct all blame at the French.¹

By 1 June the French had grown impatient with the course of the negotiations, and so Otto demanded that they take a more official nature and offered to submit new proposals in writing.² Hawkesbury agreed and suggested two peace proposals. The first was that the British would return all their conquests if European boundaries were restored to status quo ante bellum, but recognizing that the French would not accept this offer he once again offered the terms of 14 April arguing that, as Britain's diplomatic position had improved, this constituted a concession.³ Otto tried to water down the British demands, however, by threatening blackmail over Portugal. For Spain and Portugal had signed a treaty, but the First Consul refused to ratify it, leaving Portugal subject to further conquest, unless the British became more amenable. Therefore, Otto offered that the British keep their East Indian conquests, if the status quo ante

¹Pellew, ii. 54-5.

²Otto to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1801, FO 27/66.

³Hawkesbury to Otto, 6 June 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 17 Prairial (6 June 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

bellum for Portugal were exchanged for the same in the Mediterranean and America.¹

Hawkesbury replied on 25 June that the British could not accept the status quo ante bellum in the Mediterranean and America for the restoration of Portuguese territory, because the French had made great gains in both southern Europe and the Caribbean which made the term status quo ante bellum inapplicable. Having argued that even keeping all the conquests would not have compensated Britain for the increase in power given to France by her Continental acquisitions, Hawkesbury proposed a new plan by which the terms for the East Indies and Mediterranean remained the same as in the former British project, but Britain would restore all conquests in America except Martinique, Tobago, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, and the status quo ante bellum for Portugal would be exchanged for the same for Spain.²

At this point the negotiations reached a stalemate, because the French were willing to allow the British to keep only Ceylon, which was unacceptable.³ Instead of discussing terms, each side tried to intimidate the other with accusations and threats. Each accused the other of presenting proposals that were a step backward in the negotiations. Moreover, the French threatened to occupy Portugal, if the British did not make concessions, and the British warned that a third coalition would be formed, if the French did not come to terms.⁴ Otto tried to put Hawkesbury on the defensive with accusations about the British government's complicity in the anti-French press, and threatened to break off the negotiations and to leave London.⁵ Having failed to move Hawkesbury, he became quite

¹Otto to Hawkesbury, 18 June 1801, FO 27/66.

²Hawkesbury to Otto 25, June 1801, FO 27/66.

³Otto to Hawkesbury, 26 July 1801, FO 27/66.

⁴Otto to Hawkesbury, 14 July 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 27 Messidor IX (16 July 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

⁵Otto to Hawkesbury, private, 1 Aug. 1801, FO 27/66.

despondent, admitting to Talleyrand that at that time the French were unlikely to get better terms.¹

This was a decisive point in the negotiations for the British. Addington and Hawkesbury wished to avoid further concessions but dreaded the alternatives. For it was clear that the new Tsar would not provide any military aid, and although the League of Armed Neutrality had been dissolved, Britain's strategic position was once again deteriorating. Prussian troops had occupied Hanover at French insistence and were considering annexing the electorate, while the French were threatening to overrun Portugal as they had Naples. The only theatre where the British were enjoying any success was Egypt, but even there the campaign was slow and there was little hope of a final capitulation in the near future. St Vincent predicted that the French would hold out in Alexandria until their water supplies ran out, which would not be until October.² The Egyptian expedition in fact had already achieved its main objective: the French had realized that their position was hopeless and had demonstrated willingness to evacuate the province as part of the peace treaty. Moreover, the whole process of negotiating for peace seemed to have a momentum of its own. For once Addington and Hawkesbury had opened the negotiations, they could not break away without losing face with British and foreign opinion which desired peace.³ They also understood that commercial and financial interests were represented by a considerable number of MPs who would only support the measures of the government, if it demonstrated that it was more disposed to make peace than its predecessor.⁴ In addition, they had begun to

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 18 Messidor IX (7 July 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

²St Vincent to O'Hara, 21 June 1801, Add. MSS 31169, fos. 28-9.

³Ernst Presseissen, Amiens and Munich: Comparisons in Appeasement (The Hague, 1978), p. 24; Glenbervie, Diaries, i. 267.

⁴Liverpool to Hervey, 27 July 1801, Hervey Papers, Suffolk Record Office, 941/56/8.

take seriously the threat of a cross-channel invasion, as they had become convinced that the French could succeed if the wind and weather were favourable.¹ Nevertheless, Hawkesbury felt obliged to suspend the negotiations if the French would offer no more than Ceylon.²

The British were hampered by their inability to determine with certainty Bonaparte's calculations and policy. While the government had been able to intercept and decipher the correspondence of the Danish, Swedish, Prussian, and Austrian ministers there is no evidence that it had been able to obtain copies of Otto's dispatches.³ The British government received intelligence from France but its informants were not well placed to know the details of government policy. The information that the Foreign Office did receive, however, appeared to indicate that there were domestic pressures which might persuade Bonaparte to seek peace.⁴ For France was experiencing a bread shortage smaller in scale but similar to that of Britain, and there was evidence of war weariness. Moreover, it had been Bonaparte who had sought peace negotiations with Britain in December 1799, and he had made a promise to the French people in 1801 to secure peace. Nevertheless, Otto's negotiating tactics did not suggest that the French were anxious for peace. In fact, his instructions from Bonaparte were to maintain a firm line, as the First Consul was determined to obtain a peace glorious to France or to continue the war.⁵ Had Hawkesbury maintained a firmer line he

¹Memorandum on War with France, Add. MSS 33120, fos. 110-12; St Vincent to Lutwidge, 24 July 1801, and same to Græme, 24 July 1801, Add. MSS 31169, fos. 30, 32.

²Hervey to Liverpool, 27 July 1801, Add. MSS 38235, fo. 156.

³Hawkesbury retained copies of this correspondence, Add. MSS, 38239 and 38240.

⁴There is miscellaneous correspondence from France in FO 27/58.

⁵Drafts of Talleyrand's dispatches to Otto are located in AE Angleterre/594.

would more likely have ruptured the negotiations than have forced the French to back down.

After a long Cabinet meeting on 28 July, the ministry decided to attempt once more to get better terms, and Hawkesbury had to move first, because it was clear that the French were not as anxious to make peace. Bonaparte would gladly have accepted a triumphant and glorious peace which would have improved his prestige, but he was very leery of any terms which might be criticised in France. For his position was not secure, and one wrong move could topple him from power like his predecessors. On the other hand, as long as the war continued ambitious generals were kept at a safe distance from Paris, armies could be paid and equipped from the spoils of foreign lands, and satellite powers could remain occupied under the excuse it was for their own defence. Thus peace would have brought many unwelcome responsibilities.¹

Therefore, on 5 August Hawkesbury played one of his strong cards to breach the impasse. Soon after taking office, Hawkesbury and Addington had recognized that they could not retain both Malta and the goodwill of Russia.² Consequently, in the initial peace overture to the Russians, Hawkesbury had offered to fulfill the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1799, and, although the question of Malta was postponed during the discussions over the Armed Neutrality, it was clear that some arrangement over Malta would be necessary in the future. Hawkesbury had tried to avoid conceding Malta in the negotiations with Otto but only to discuss Malta's future with the Russians. Therefore, ignoring the plea of the Earl of Elgin, the ambassador at Constantinople, 'for Heaven's sake, keep Malta',³

¹Bonaparte's diplomatic position is explained in Deutch, p. 36. See also Geoffrey Bruun, Europe and the French Imperium, 1799-1814 (New York, 1938); George Lefebvre, Napoleon: From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit, 1799-1807 translated by Henry F. Stockhold (New York, 1964); C. L. Mowat, The Diplomacy of Napoleon (London, 1924); Jean Tulard Napoleon: The Myth of the Saviour translated by Teresa Waugh (London, 1982).

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 268.

³Elgin to Hawkesbury, 30 May 1801, Add. MSS 38237, fo. 40.

Hawkesbury decided to offer the neutralization of the island as an apparent concession to the French.¹ This was less satisfactory than dealing directly with the Russians, but he hoped to achieve the same result. As the Knights of Malta were not strong enough to defend the neutrality of the island, Hawkesbury proposed that it should be garrisoned by a third power, ideally Russia. Contingent upon this offer, the French were to accept one of two options on the West Indies. The first was that the British would keep Trinidad and Tobago with Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice restored to the Dutch on the condition that they were made free ports. The second was that the British would keep St Lucia, Tobago, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice.

Otto received Bonaparte's response to this proposal on 11 August but could not present it until Hawkesbury returned from Weymouth, where he had accompanied Vorontsov on his official reception by the King. Bonaparte had in fact agreed to Hawkesbury's offer on Malta but claimed that Britain did not require more territory in the West Indies and he felt that it would not be fair for Britain to have the same domination there as in the East Indies.² Hawkesbury was pleased upon his return with the change in tone demonstrated by the French but demanded that Britain keep more than Tobago in the West Indies. For although the British government was desirous of peace, it wanted better terms.³

At this point the negotiations were sent into turmoil by more conflicting reports from Egypt. When an unconfirmed report of the fall of Cairo arrived, Otto decided a quick agreement was necessary and requested permission from the French government to accept Hawkesbury's second alternative of 5 August, with Britain keeping Tobago and St Lucia and Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice rendered

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 17 Thermidor IX (5 Aug. 1801), AE Angleterre/595; Hawkesbury to Otto, 5 Aug. 1801, FO 27/66.

²Otto to Hawkesbury, 11 Aug. 1801, FO 27/66.

³Otto to Talleyrand, 25 Thermidor IX (13 Aug. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

free ports. He decided not to accept any terms, however, if Egypt fell.¹

Unfortunately, Bonaparte wanted to remain firm and instructed Otto to water down as many of the British demands as possible. On Malta, Otto tried to get Hawkesbury to relinquish the third power guarantee and restore the island simply to the Knights of Malta. Hawkesbury replied, however, that the British troops would not leave the island until a Russian or Austrian garrison arrived. The French negotiator also tried to renege on a formal guarantee by France of the cessions made by Spain and Holland. Nevertheless, Hawkesbury remained firm, insisting that Britain would make no restitutions unless the concessions to her were guaranteed. Otto also stalled on another of Hawkesbury's concerns, the representation of Portugal and Turkey at the peace congress, and tried to take a new initiative by bringing up the question of the Newfoundland fisheries. Hawkesbury, however, would admit of nothing new, agreeing only to put the fisheries on the same footing as before the war.²

Once again the negotiations ground to a standstill, even though the negotiators met daily and were eager to conclude a settlement quickly.³ On 11 and 12 September, the Cabinet held two long meetings during which members expressed anger at Hawkesbury for giving up Malta, Martinique, and the Cape, and afterwards he spent two days recuperating in the country. When he returned on 17 September, Otto delivered a note which claimed that any further concessions would be to the detriment of France. But as Talleyrand had given permission to offer Trinidad as early as 23 July, Otto proposed that

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 25 Thermidor and 7 Fructidor IX (13 and 25 Aug. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 9, 14, and 17 Fructidor IX (27 August, 1 and 4 Sept. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

³Starhemberg to Colloredo, 4 Sept. 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

the British could keep the island, if they renounced Tobago, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice.¹

By 17 September, Bonaparte had decided that the negotiations could not be protracted any longer because he had to know whether there would be peace or war. For the equinox was approaching and, if there was to be war, he had to campaign before winter. Thus peace had to be signed before 10 Vendémiaire (2 October). He directed Otto that if the British insisted on keeping Tobago, he was to break off the negotiations.² Otto delivered the ultimatum on 22 September along with a project for a treaty of peace, but Hawkesbury still was not satisfied.³

On or about 27 September, the critical decision to make peace was finally taken. The reasons for closing the deal were not quite the same as those for which the government had sought it in the first place. Britain's diplomatic position had been partially salvaged, and the revolutionary threat posed by the high grain prices had subsided with the reopening of the Baltic trade and the prospect of a good harvest, but Britain's domestic position would have remained very uncertain and unstable as long as the war continued. Two new issues had also moved to the forefront. First, the threat of invasion, which had been remote at the beginning of the year, Addington had begun to take more seriously by the end of August, and during September he had discussed preparations for the defence of southern England in conjunction with Pelham, Pitt, and

¹Note to Otto, 23 July 1801, Correspondance du Napoléon Premier publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III, (32 vols, Paris, 1858-70), vii. 259; Otto to Hawkesbury, 19 Sept. 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 2 jour complémentaire (19 Sept. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

²Bonaparte to Talleyrand, 17 Sept. 1801, Correspondance du Napoleon, vii. 323-6.

³Hawkesbury to Otto, 22 Sept. 1801, FO 27/66; Otto to Talleyrand, 5 jour complémentaire (22 Sept. 1801), AE Angleterre/595.

Colonel Twiss of the Royal Engineers.¹ On 26 September, Glenbervie noted in his diary that, 'The expectation of an invasion is greater than I ever remember.'²

Addington's predominant concern, however, was the future of the country's finances.³ He doubted whether the economy could stand the strain of the demands of war, and there was some question as to whether the government could secure another loan on reasonable terms. Those who controlled the money markets in the City seemed to desire peace, as it was generally believed that Bonaparte would reopen European markets to British goods. The income tax also was extremely unpopular, and Pitt had borrowed heavily using the projected yield of the tax as security.⁴ Consequently, Yorke noted that, if they carried on the war for two more years, the financial position might get so bad as to require the government to make peace on even worse terms.⁵ Addington and Hawkesbury stayed up most of the night discussing these issues with Pitt, who through much of the summer had stayed at their homes advising them on the negotiations.⁶ By this time a strong difference of opinion had arisen between Addington and Hawkesbury over whether they should make any further sacrifices to obtain peace: Hawkesbury wanted to refuse any further concessions, but Addington insisted that peace was worth the price.⁷

¹Addington to Hiley Addington, 29 Aug. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/C1801/OZ134; St Vincent to Nelson, 14 Aug. 1801, Add. MSS 31169, fo. 36; Pelham to Addington, 23 Sept. 1801, Add. MSS 33120, fos. 41-51.

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 253.

³Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, i. 186; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 53.

⁴Pellew, ii. 55.

⁵Yorke to Abbot, 18 Aug. 1801, PRO 30/9/120, fos. 3-6.

⁶Glenbervie Diaries, i. 251, 262, 295.

⁷Starhemberg to Colloredo, 25 Sept. 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

Pitt and Addington, however, were able to persuade Hawkesbury to give way.¹

Consequently, on 28 September, Addington intervened in the negotiations in order to hasten a settlement. He took charge of the meeting between Hawkesbury and Otto, asserting that the peace they were all working towards was not merely to cease hostilities but to reconcile their two nations. Addington probably did not really believe this but used it as an argument to obtain what he hoped would be an adequate, secure solution for Malta. He also pointed out that stipulating the accession of Britain's allies to the treaty was a matter of diplomatic courtesy to which Otto could not object. He succeeded in resolving the impasse in the negotiations because Otto found him to be much more amicable and persuasive than Hawkesbury.² In response, Otto delivered another draft treaty the next day, but Hawkesbury objected to the wording about the guarantee for Malta and the stipulation for the French Guiana boundary, made some minor modifications, and returned the treaty claiming it to be Britain's final offer.³ Otto replied the day after that Bonaparte wished to negotiate separately with Portugal and Turkey and it would take too long for their representatives to get to the peace congress.⁴ When Hawkesbury replied that the British wanted the allies at the conference, but that it was not necessary to wait for them, all disagreement was overcome.⁵

On 1 October, Addington and Hawkesbury met a divided Cabinet but won over sufficient support to sign the treaty. Then Addington told the King that he must make peace or resign, as better terms

¹Ziegler, p. 123; Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, i. 184; Holland Rose, Pitt and the Great War, p. 468.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 6 Vendémiaire X (28 Sept. 1801), AE Angleterre/596; Same to same, 7 Nivôse X (28 Dec. 1801), AE Angleterre/597.

³Hawkesbury to Otto, 29 Sept. 1801, FO 27/66.

⁴Otto to Hawkesbury, 20 Sept. 1801, FO 27/66.

⁵Hawkesbury to Otto, 30 Sept. 1801, FO 27/66.

were impossible.¹ Consequently, early that evening, Hawkesbury and Otto signed the Preliminaries of London at the Foreign Office. Starhemberg stated that it would have been impossible for anyone to have taken more pain and effort than Hawkesbury had in the negotiations with Otto,² and the British Foreign Secretary's diligence had finally succeeded.

Under the terms of the treaty, Britain returned all French, Spanish, and Dutch conquests except Ceylon and Trinidad, with the Cape opened as a free port. Egypt was returned to The Porte, whose territorial integrity was guaranteed. The French agreed to evacuate Naples and the Papal States and to restore Portugal's European territory, but the Brazil-Guyana border was recognized in a secret article as that agreed to in the Treaty of Badajoz. Britain returned Malta to the Knights of St John under the guarantee of an unnamed third power, with the details to be worked out at the peace congress. Payments for charges incurred in maintaining prisoners of war were to be settled in a bi-lateral tribunal to be appointed later. Finally, the Newfoundland fisheries and French factories in India reverted to their prewar status.³

The diplomacy of the new ministry from its inception until October 1801 was remarkably successful. Hawkesbury and Addington had achieved their three important goals of neutralizing the League of Armed Neutrality, reestablishing cordial relations with Russia, and terminating the war with France even though both sides had at times nearly broken off the negotiations. Having come to power at the darkest moment of the war, the new ministry resolved the most pressing external and internal threats within eight months. Conscientious and careful diplomacy, combined with military good

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 255.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 25 Aug. 1801, HNSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 26-8.

fortune and an abundant harvest, had succeeded where the arrogant and uncompromising methods of their predecessors had failed.

Nevertheless, while publicly exuberant about the peace, Addington was privately downcast and apologetic. For only his minimum objectives had been achieved: Britain's allies were provided for; the French were out of Egypt; and Britain had obtained some small compensation for the increase in French power. For this, however, he had to pay a large price. Most of Britain's conquests were surrendered without a corresponding decrease in the extent of French territory on the Continent, and the solution for Malta was less satisfactory than could have been achieved by direct Anglo-Russian negotiation. Hawkesbury and Addington knew the terms would leave them open to severe criticism by some members of Parliament, and they were aware that the period of peace might not endure. Nevertheless, they considered it an 'experimental peace',¹ and the experiment had to be attempted and given time to produce a result.

¹Draft Memorandum on the State of Affairs, 1802, Castlereagh Papers, D3030/1738/7.

Chapter Four

Parliament and the Congress of Amiens, October 1801 to March 1802

'The fact is that the overthrow of an administration 17 years old, had necessarily loosened an infinite number of political Ties, and it will be some time before such new arrangements can be made as will present the Idea of a firm & settled Government.'

George Tierney¹

The Reception of the Preliminaries

The Addington ministry was uncertain of how the news of the peace would be received. Addington told Abbot, 'My mind is greatly relieved, as you must suppose; but it is not yet free from Solicitude, as much remains to be done to enable us to bring the Ship safe into Port.'² Addington and Hawkesbury felt that the terms might be unpopular, for in the Cabinet, Eldon, Pelham, and Westmorland had approved of the treaty only with great reluctance. There was no doubt that it was going to be difficult to sell the treaty to Parliament. The best hope of the ministry was that the general dissatisfaction with the war would lead to approval of the peace. Addington was counting on a coalition of the loyal supporters of the ministry and the opponents of the war to outnumber the critics of the peace.

The popular reaction to the announcement of peace was as favourable as Addington could have wished, and possibly too favourable. For general rejoicing erupted throughout the country.

¹Tierney to Grey, 22 Oct. 1801, Grey Papers.

²Addington to Abbot, 16 Oct. 1801, Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/110, fos. 24-5.

In Bath, the mob shouted, 'Long live the King, Addington for Ever'.¹ In London, the populace celebrated in the streets for days. Moreover, as part of the celebration of the peace, all houses there were expected to be illuminated, and stones were thrown at the windows of those that were not lit, on the assumption that the resident was demonstrating disapproval. For example, William Cobbett was one of those who deplored the peace, and his home was stoned until he illuminated his house. When the French envoy, General Lauriston, arrived in London with the French government's ratification of the preliminary treaty, the mob disengaged his horses and pulled his carriage through the streets. Otto put up in his window a banner that read 'concorde', but some of the semi-literate in the street misread it as 'conquered' and stoned his house until he took the sign down. The government was pleased at this demonstration of approval for its policy, but was very concerned about the uncontrollable nature of the popular demonstrations. Yorke, for example, told Pelham, 'This wretched London Mob would have done as much or more for Massena, or Augereau if they [had] entered the Capital at the head of a victorious army.'² Yorke was obviously exaggerating, but this comment demonstrates the alarm felt by some members of the government.

Although the activities of the London 'mob' were not necessarily an accurate indicator of public opinion, the public celebrations and the lack of any demonstrations of dissatisfaction appeared to indicate that the country on the whole either supported or at least did not oppose the peace. In addition, it was quite clear to foreign diplomats such as Otto and Starhemberg that the peace was extremely popular.³ Eldon was convinced by the general reaction to the peace that the ministry had made the right decision:

¹Mrs Ord to Mrs Goodenough, 12 Oct. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/F14.

²Yorke to Pelham, 13 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 35701, fo. 120.

³Otto to Talleyrand, 21 Vendémiaire X (29 Oct. 1801), AE Angleterre/596; Starhemberg to Colloredo, 13 Oct. 1801, HNSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

`I think I have discovered that we ought to be hanged, and that Parliament had so forewarned us, if we rejected such a Peace, as we have made.'¹ Some members of the government were not convinced, however, that the peace would be permanent. Hobart told Auckland, `having made Peace, I think it better at least to affect a belief in its permanency, altho' I might be prepared for a different result, than to put on a face of mortification & Disappointment.'² Considering Addington's downcast mood after the signing of the treaty, it seems likely that the Prime Minister's sentiments were similar to Hobart's.

The real political significance of the peace was, however, its influence on parliamentary party politics. For this one issue scrambled party alignments, creating instability where there had once been order, and the results were to affect the course of British politics for the next twenty years. After Pitt ascended power in 1783, Parliament had divided largely into two groups, one led by Pitt, the other by Fox. Pitt's supporters were not necessarily personally devoted to him, but as Fox was the only alternative, a majority in Parliament chose to remain firmly behind Pitt. Fox's seemingly unpatriotic stance during the war strengthened Pitt's position and because of it some of Fox's most influential allies even crossed the floor to join Pitt's government. Thus by the time that Pitt retired in 1801 his parliamentary position was almost invincible. For although some of his colleagues may have disagreed on policy, none would have challenged his leadership.

When Addington took over, there was no fundamental realignment of parties: virtually the same members of Parliament continued to support or oppose the government. Pitt's party was still in power, there were just different men in some of the offices. The news of the peace destroyed the unity of Pitt's party, however, and undermined the division between Pittites and Foxites in Parliament.

¹Eldon to Addington, endorsed Oct. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OZ95.

²Hobart to Auckland, 14 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 34455, fo. 442.

Pitt, himself, fully supported the peace and Addington and Hawkesbury had regularly consulted him during the negotiations, including sending him a 150 page report on the preliminaries.¹ After the conclusion of the treaty, he told Addington that he would have signed on those terms with pleasure.² He continued to advise Addington, offering suggestions to improve the King's speech to be delivered at the opening of Parliament in November 1801 and helping him with the government finances. Dundas noted that he had seen Pitt 'loitering about London in daily intercourse with ministers.'³ During the first year of the ministry Pitt had acted magnanimously, even though he must have realized that if Addington concluded peace successfully it would have reflected poorly on his own management of the war and failure to procure a peace. Thus his personal position was very difficult yet he could not have acted better towards Addington than he did. For not only did he support the peace, but also wrote to his friends to convince them to support it,⁴ and many of them complied. Rose, although resenting Addington for displacing Pitt, told the Prime Minister,

I have no Hesitation in expressing the most un-qualified approbation of the Terms of the Peace which you were so good as to communicate to me; they are according to my Judgement most highly creditable to the Country; and on the whole as advantageous as could reasonably be expected; I should have thought so even if the Cape had been un-conditionally restored, and I am confident that no Hope of getting something better terms [sic] Twelve

¹Pitt to Hiley Addington, 28 Sept. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OP44.

²Glenbervie Diaries, i. 268.

³Dundas to Spencer 17 Nov. 1801, Cyril Matheson The Life of Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811 (London, 1933), p. 319.

⁴Pitt to Bathurst, 18 Oct. 1801, Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on the Manuscripts of the Seventh Earl Bathurst (London, 1923), 26; Pitt to Mulgrave, 2 Oct. 1801, Stanhope, iii. 28; Pitt to Grenville, 5 Oct. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vii. 49-50; Pitt to Canning, 26 Oct. 1801, Canning Papers, 30.

Months hence could have justified the incurring another Year's Expense with the Consequences thereof.¹

Earl Bathurst, Ryder, and Canning all wrote expressing similar sentiments,² but not all of Pitt's former colleagues felt the same way.

The first blow was the response of Grenville. Pitt's cousin has always been very difficult for historians to fathom and this episode is indicative. After resigning in February, Grenville accepted Pitt's argument that the old ministry ought to support the new so as to keep the Foxite opposition out of office. Moreover, Grenville understood the difficulties that the new government faced and tried to convince his colleagues that it would be unjust to cause Addington trouble. He had told Carysfort at that time,

I will not conceal from you that I have a personal interest in making these suggestions to you, considering as I do, our own honour as very deeply concerned in the avoiding all (even the slightest) appearances, of giving either by ourselves, or by those intimately connected with us in alliance & friendship, any trouble to those who, at a crisis so very arduous, are to undertake a task from which the strongest nerves might shrink.³

He continued to support and advise the new ministry until the summer. According to Glenbervie on 24 October, 'Lord Grenville six weeks ago said he knew no measure of this Ministry that he did not approve of, and that he could not easily foresee any which he could bring himself to oppose.'⁴ Nevertheless, soon after the peace was announced Grenville wrote to Addington, Pitt, and the King to say that he disapproved of the peace and was determined to oppose it in Parliament, stating that 'nothing but a sense of indispensable duty

¹Rose to Addington, 4 Oct. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OP48.

²Bathurst to Addington, 4 Oct. 1801, Ryder to Addington, 2 Oct. 1801, and Canning to Hiley Addington, 2 Oct. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OP54, 61, and 75.

³Grenville to Carysfort, 6 Feb. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vi. 437.

⁴Glenbervie Diaries, i. 268-9.

could have led me to this separation from those for whom I entertain sentiments of friendship and regard, and whose measures I was most sincerely desirous of supporting'.¹ He professed that he believed that he could oppose the ministry on the issue of peace without going into systematic opposition or endangering the position of the government, even though Pitt warned him that his opposition would hurt the ministry.²

The question remains why Grenville decided to take such an outspoken stance in opposition to Addington and Pitt. The short answer is that he genuinely thought that the peace was unwise. The terms of the treaty did not fulfill Britain's war aims of reducing France to its prewar boundaries and imposing upon her a government that would respect those boundaries.³ He had been the strongest opponent of accepting Bonaparte's peace overtures of December 1799, and he was simply trying to be consistent. He may have also believed that supporting Addington and Hawkesbury's peace would have been a public acknowledgement that they had succeeded where he had failed. Therefore, in order to justify his previous conduct, he had to argue that the new ministry had accepted disadvantageous terms to which he would never have agreed. His view of the issue was so narrow that he did not realize that his war aims were totally unrealistic, and that the consequences for continuing the war could have been grave. Nevertheless, he was extremely stubborn and believed that it was his public duty to state his convictions regardless of the difficulties it might cause his political allies and himself. He had wanted to support the government and had pledged his support, but became annoyed when it did not follow his policy. Thus, he was only happy as long as he was consulted on foreign policy. Moreover,

¹Grenville to Addington, 14 Oct. 1801, Pellew, i. 459-60.

²Grenville to Dundas, 5 Nov. 1801, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/556/15; Pitt to Grenville, 9 Oct. 1801, Dropmore Papers, vii. 55-6.

³Grenville to Auckland, [1801], Add. MSS 34455, fos. 462-3.

Buckingham's group took an irrational dislike to Addington and placed pressure on Grenville to oppose the Government.¹

The other major opponent of the peace was Windham. Addington had expected that Windham might be adverse to the treaty but he had hopes of persuading him that the peace was in the country's best interests. He wrote to Windham immediately after the treaty was signed, 'I think when I see you which I hope I shall before you leave London I can satisfy you that it is not clear even upon your own Principles that we are wrong.'² But Windham replied that he condemned the peace without even knowing the terms: 'the Country has received its death blow.'³ Later Pelham also tried to win over Windham:

I am not surprised at the anxiety you feel about the Peace, & I am inclined to think that after the first effusisms [sic] of Joy at the return of Peace, that the country in general will not be less so--at the same time I think you must have seen & known enough of our means of carrying on the War & of the preparations for defence, to be satisfied that we were not in a state capable of effecting either with Success.⁴

Windham, however, would not change his opinion.

Windham was one of the most loyal disciples of Edmund Burke, and had adopted his mentor's hatred of Revolutionary France. His first priority while Secretary at War had been to support the royalists. Thus while his colleagues debated whether to send troops to Egypt or central Europe, he had supported a direct invasion of France to overthrow the regime, and he would never have been satisfied until the royalists had been restored. His position, therefore, was even more unrealistic than Grenville's. Despite this

¹Peter Jupp, Lord Grenville, 1759-1834 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 306-8.

²Addington to Windham, 1 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 37880, fo. 160.

³Windham to Addington, 1 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 37880, fo. 171.

⁴Pelham to Windham, 20 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 37880, fos. 175-6.

opposition, however, he did try to keep on good personal terms with Addington, and they continued to correspond and meet socially. In 1809, when both men were out of office, Windham would admit to Addington that he had been wrong all along. Many years later, Addington told his son-in-law and biographer, George Pellew, that during dinner at the White Lodge in July of that year Windham admitted, 'I have for some time wished to tell you, that I am thoroughly convinced, if it had not been for the peace of Amiens this country could never have maintained the struggle to the present period.'¹ Thus Windham acknowledged that the peace provided an important breathing space, which was one of the major reasons that Addington sought it in the first place.

Some other prominent politicians also decided to oppose the peace. For example, Spencer decided to follow the lead of Grenville and Windham. As a member of Pitt's war Cabinet, his reasons were probably similar to Grenville's, though he stated that he would have been satisfied if the Cape had been retained.² Fitzwilliam, once a Foxite Whig and later a member of Pitt's ministry, also criticized the terms, but his reasons more closely resembled Windham's. For he did not believe that any peace would be permanent until the French government had changed.³ Nevertheless, as J. R. Jones points out, these contemporary critics who favoured continuing the war had lost touch with the realities of Europe and persisted in unrealistic aims. There was no way that the British negotiators could have achieved real security at that time.⁴

There were others whose opinions fell in the middle. Dundas supported the peace in principle but disliked the terms. For he did not care so much about Europe or the royalists, but he disapproved

¹Pellew, ii. 52-3.

²Spencer to Camden, 14 Oct. 1801, Althorp Papers, G42.

³E. A. Smith, Whig Principles and Party Politics: Earl Fitzwilliam and the Whig Party, 1748-1833 (Manchester, 1975), p. 261.

⁴J. R. Jones, Britain and the World (London, 1980), p. 275.

of returning the colonial conquests, especially the Cape and Malta. He had always believed that colonial warfare was the best means of promoting Britain's interests, and he felt that two of the most important conquests of his administration were being given away for little in return. Nevertheless, he was too personally devoted to Pitt to differ from him in public, and so while expressing his views to colleagues in private, he decided not to attend the session of Parliament, in order to prevent placing himself in the position of having to vote against his conscience or against Pitt.¹ In fact, Dundas was even considering retiring completely from politics.² For loyalty to Pitt was more important for Dundas than any political point. Camden and Bathurst felt the same. Moreover, they perceived the danger of members of Pitt's party taking a position in opposition to their former leader. If the party split, Pitt's power would subside and the chances of him returning to office in the future would diminish, and so Camden and Bathurst tried desperately to patch up the differences and keep the party together but to no avail. The split that arose between Pitt on one side and Grenville, Spencer, and Windham on the other, however, was never to be healed.³

While members of the former ministry were withdrawing support from the new government, members of the former opposition were beginning to support it. For the war had been the most important political issue that had held the Foxite Whigs together, and by successfully negotiating peace, Addington had caused confusion in their ranks. Thus after a decade of opposing every measure of the government, the Whigs were faced with an issue which they were obliged to support. Indeed the whole premise of their being in

¹Dundas to Pitt, 6 Oct. 1801, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/64/2.

²Dundas to Hope, 23 Dec. 1801, Hope of Luffness Muniments, GD 364/1/1135/2/1.

³Bathurst to Pitt, 16 Oct. 1801, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/112/1, fos. 40-2; Camden to Grenville, 9 Oct. 1801, Pratt Papers, U840/C23/2; Camden to Spencer, 9 Oct. 1801, Althorp Papers, GD 42; Feiling, p. 226.

opposition was undermined by a government that pursued policies that they supported. Nevertheless, they could hardly join the government benches. As a result party unity began to dissolve, as it had among Pitt's party.¹ Fox had once been the unifying force behind the party, but his influence had waned since his voluntary secession from Parliament in 1797. Moreover, morale was low. For even though their two greatest aspirations had been achieved, Pitt out of office and the war ended, they were still as far as ever from obtaining office themselves.

This was the political environment when the new session of Parliament opened in October. Addington had planned to call the session for 29 October regardless of whether peace was signed by then, as the government would require another vote of supplies. With peace having been signed on 1 October, the ministry had four weeks to prepare the defence of its measures. But even though popular demonstrations in favour of the peace began early, Addington was still unsure of the disposition of Parliament. For he knew that Grenville and Windham would oppose the peace, but he was uncertain of how many members they would carry with them or how the Foxite Whigs would react. Therefore, it was unclear how many votes the government could win in a division, and some predictions were not very optimistic. Yorke told Pelham, 'We shall certainly have a rough Session, & I believe much envy, hatred and uncharitableness are on foot.'² Glenbervie indeed thought that Addington would not survive the session.³ Consequently, the ministry worked hard to gather supporters for the forthcoming debates and votes. Addington pressed Abbot, Hobart worked on Auckland, and Pitt persuaded Castlereagh to lend the government active support.

Parliament opened on 29 October, and Windham could not wait to attack the peace. He took the opportunity of the debate on the

¹E. A. Smith, Lord Grey, 1764-1845 (Oxford, 1990), p. 83.

²Yorke to Pelham, 30 Sept. 1801, Add. MSS 35701, fos. 110-5.

³Glenbervie Diaries, i. 255.

address of thanks for the King's speech to open a tirade against the government, 'who, in a moment of rashness and weakness, have fatally put their hands to this treaty, have signed the death-warrant of their country. They have given it a blow, under which it may languish for a few years, but from which I do not conceive how it is possible for it ever to recover.'¹ Addington responded quite graciously that Windham's comments were out of order, as the terms of the peace had not yet been set before the House, and that the present debate concerned the King's speech only. Sheridan then stood up and spoke as if he had not heard a word that Addington had said, and made his famous remark, which he had stolen from Francis Horner that it was 'a peace which every man ought to be glad of, but no man can be proud of'.

The next day, Hawkesbury presented the terms of the peace along with the convention signed with Russia, and the debate on the peace treaty began in earnest on 3 November. After the motion in support of the peace was seconded, Leveson Gower rose to criticize Hawkesbury's reference to the terms offered by Malmesbury at Lille in 1797 in justifying the Preliminaries of London because he claimed that the situation faced by the government then had been worse and the terms that it had offered better.² There were two problems, however, with this argument. First, despite the naval mutinies and the suspension of cash payments in 1797, the economic and domestic political situation was much worse in 1801.³ Second, although Grenville had offered terms that were more favourable to Britain, they were irrelevant because the French had rejected them. Nevertheless, in his response to Leveson Gower, Hawkesbury skirted the issue. He neglected to mention any reference to internal difficulties, probably to avoid admitting publicly the role played by social unrest in the formulation of policy because it might alarm the country or encourage political radicals. Instead he concentrated

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 14.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 36-7.

³See above, chapter 1, pp. 17-29.

on the future prospects of the war and the terms of the treaty. He argued first that another grand coalition was impossible, and that the British could not achieve their war aims without one. He then referred to the time and the tone of the treaty, arguing that the time was suitable because the British had enjoyed recent military success, 'in the hour of victory it became the spirit and magnanimity of the government and the people, to listen to the voice of peace'.¹ This was rather empty rhetoric because he would have signed in March before these military successes, if the French had then agreed. He was on more solid ground, however, in dealing with the terms, which, he argued, were both honourable and advantageous. He belittled the concessions that he had granted and emphasized the value of what had been retained in Trinidad and Ceylon. It would have been fairer if he had said that the terms were not dishonourable or disadvantageous, which is not the same. The British had retained their two most important acquisitions and had not surrendered any possession that they had held prior to the war. Nor were they humiliated the way the Austrians or Portuguese had been by the French. Certainly, the preliminaries of peace compared favourably with the treaties of Lunéville or Badajoz.

During the following debate many members concentrated on scoring party political points. For example, Thomas Grenville complained, 'that both in the present treaty, and in the convention with the northern powers, ministers had assumed a humble tone, which would lead to consequences dangerous to the existence of the country. ... To have been victorious, and yet to have treated as a vanquished nation, was a galling reflexion to a British mind.'² Castlereagh's response, on the other hand, was more to the point. In his mind the question was whether 'to carry on the war alone against France, or to make peace with that state, if it could be done upon terms consistent with our safety and independence.' He then argued that continuing the war without allies would have been

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 41.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 49.

useless, and that the terms of the preliminaries `were as favourable as we could look for in the present state of Europe'.¹

The best speech of the night was made by Pitt. Possessing a detailed knowledge of the process of the negotiations and having advised the government, he was in a good position to understand the whole picture. He stated that the failure of the Continental alliance meant that the question over peace was one of terms only, and on that subject, he made an important point which the opponents of the terms overlooked. `It was undoubtedly the duty of every government,' he pointed out, `in negotiating a treaty of peace to obtain the best possible terms; but it was sometimes difficult to know how far particular points might be pressed without running the risk of breaking off the negotiation.' As to the colonial possessions Hawkesbury had surrendered, `They would only give us a little more wealth; but a little more wealth would be badly purchased by a little more war.' He compressed the whole issue into a nutshell by stating that, `the government had undoubtedly endeavoured to obtain the best terms they could for the country; and he was ready to contend, that the difference between the terms we had obtained and those of retaining all which we had given up, would not have justified ministers in protracting the war.'² It was unfortunate for Addington and Hawkesbury that they could not describe their policies so concisely.

On 10 October, Fox had made a rather impolitic speech at the Shakespeare tavern, stating that he gloried in the triumph of the French over the British governments. In standing up in the Commons to speak after Pitt, however, he displayed more sense. He conceded all of Pitt's arguments about the terms, but had something to add about the continuance of the war. He stressed the social damage that the war had wrought, referring to the increase in the ranks of the poor and the inability of charity to deal with the problem, and arguing that the rapid decline in the price of grain when the peace

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 54-5.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 57-72.

was announced proved that high prices were linked to the war. 'Can any man doubt under such circumstances,' he added, 'whether it be not better for the people to eat, than that we should possess the Cape, or even Malta ...?' Noting that the joy expressed at the news of the peace was greatest among the lower classes and that they never stopped to inquire about the terms, he concluded, 'that the people were so goaded by the war, that they preferred peace almost upon any terms'. His only regret was that the peace had not come years sooner.¹

The debate continued and concluded the next day. The only speech of note was Windham's, who in a lengthy tirade denounced the peace in the strongest terms and warned of the danger still posed by France. Many remarked that he spoke like the 'ghost of Burke'.² But as it had been so often with Burke's speeches, Windham was 'admired but disapproved.'³ Sensing that the House was strongly against him, Windham did not even move for a division.

The debate was somewhat less vindictive in the Lords. The defence of the government was borne by Pelham who rose in response to a weak speech by Spencer criticising the peace. Pelham concentrated on a comparison with the proposals of 1797, noting the only real difference was that the British did not retain the Cape, which was made a free port. Grenville then rose with a lengthy criticism of the treaty. He stated that the basis of every negotiation must be either status quo ante bellum or uti possidetis, but that Addington and Hawkesbury had followed neither. Therefore, he predicted that the peace would cause Britain's position vis-à-vis France to deteriorate. Eldon answered that the dangers that Grenville envisioned would not have been better provided against if the British had kept all of their conquests, a point which Nelson

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 72-83.

²Lady Bessborough to Leveson Gower, November 1801, Leveson Gower Correspondence, i. 306.

³Corry to Abbot, 5 Nov. 1801, Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/115, fo. 256.

reiterated in his speech. Nevertheless, Grenville did proceed to provoke a division, which the government won 114 to 10. The minority included Grenville, Spencer, Buckingham, and Fitzwilliam.¹

This episode completely changed the complexion of Parliament. For as Yorke had predicted, new parties were aligning.² Before the peace, the same men supported the government as had supported Pitt, and the same group remained in opposition. After the peace, however, Grenville, Windham, and Spencer had broken from the government ranks, taking their adherents into opposition. The ministry was compensated, however, by the support of most of the Foxite Whigs. This left Fitzwilliam and the rest of the Whigs who could not support the peace on the side of Grenville and Windham against the ministry supported by the rest of the House. The ministry was in a stronger position because the Foxites were a much larger group than the Grenvillites. Nevertheless, Addington was not comfortable with these developments. He wrote to Windham, 'As to the Measure [the peace], to which you advert, I should indeed have Cause for Shame if the Principles upon which it is disapproved of by you, were not far more congenial to my own mind, than those upon which some Persons are disposed to support it.'³ He would have preferred it if Grenville and Windham had continued to support him and Fox had continued to oppose. For while he had lost the support of Grenville and Windham, he could not be certain of maintaining that of the Foxites. In addition, although Grenville and Windham did not take many votes with them, they were strong debaters and might in future win over a following. This caused a serious problem for Addington's ministry which was so weak in debating talent.

Addington was aware of this weakness and tried to attach talented speakers to the ministry, though largely without success.

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 159-91.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 27 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 35701, fos. 126-9; Smith, Lord Grey, p. 87.

³Addington to Windham, 25 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 37880, fo. 117.

During November and December 1801, there were rumours that he was negotiating a coalition with the Foxite Whigs. The evidence available is inconclusive, but it is reasonable to assume that there was some truth to these rumours. Tierney told Grey that Addington had sent a message through Bragge to meet him on horseback in Hyde Park, where they spoke for two hours and then agreed to meet again on Wimbledon Common.¹ Later Tierney told Moira that he and Addington had agreed to an arrangement which would bring Tierney, Moira, Erskine, and Thurlow into office with Grey and Bedford entering at a later time.² Upon hearing of the negotiations, Moira asked to speak privately with Addington, although according to Tierney the meeting never took place.³ Grey, however, did meet privately with St Vincent and explained that he wanted a guarantee that the system under which the government was to be conducted would be changed, either by strong new policies or by stacking the ministry with Whigs.⁴ Moira also refused to sit in the same Cabinet with Portland, who, the Whigs felt had betrayed them.⁵ Thus, the negotiations appeared terminated by the end of December, but in January, the Prince of Wales pressed a reluctant Addington to form a junction.⁶ Moira met with Addington in February, but they failed to reach agreement and the negotiations were suspended.⁷

While Tierney presented all this evidence of activity, there is reason to believe that he was exaggerating the nature of his

¹Tierney to Grey, Oct, 1801, Grey Papers.

²Tierney to Moira, n. d., Tierney Papers, 30M70/52G; H. K. Olphin, George Tierney (London, 1934), pp. 75-6.

³Moira to Addington, 9 Nov. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OZ41; Tierney to Grey, 19 Dec. 1801, Grey Papers.

⁴Grey to Tierney, 24 Dec. 1801, Tierney Papers, 31M70/33b; Smith, Lord Grey, p. 79.

⁵Moira to Tierney, 18 Nov. 1801, and Bute to Tierney, 18 Nov. 1801, Tierney Papers 31M70/52c and 13c.

⁶Tierney to Grey, 19 Dec. 1801 and Jan. 1802, Grey Papers.

⁷Tierney to Grey, Feb. 1802, Grey Papers.

discussions with Addington. For Addington never envisioned a coalition with the Whigs. Rather he hoped to gain further talent and support for the ministry by offering some lesser offices to Tierney, Grey, or Erskine.¹ The changes to the ministry were to be only partial and Addington was to remain at its head.² It was already a hodgepodge of parties, and one or two additions from the Whigs would not have tipped the balance. Addington had already discussed with Pitt the possibility of giving office to Tierney and Pitt had approved, although he thought it would be a post in the East Indies.³ Pitt refused to believe, however, that Addington had made offers to Moira or Grey. Moreover, St Vincent was a personal friend of Grey's father and might have discussed his accession to the ministry without Addington's knowledge. For Lady Holland thought that the main negotiations were taking place between Grey and St Vincent.⁴ In addition, it was probably Tierney who was pushing to have more of his colleagues admitted into office. Nevertheless, a coalition would have alarmed Pitt and infuriated the King, and such behaviour would have been completely out of character for Addington.

The question remains why Addington allowed himself to get caught at all in a series of negotiations with members of the opposition, when he had the overwhelming support of Parliament for his policy. The reason was that the situation was much less stable than it appeared. He admitted to Hiley that the position of the government was precarious.⁵ For he could not count on the continued support of the Foxites for all of his policies, and he had strong

¹Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 15 Nov. 1801, Add. MSS 38235, fo. 300.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 9 Pluviôse X (28 Jan. 1802), AE Angleterre/597.

³Rose to Tomline, 12 Nov. 1801, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/44; Canning to Frere, 21 Nov. 1801, Add. MSS 38833, fo. 62.

⁴Lady Holland Journal, ii. 147.

⁵Addington to Hiley Addington, 27 Nov. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OZ142.

reason to believe that many of Pitt's friends would move into decided opposition. Moreover, as the negotiations for the definitive treaty dragged on, he began to wonder whether peace would ever be firmly established, and he knew that his government would be in deep trouble if it were not.

The Congress of Amiens

During the negotiations of 1801, Hawkesbury and Otto had wanted to announce an agreement as early as possible. Finding that agreeing in principle was easier than spelling out all of the details, they agreed to sign merely a preliminary treaty and to leave the final details to be settled at a peace congress in Amiens. Thus, the peace as of 1 October was, in effect, an armistice or truce: Britain and France were no longer at war, but peace had not yet been firmly established.

Yet the Addington ministry was quite confident that the negotiations for the definitive treaty would be merely a formality and following the signing of the preliminary treaty it began the initial phases of demobilization. It was owing to this overconfidence that Addington chose Cornwallis to negotiate the definitive treaty at Amiens. Glenbervie later acknowledged that

Those who know him best are readiest to acknowledge his unfitness for such a business--but it seems he was of a different opinion for he certainly asked for it, & our ministry, who fancied the Preliminaries had settled every thing thought the popularity of his name would give a splendor [sic] to the formal conclusion of the Peace.¹

Addington and Hawkesbury believed that the preliminaries had settled all the essential points and that it would take little time and effort to flesh out the final details of the few articles which Otto and Hawkesbury had postponed.² They chose Cornwallis rather than an experienced negotiator, such as Whitworth, because they thought that

¹Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, vii. 12 Mar. 1802.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 15 Nov. 1801, Add. MSS 38235, fo. 300.

his distinguished military career would make him more agreeable to Bonaparte. Hawkesbury wrote to the King that he was 'convinced that the military reputation and character of Marquis Cornwallis will give him advantages in treating with the French Government which no other person would possess in an equal degree'.¹ Moreover, Addington, Hawkesbury, and Cornwallis believed that the congress would take little time and that the treaty would be ready by the middle of November.²

Consequently, Hawkesbury's initial instructions to Cornwallis were not very detailed. He noted that the article on Malta was the most important and directed Cornwallis to stipulate that the island be restored to the Order of St John. He also directed Cornwallis to define whom that order included, as the British government hoped that the Maltese could be allowed into the order, from which they were for the time being excluded, so as to improve relations between the knights and the natives. Finally, Hawkesbury stipulated that a garrison of troops, ideally Russian, should be provided. Subsequently, however, on 14 November Hawkesbury had to report to Cornwallis that the Russians had refused to guarantee Malta, and that the Tsar wished that the King of Naples garrison the island. Acknowledging that the French would probably oppose a Russian garrison for Malta, he directed Cornwallis to comply with their objection as a 'concession'.³ The only other article he emphasized was that which stipulated payment for the maintenance of the prisoners of war, indicating, however, that the British would accept the island of Tobago instead of payment.⁴ Later, Hawkesbury added

¹Hawkesbury to the King, 5 Oct. 1801, Aspinall, iii. 615.

²Tierney to Grey, 9 Oct. 1801, Grey Papers; Rufus King to Secretary of State, Charles R. King, The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King (6 vols., New York, 1896), iii. 523; Franklin and Mary Wickwire, Cornwallis: The Imperial Years (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1980), p. 257.

³Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 14 Nov. 1801, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/267, fos. 1-2; Same to same, 16 Nov. 1801, FO 27/59.

⁴Instructions to Cornwallis, FO 27/59.

that a provision for the Prince of Orange had been withdrawn from the preliminary treaty on the understanding that the French and Prussians would provide an indemnity, but he told Cornwallis to insert a new clause, if nothing had been done for the Prince of Orange by the time the treaty was ready for signature.¹

Cornwallis arrived in Paris on 7 November, while back in London on the same day Otto informed the British government that the French were sending a fleet of twenty-three ships of the line, sixteen frigates, and 20,000 men to St Domingue to crush the rebellion. Hawkesbury and Addington were alarmed at the size of the fleet, and decided to send one of proportional size to the West Indies to watch it. Hawkesbury instructed Cornwallis to assure the French that the British did not object to the expedition, but that such actions could create considerable distrust.²

Upon arrival in Paris Cornwallis met privately with Talleyrand and Joseph Bonaparte, who had been appointed the French negotiator for the definitive treaty. Hawkesbury had told Cornwallis that there would be no objection if he wished to settle the principal points of the negotiation with Joseph Bonaparte before they left Paris for Amiens, if this would help to expedite the process afterwards. Cornwallis, on the other hand, felt that it would be disadvantageous to stay in Paris for any length of time as

I should have to deal with Talleyrand on the spot, instead of negotiating with him through the medium of Joseph Bonaparte, who had the character of being a well meaning, altho' not a very able Man, and whose near connexion with the first Consul might perhaps be in some degree a check on the spirit of chicanery and intrigue which the Minister of the exterior so eminently possesses.³

He therefore hoped to set out for Amiens by the end of the month, but he did meet with Joseph on 24 November, and to his surprise was quite satisfied, as Joseph accepted Hawkesbury's plan for Malta. The

¹Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 1 Nov. 1801, FO 27/59.

²Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 7 and 8 Nov. 1801, FO 27/59.

³Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 20 Nov. 1801, FO 27/59.

only problem appeared to be the settlement of the prisoner of war accounts. But when on 28 November, Cornwallis met privately with the First Consul, the meeting though friendly, was unpromising. For Bonaparte refused to consider any provisions for the Prince of Orange, rejected the idea that the French should pay for the prisoners of war, and refused to give up Tobago unless the British would trade another West Indian island for it. In addition, he made some new suggestions of his own. Better to neutralize the value of Malta, he proposed that the fortifications of the island be destroyed. He also requested a revision of the treaties concerning the Newfoundland fisheries and a mutual agreement to deport dangerous persons requested by the other.¹

Realizing that he was making little progress in Paris, Cornwallis insisted on proceeding to Amiens, where he arrived on 1 December. He believed that once he and Joseph sat down together, without the interference of Talleyrand and the First Consul, they could conclude the treaty in little time. He told Hawkesbury, 'I have little Doubt, as soon as I shall receive it [a proposal for a definitive treaty] from Your Lordship, together with His Majesty's final Commands in regard to Malta, that this Business will be arranged with Expedition.'²

Hawkesbury was pleased with the progress in the negotiations described in Cornwallis's reports of his meetings with Joseph and Napoleon Bonaparte and on 16 December he sent a proposal for a definitive treaty. In it the article on Malta conformed to the tone of the discussion Cornwallis had had with Joseph: the British would evacuate the island in three months, to give the King of Naples sufficient time to provide a garrison.³ In a private letter accompanying these dispatches, he added,

I hope we shall be able to form some Judgement in the Course of a week or ten Days of the probable Duration of

¹Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 3 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

²Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 6 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

³Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 16 and 17 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

the Negotiation. I confess I should be very much inclined Personally (but This is not official) if every other point could be satisfactorily settled and a Spanish Minister should not arrive within a certain time to sign the Treaty with the Plenipotentiaries who were at that time at Amiens & to insert an article similar to that respecting the Ottoman Porte inviting the King of Spain to accede to the Treaty.¹

Cornwallis's assistant, Anthony Merry, remarked, 'They are in such a Hurry at Home ... that we are even authorized to conclude and sign before the Arrival of the Spanish P[le]n[ipotentiary] if there should be a Prospect of any Delay in [sic] the Consequence of his non-Presence.'²

Cornwallis delivered the British project of treaty on 21 December, but instead of discussing the terms, Joseph responded with a counter-project. The French had realized that the British were in haste and took advantage of it. Merry was slightly exaggerating when he claimed that Cornwallis demonstrated a 'Disposition ... to give way on every Point, in order to get through the Business the more easily'.³ Nevertheless, Cornwallis had been careless enough to give Joseph the initiative. Hawkesbury had made the mistake of introducing issues, such as Tobago and the Prince of Orange, which were not mentioned in the preliminaries, and the French responded by introducing new issues of their own. They demanded better terms in the Newfoundland fisheries and in India, possession of the Falkland Islands, protection for fishermen in war-time, and the abolition of naval salutes.⁴ Merry described the counter-project as tending, 'no less than to take away in some instances, to leave in

¹Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 17 Dec. 1801, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/266, fos. 3-4. The Dutch representative arrived at Amiens on 7 December, but the Spanish had not appointed one.

²Merry to Jackson, 21 Dec. 1801, Jackson Papers, FO 353/76.

³Merry to Jackson, 16 Dec. 1801, Jackson Papers, FO 353/76.

⁴Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 27 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

doubt in others, all the Advantages given us by the Preliminaries in return for the Sacrifices we have made'.¹

This counter-project threw the negotiations into chaos. Cornwallis complained that the cessions of Trinidad and Ceylon had not been admitted, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire neglected, the prisoner of war indemnity not addressed, and the arrangement for Malta altered. When Cornwallis proposed that Joseph and he have their secretaries draw up an official protocol, the two negotiators could not agree what was to be written down. Cornwallis concluded that Joseph's strategy was to 'throw upon me the Odium of the Delay (which now appears to be the aim of the French Government) and, upon the whole, to create a Confusion in our Proceedings'.²

Unfortunately for the British, Cornwallis was not the right man to handle this situation. While he might have been the best choice for a ceremonial occasion, he did not possess the mental toughness to deal with Joseph Bonaparte. Instead he became despondent too easily: 'I feel it as the most unpleasant circumstance attending this business, that after I have obtained his acquiescence on any point, I can have no confidence that it is finally settled, and that he will not recede from it in our next conversation'.³ Moreover, according to Merry's account of the negotiations, Cornwallis's ignorance of the subjects under discussion often played into Joseph's hands. While Merry fought to incorporate Hawkesbury's instructions, Cornwallis's interference worked to the advantage of the French. In short, Merry thought Cornwallis utterly incompetent, referring to his superior as an 'old woman', and stating that 'He is completely in a state of Dotage, and literally fit for Nothing but a Nap after Dinner'.⁴

¹Merry to Jackson, 30 Dec. 1801, Jackson Papers, FO 353/76.

²Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 30 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

³Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 30 Dec. 1801, FO 27/59.

⁴Merry to Jackson, 30 Dec. 1801, 19 and 30 Jan., 6 and 25 Feb., and 5 Mar. 1802, Jackson Papers, FO 353/76.

Merry was unduly hard on Cornwallis, but it is clear that the latter was showing too much of his hand. The First Consul, for his part, was eager as the British for a quick conclusion to the treaty.¹ He wrote to his brother, Lucien, on 1 December, 'Le congrès d'Amiens est réuni, et la paix définitive sera promptement signée.'² A month later he had become annoyed with the delay and demanded to know the precise day on which the treaty would be signed,³ and when the treaty still had not been concluded by March, he instructed Otto to place greater pressure on the British government.⁴ Nevertheless, these delays were not the responsibility of the British or the Spanish as has been claimed.⁵ For Joseph realized that the British were in a hurry and used this to his advantage.⁶ He told the First Consul that he was causing the delays intentionally to break the patience of the British, but was trying to make it appear that it was the fault of Cornwallis. Joseph could sense that Cornwallis was eager to conclude the treaty, and took advantage of it. The longer he kept Cornwallis at Amiens, the more impatient and ready to concede better terms he believed Cornwallis would become.⁷

¹Bonaparte to Talleyrand, 21 Oct. 1801, Letters and Documents of Napoleon, 1769-1822, ed. John Howard (London, 1961), p. 505.

²Bonaparte to Lucien Bonaparte, 1 Dec. 1801, Lettres inédites de Napoléon, ed. Leon Lecestre (Paris, 1897), p. 35.

³Bonaparte to Joseph Bonaparte, 29 Dec. 1801, Mémoires et Correspondance politique et militaire du Roi Joseph, pub. par le Baron Du Casse (9 vols, Paris, 1856), i. 215.

⁴Bonaparte to Otto, 12 Mar. 1802, Correspondance du Napoleon, vii. 519.

⁵Albert Sorel L'Europe et la Révolution française (8 vols, Paris, 1949), vi. 186; Mowat, p. 99.

⁶Joseph Bonaparte to Talleyrand, 3 Nivôse X (24 Dec. 1801), AE Angleterre/598; Same to same, 16 Pluviôse X (4 Feb. 1802), AE Angleterre/599.

⁷Joseph Bonaparte to Bonaparte, 12 & 17 Mar. 1802, Correspondance du Joseph, i. 227, 231.

To a large degree Joseph's plan worked. Cornwallis was not the only one who was impatient to sign the treaty. As mentioned, Addington and Hawkesbury had expected that the whole business would have been completed by the end of November, and when the negotiations dragged into January, they became quite anxious. As doubts grew over whether peace would be concluded, public confidence in the government started to wane. This uncertainty was also impeding the formulation of policy in other important areas. For Hawkesbury informed Cornwallis on 10 January that,

it is difficult for us to arrange our Finances till the Peace is actually concluded. As Parliament must meet for the Dispatch of Business before the End of this Month it will be impossible for Mr Addington to bring forward the Budget before the Completion of the Definitive Treaty & we may therefore be placed in a very embarrassing Situation and shall certainly be exposed to perpetual Importunities.¹

Addington was anxious to bring in a peace-time budget. The price of bread had begun to rise again despite the good harvest, and according to Starhemberg, *'Il est impossible au gouvernement de retâcher aucune taxe; et, par conséquent le peuple est également grevé, la misère redouble, et le mécontentement réparaît insensiblement.'*² Thus the government was under considerable pressure to sign a treaty as soon as possible.

The British position became even more difficult as the negotiations dragged on into February. The news that Bonaparte had assumed the Presidency of the Cisalpine Republic appeared to justify the position of critics of the preliminary treaty who claimed that French aggression would continue despite the peace. Consequently, Hawkesbury instructed Cornwallis that it was even more essential for him to hold a firm line with Joseph:

The Business of Lyons [where Bonaparte proclaimed himself President of the Cisalpine Republic] however makes it

¹Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 10 Jan. 1802, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/267, fos. 11-2.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 15 Jan. 1802, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/143.

important for us to be more firm than ever upon our own Rights and more determined than ever to resist all new Pretensions as far as respect British objects on the Part of the French government. If we do not adopt this as our policy We shall be exposed to perpetual insults.¹

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the British were partly to blame for the delay. First, in his haste to conclude the preliminary treaty, Hawkesbury had agreed to postpone until the congress at Amiens the final negotiation of the clauses on which he had had the most difficulty reaching agreement with Otto. He should not, therefore, have expected that Cornwallis would have any easier a time reaching agreement with Joseph Bonaparte. Yet Addington and Hawkesbury chose Cornwallis because they thought the negotiations would be merely a formality. Hawkesbury should have realized from his own experience that a great deal of work remained before a definitive treaty could have been concluded. Second, Addington and Hawkesbury complicated the negotiations by including issues which had not been covered by the preliminary treaty. Hawkesbury took it for granted that the French government would honour Otto's verbal assurances that provision would be made for the Prince of Orange and that Tobago would be given up in compensation for the prisoner of war claims. He should not have been so naive. Bringing up these issues at Amiens not only prolonged the negotiations themselves, but also permitted the French to introduce other issues as well, which further prolonged the affair. Finally, the British wasted a lot of time arguing over points of relatively little importance--the prisoner of war question, whether Portugal and Turkey should sign the treaty, and the indemnity for the Prince of Orange when they should have concentrated almost exclusively on the one question of vital importance: the settlement for Malta. Although the benefit of hindsight puts these questions into better perspective, Hawkesbury had acknowledged that Malta was the essential issue and it was clear at the time that the other questions mattered little by comparison. The British should have made a better assessment of their

¹Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 12 Feb. 1802, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/267, fo. 15.

priorities, and offered to exchange the lesser issues for a better settlement of Malta.

Addington and Hawkesbury had nevertheless realized that they could not allow the negotiations merely to drag on. For while they were stuck in limbo, Bonaparte had already increased his power. At the end of January they were even considering sending Lord Hervey, under-secretary in the Foreign Office, to Amiens to take over the negotiations.¹ After dismissing that idea, they decided that if peace were not concluded within a short period they would have to resume the war. On 12 February, the same day that Hawkesbury ordered Cornwallis to be more firm with Joseph, Hobart instructed the Admiralty to prepare for war on account of a likely rupture in the negotiations. Three weeks later he ordered the Admiralty to send six ships of the line to the West Indies in addition to those already sent to watch the French fleet at St Domingue.² The government was unable to make any final decisions at that time, however, because Addington and his daughter were seriously ill. Addington spent most of the month of February at home recuperating and watching over his daughter who very nearly died. By the beginning of March, the government doubted whether, in Yorke's words, the 'Infinite' treaty would ever arrive. Addington and Hobart, along with many others began to expect that the negotiations would break off.³

The problem facing the ministry was that they could not afford to allow the negotiations to carry on indefinitely, but at the same time they could not appear to be the party that broke off the negotiations.⁴ While the uncertainty of the negotiations was impeding the formulation of government policy, to declare war would

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 29 Jan. 1802, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/143.

²Hobart to Clephane, Feb. 1802, WO 6/55; Hobart to Admiralty, 12 Feb and 4 Mar. 1802, WO 6/149.

³Yorke to Hardwicke, 23 Feb. and 2 Mar. 1802, Add. MSS 35701, fos. 252-5, 261-70; Starhemberg to Colloredo, 23 Feb. 1802, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/143.

⁴Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 16 Feb. 1802, FO 27/60.

have outraged parliamentary and popular opinion. Therefore, Hawkesbury combined the threat of naval mobilization with a softening of the British terms on some of the minor points in the treaty, such as relaxing his insistence that the Turks must sign, and this line seems to have succeeded. For Joseph appeared quite surprised and alarmed at the prospect of British naval armament and suddenly became amenable to British terms on some of the outstanding articles of the treaty.¹

Hawkesbury then directed Cornwallis to present an ultimatum to the French, and sent a copy of a new draft treaty to propose to all the plenipotentiaries. He added that

If, however, any new demands should be insisted on, or if the Plenipotentiaries of the other Powers should object to signing the Treaty conformably to the Articles, of the inclosed Draft, it is His Majesty's Pleasure, that you inform the Minister of the Congress, that you have gone to the utmost extent of you instructions, and that in obedience to the orders of your Court, you must leave Amiens in eight days from the period of that Declaration; unless the Treaty is concluded within that time.²

The British proposal was similar in many respects to the latest French project, but included numerous amendments to the article concerning Malta. Hawkesbury hoped that the spirit of conciliation incorporated in it would be met by a similar response on the side of the French. He reiterated, however, that the British had gone as far as they could.

Cornwallis presented the British proposal to Joseph, but because he found the latter disposed to peace, he withheld the threat of the ultimatum as 'it might indicate strongly a Disposition of a contrary Tendency'. Joseph claimed that there were still many differences between the British and French positions, but that they were more in wording than in substance.³ Addington and Hawkesbury both wrote to assure Cornwallis that they approved of his discretion

¹Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 10 Mar. 1802, FO 27/60.

²Hawkesbury to Cornwallis, 14 Mar. 1802, FO 27/60.

³Cornwallis to Hawkesbury, 17 Mar. 1802, FO 27/60.

in not implementing the ultimatum, and agreed to a few more alterations to the terms of the treaty. Nevertheless, Addington stressed that 'Under the present Circumstances, Dispatch is of the utmost Importance on all Accounts, & particularly with a view to the financial Arrangements for the Year.'¹

As it appeared to Cornwallis that the differences over the terms were merely semantic, he consulted the Dutch plenipotentiary, R. J. Schimmelpenninck, who advised some modifications that Joseph found acceptable. On the evening of 24 March, Cornwallis sat down with Joseph and hammered out the final details. The French press announced the signing of the peace the next day, but it was not until 27 March that an official treaty was drawn up and signed. Six months after the signing of the preliminaries, and one year after the initial negotiations had commenced, the Addington ministry finally had a definitive peace.

In the end the definitive treaty very closely resembled the preliminaries. The most important article was the provision for Malta, and the settlement of this issue was a compromise. The British demands that the fortifications remain intact, that Maltese could join the Order of St John, and that a garrison be provided were all met. On the other hand, the British had to agree that the garrison be Neapolitan, and that the French, Austrians, Prussians, Spanish, and themselves join the Russians in guaranteeing the neutrality of the island. As the Russians had already refused either to garrison or to be the sole guarantor of the island, this could hardly be considered a concession on the part of the British. A compromise was also reached on the question of the prisoners of war: the British received recognition that each country was liable for payment, while the French received such vague terms for the provision of the payment that in the end they could avoid paying anything.

¹Addington to Cornwallis, 22 Mar. 1802, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/267, fo. 21.

During the negotiations numerous new issues were also brought forward that wasted a great deal of time. Of these the British were able to include an article promising indemnity for the Prince of Orange, although no specific arrangement was stipulated, and the French obtained an agreement over mutual extradition for specified crimes. All in all, therefore, Merry's belief that the definitive treaty was much worse than the preliminaries and his fear that he would be blamed for it were exaggerated.¹ For although the definitive treaty did not meet the expectations of Addington and Hawkesbury, it did provide an adequate settlement of the issues left outstanding by the preliminary treaty.

This did not mean, however, that the situation was as favourable as it had been in October 1801, or that the terms of the definitive treaty were as well received as those of the preliminaries. For the situation had indeed changed. France had sent a large fleet to the West Indies, and Bonaparte had increased his power by having himself elected the president of the Cisalpine Republic and forcing the Spanish to cede Louisiana. In addition, the delaying tactics of Joseph Bonaparte at Amiens had caused the British ministry considerable alarm. When Addington and Hawkesbury had first come to power they had not known whether they could trust the French government but they had felt they had to give Bonaparte the benefit of the doubt. Developments since the signing of the preliminary treaty, however, seemed to confirm that they could not trust the French to contain their aggression. Therefore, Addington and Hawkesbury had to be more on their guard, and more willing to accept that the peace might be of a shorter duration.

Other members of Parliament thought the same. For Grenville and Windham the past six months had justified their opposition to the peace terms. Pitt, while still supporting the peace, was more willing to concede that he distrusted the French and that the British would have to be prepared for a renewal of war. Addington and Hawkesbury also realized that the climate of opinion had soured.

¹Merry to Jackson, 5 Mar. 1802, Jackson Papers, FO 353/76.

Hawkesbury tried to get away without a debate or vote on the treaty, by stating to the House that none were necessary as the treaty conformed to the preliminaries which had already been debated. Windham for one, however, insisted on a debate. He used the debate on the motion to set a time for debate on the treaty to launch another attack on the idea of peace with Revolutionary France. Consequently, the government had to concede a debate.

During the course of the debate, there were only two new subjects discussed in it that had not been covered in the preliminaries. The first was the increase in the power of France in the previous few months as a result of the cession of Louisiana by Spain and of Bonaparte accepting the presidency of the Cisalpine Republic. From the standpoint of the British government, the preliminaries had been signed on the understanding that the relative positions of power between Britain and France would remain what they had been at the time of the signing of the preliminary treaty. Nevertheless, Louisiana and the Cisalpine Republic were not covered by the terms of the treaty, and the British could hardly dictate what territories other states could or could not give to France. French power was increased by these acquisitions, but as Addington and Hawkesbury stated in the Commons, the question was whether these acquisitions justified a renewal of war on the part of Britain, and they thought not.

The other question related to the renewal of ancient treaties which had been rendered void by the outbreak of war. It was unclear whether accepted diplomatic practice required that these treaties be mentioned by name in the peace treaty in order to have them reinstated, or whether their reinstatement was implied. Those who criticized the treaty took the position that, as the government had not stipulated the renewals of these treaties in the treaty of Amiens, they had carelessly sacrificed many advantages important to British trade. There was nothing careless, however, about the omission. For Addington and Hawkesbury had deliberately ignored the question of renewal. Liverpool, who had a vast experience in matters of trade and trade treaties, advised against renewing these

treaties, as did Eldon.¹ In the first place, Bonaparte was unlikely to agree to the terms of the 1786 treaty because they were too advantageous to Britain. Second, so much had changed in terms of diplomacy and international trade since the beginning of the war that the old treaties were no longer practical. Liverpool explained:

It is the lot of all the Governments of Europe but particularly of that of Great Britain, to have fallen on Times when new Principles and new Systems must be adopted. We can no longer resort to those on which our ancestors have hitherto acted. The Events of the present War have not only changed the Government of France--extended its Territory, and added to its political Influence; but they have subverted almost every Political Relation that before subsisted between the different Powers of Europe. We must depend for our future Security, on a new System of Policy adapted to the wonderful Changes that have taken place.²

The British had also obtained some important advantages in their trade with Portugal, in particular, which could not be accommodated by a renewal of the old treaties. Therefore, Addington and Hawkesbury preferred a vague commercial agreement with France to a comprehensive treaty.³ Dundas expressed concern that the failure to renew the treaties with reference to India might deprive Britain of its special rights in that region, but Wellesley did not agree. He saw nothing in the treaty of Amiens which was likely to have any effect on the British position in India.

The most important consequence of the Amiens negotiations was, however, the divisions which arose within the government. Pelham objected to accepting the peace terms until the government had received a satisfactory explanation of French actions and intentions. He considered resigning, but as this would have caused great difficulties for the government and as he agreed with his

¹Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 7 Dec. 1801, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 116; Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 11 Dec. 1801, Add. MSS 61818, fos. 21-3.

²Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 23 Dec. 1801, FO 27/66.

³Otto to Talleyrand, 1 Brumaire X (23 Oct. 1801), and 7 Nivôse X (28 Dec. 1801), AE Angleterre/597.

colleagues on all the rest of the important issues, he chose to remain.¹ When Auckland publicly admitted that he was dissatisfied with the provisions for the Prince of Orange, he received a stern rebuke from Addington: 'This Information has necessarily led me to suppose, that it cannot be the Wish or Intention of your Lordship to continue to hold an office, connected with a government, of whose Conduct you have publickly declared your Disapprobation upon an occasion so important.'² Addington was able to silence this criticism, but it had already proved politically embarrassing and emphasized the unsatisfactory nature of the position which the negotiations for the Treaty of Amiens had placed the government.

As far as the government was concerned, the political climate in Britain had certainly deteriorated between the signing of the preliminaries and the conclusion of the definitive treaty. Addington and Hawkesbury had expected that the congress would be short and mostly a formality. Thus they were greatly alarmed and infuriated when it dragged into a long and complicated negotiation which resulted in final terms which were even less favourable to the British. The government even had to mobilize the navy to get Joseph Bonaparte to sign. Moreover, during that time Bonaparte had expanded his power, and as Otto noted British opinion on the peace soured with each new French acquisition.³ Thus the long delay and the deterioration of the British position gave ammunition to the opposition. Although this group was very small, it was beginning to grow and was led by some of the most talented and influential parliamentary speakers. Nevertheless, the government felt that at that time the benefits of the peace still outweighed the costs of renewing the war. They were less inclined, however, to believe that the period of peace would last very long.

¹Aspinall, iv. 17n; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 73-4.

²Addington to Auckland, 7 May 1802, Add. MSS 34455, fo. 492.

³Otto to Talleyrand, 14 Ventôse X (5 Mar. 1802), AE Angleterre/597.

Chapter Five

Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform, April to December 1802

`The system of terror, of alarm, and of espionage, has been laid aside, the most burthensome of the taxes repealed, and a sincere desire manifested on the part of the new minister to meet the wishes of the nation. ...

They call him the Doctor ... a minister of healing he has truly been; he has poured balm and oil into the wounds of the country, and the country is blessing him.

Robert Southey¹

The news of the signing of the definitive treaty was a tremendous relief to the ministry. The way in which Cornwallis had allowed Joseph Bonaparte to redefine some of the articles of the preliminary treaty was unsatisfactory, but at least the dreadful uncertainty that had impeded government policy in all areas had dissipated. This did not mean, however, that the ministry could relax. Peace was an important end in itself, but it was also a means to several other necessary ends. The poor state of the country's finances and the consequences of economic distress had been, according to Addington, two of the most important incentives for seeking peace. In addition, St Vincent desired peace to give him the opportunity to reform abuses and inefficiency in the administration of the navy. The indefinite period of peace granted by the signing of the treaty automatically eliminated certain expenditures, injected greater confidence into the stock market, and led to a further decrease in the price of wheat, but there was still plenty of work for the ministry before all of its objectives were attained.

¹Robert Southey, Letters from England, ed. Jack Simmons (London, 1951), pp. 71-4.

The Finances

One of Addington's primary concerns during his period in office was to ensure that the government obtained sufficient funds to meet all of its commitments. Prior to the signing of the preliminaries of peace, Addington believed that the time was approaching when the government would require drastic and unpopular measures to remain solvent. For the expense of the war establishments was increasing every year, and with no allies to distract the enemy, the British faced the full brunt of the French military forces and the possibility of invasion, while at the same time money was becoming more difficult to obtain. The wartime levels of taxation were already extremely unpopular, and loans were the only means of paying for the war. The money markets, however, were becoming increasingly restricted, as the interruption of foreign trade and the collapse of the domestic markets, owing to the high price of wheat, ate into profits. Thus the City had less money available to lend to the government and this caused a rise in interest rates.¹ The scarcity of money and high interest rates caused by the war and government borrowing exacerbated the problem by restricting the capital available to the private sector, which in turn intensified the general economic slump. Thus the government was caught in a vicious circle and the prospects for the immediate future appeared bleak.

The signing of the preliminary treaty brought initial relief, but the manner in which the negotiations for the definitive treaty dragged on caused great uncertainty in the money markets. For few were willing to lend money even to the government while they were unsure whether peace would last. Consequently, if Addington had tried to negotiate a loan at that time, he would have had to accept extremely disadvantageous terms. Nor could he bring down a budget as projections of expenditure and income were dependent on whether or not the war would be resumed. Therefore, he postponed the loan and the budget until after he was certain of the outcome of the Amiens

¹Polden, p. 141.

negotiations.¹

When the news of the signing of the treaty arrived on 29 March, Addington set immediately to arranging Britain's first peace-time budget in ten years. He relied heavily on Vansittart and consulted Pitt often, keeping him supplied through correspondence with trade, taxation, and other economic returns.² For Addington's first budget was extremely important, and he was anxious to obtain all the help he could.

Nevertheless, the responsibility for the general direction of the budget belonged to Addington. This budget did not respond merely to the financial needs of the government but also to the larger pressures which pervaded all aspects of the ministry's policy-making. Peace had become desirable because the consequences of the war had severely strained the economy and caused considerable financial hardship, and during the war the public endured unprecedentedly rapid increases in taxation.³ Now that peace had been obtained, Addington had to pass the benefits on to the country.⁴ The only means of accomplishing this was to reduce taxes by cutting expenditure, and the largest item of expenditure other than interest payments was the military establishment. But while he recognized that peace would permit large cuts in the army and the navy, he was nevertheless aware that the peace would be extremely precarious; for though he supported the treaty, he too had become suspicious of Bonaparte's intentions. He recognized that the French might take advantage of the peace to increase their power or even provoke a renewal of war,⁵ and so, he

¹Ziegler, p. 148.

²Pellew, ii. 57-63; P. K. O'Brien, 'English Government Revenue, 1793-1815: A Study in Fiscal and Financial Policy in the Wars against France' (D. Phil., Oxford, 1967), p. 29; Polden, pp. 45, 91, 143; Steele to Pitt, 5 Feb. 1803, Pitt Papers, Cambridge University Library 6958/2925.

³O'Brien, p. 313.

⁴Pellew, ii. 58.

⁵Pellew, ii. 58; Malmesbury Diary, iv. 70.

felt obliged to maintain British forces on a footing that would prepare them for sudden mobilization. Balancing these two conflicting priorities was, however, extremely difficult.¹

The budget which Addington introduced into the Commons on 5 April was the most extraordinary in many years. This was to be expected as it was the first peace-time budget in nine years, but Addington also faced some entirely new problems. The most important item in the budget was the repeal of the income tax. This novel measure of Pitt's had been tolerated, but only grudgingly, after being introduced under the conditions of the war in 1799. Although Parliament and the elites in the country seemed to accept Pitt's arguments about the necessity of the new tax to enable Britain to continue the war, they considered it a distasteful temporary expedient. As the war lingered on, however, extra-Parliamentary opposition to the tax grew, and criticism of it began to carry over into criticism of the war in general. Everyone expected that peace would necessarily bring relief from wartime levels of taxation, and during the interlude between the signing of the preliminaries and the definitive treaties, the City of London petitioned Parliament for the repeal of the income tax.²

Addington had long since decided that the repeal of the tax was necessary on both political and practical grounds.³ For he wished to grant the country as many of the benefits of peace as possible. The health of the economy required it, but also the terms of the treaty were so unsatisfactory that he needed to win over popular support by proving to the country that the benefits of peace compensated for the surrender of the conquered colonies. On the practical side, Addington

¹Pellew, ii. 56.

²B. E. V. Sabine, A History of Income Tax (London, 1966), p. 34; A. Farnsworth, Addington, Author of the Modern Income Tax (London, 1951), p. 34; Edwin R. A. Seligman, The Income Tax: A Study of the History Theory and Practice of Income Tax at Home and Abroad (New York, 1911), p. 115; O'Brien, p. 398.

³Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 Mar. 1802, Add. MSS 35701, fos. 279-80.

was also concerned about the efficiency of the tax. Everyone understood that it was an extraordinary measure implemented to meet the extraordinary financial demands of the war. Addington told the Commons:

The income tax was a measure much too important for the House to let go during the continuance of the war. He should be sorry if the measure he was about to take was the result of a change in his opinion, as to the policy of continuing this tax had the war continued. ... He was, however, bound to declare, that it was his thorough and entire conviction, that it was to the wisdom which originated that tax, and the firmness which induced the House to persist in it, that the country was indebted for the comforts we now had; for it was by that system that we were enabled to surmount the difficulties with which, during the last three years, we had to struggle; and it was from that conviction also he now recommended that this burthen should not be left to rest on the shoulders of the public in time of peace, because it should be reserved for the important occasions which, he trusted, would not soon recur.¹

Thus, Addington believed that it was better to keep the tax in reserve until war resumed. If it had been continued during peace, the government would have begun to take it for granted as an ordinary source of revenue, and the exchequer would have had to look elsewhere to meet the extraordinary demands if war resumed.

The next major concern was the peace-time military establishment, and the military and navy were the obvious choices for spending cuts because they comprised the areas that had increased most dramatically during the war. Nevertheless, two points prevented Addington implementing immediate drastic cuts. First, disbanding regiments and decommissioning ships took time, up to six months or more for those overseas. Second, Addington worried that the French might take advantage of Britain's demobilization to make further gains in Europe or to attack Britain. The British had to be prepared to re-mobilize and have their army and navy up to strength in a short period, and this required a large peace-time establishment. Consequently, the policy of the government was to provide an

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 447-8.

effective force at the least expense.¹ Thus with the long term future so uncertain, Addington decided to provide only for a five months' establishment and postpone the request for funds for the further seven months until later in the year, when he would have a better idea of the forces required.² In the meantime, he budgeted for a naval establishment of 130,000 for the first five months and in June he returned to ask provision for 70,000 for the rest of the year. The regular army was reduced to 95,000 which was still twice the number of the first peace-time establishment following the American war. He also provided for a militia of 48,000 with 24,000 in reserve and an Irish militia of 18,000.³

Another financial measure, not technically included in the budget but which was related to it and implemented only a few days before, was the reform of the Civil List. This was important because it was indicative of the originality of Addington's financial measures and supports John Breihan's argument that Addington was a proponent of reform, not the block-headed conservative depicted by some historians.⁴ At that time, the Civil List included the provision for the salaries of most government officials as well as the expenses of the royal family. The result was that while the King had exercised remarkable economy in managing his household, the Civil List had run into arrears owing to the growing expense of the government and the diplomatic service during the war, because the Civil List schedules had not changed for sixteen years.⁵ Consequently, after arranging for Parliament to pay for the arrears, Addington removed the government charges from the heading of the Civil List and arranged for their

¹Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OM6.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 446.

³Pellew, ii. 65; Watson, p. 412.

⁴Breihan, pp. 163-89.

⁵Pellew, ii. 62-3.

future payment to be provided by the consolidated fund.¹ In this way, Parliament and not the King became responsible for the expenses of government.²

All of these measures were costly, and in addition to these expenditures, Addington was obliged to make up the deficiencies of some of Pitt's projections, contribute to the reduction of the national debt, pay off some of the existing exchequer bills, and pay the interest on the remaining exchequer bills. His dilemma was thus to obtain sufficient revenue, while at the same time relieving the economy and the country of the burden which the government had caused during the previous few years. Moreover, when the income tax had failed to produce the revenue projected, Pitt met the shortfall by raising loans on the security of the future revenue of the tax, in effect mortgaging the tax for another ten years, while the interest on those loans absorbed one-third of its revenue.³ Addington consequently had to raise in excess of £100 million to accomplish his goals.

Addington's solution was to raise an extraordinarily large loan. This was controversial because financial orthodoxy dictated that the government should raise loans only in war-time and rely solely on taxes in peace-time. It would have been impossible, however, for Addington to have raised the amount he required through taxes. On the whole, there was little complaint in Parliament about this decision; even Pitt and his colleagues recognized that unusual financial and political circumstances demanded an extraordinary response. The major drawback though was that the national debt was to be increased considerably during peace-time. Nevertheless, Addington calculated that this would be the least onerous means of meeting all his financial needs. For provided there were sufficient funds in the

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 322, 372-82.

²D. K. Keir, The Constitutional History of Modern Britain since 1485 (7th edition, London, 1964), p. 387.

³Pellew, ii. 59-60; Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OT1.

money markets, government loans provided an attractive investment without injuring the economy. In the short term, taxpayers only had to pay the interest on the loan, and the provision of the sinking fund would gradually eliminate all government debt. This was the thus least painful way to raise a large sum.

Having repealed the income tax, Addington was obliged to make other provision for the loans which Pitt had secured upon it amounting to £56,445,000. To meet this, along with the other expenses of government, he raised a total loan of £97,934,437. His timing, however, proved excellent. Owing to the prospect of peace, which was good for the economy, and an expectation of a reduction of government borrowing in the future, there were seven applications for the loan and the bids were competitive. Addington was thus able to obtain it at a much lower rate of interest than anyone had expected. He was also very fortunate in that he obtained the money on the day after the Ways and Means had been completely exhausted.¹ According to the terms of the loan, for every £100 the government received it paid out £65 in 3% consols, £60 in 3% reduced stock, and £6 19s. 3d. in 3% reduced stock, a total of £131 19s. 3d. As the market value of government stock was much higher than that, Addington considered this 'bargain ... as perfectly satisfactory and auspicious to the greatest degree.'² Pitt corroborated this statement by pointing out that after nine years of war Addington in effect had obtained 'a loan for 25 millions at the very same price of stocks at which, in the first year of the war in 1793, with all the accumulating resources of ten years of peace, we made [sic] a loan for only four millions.'³ Addington calculated the annual interest on the loans at £3,211,202, but to be on the safe side he provided additional taxes to cover £4 million. This was achieved by raising existing taxes without creating any new ones. He raised the taxes on malt and beer by £2 million, the

¹Polden, p. 144.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 447; Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OT5.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 458-9.

assessed taxes by £1 million, and the import and export duties by £1 million.

The increase in the revenue from the malt and beer tax was achieved by raising the hop duty to 3d. per pound weight and the malt tax to 2s. 5d. per bushel, along with 2s. extra per barrel of strong beer. Samuel Whitbread, the whig brewer, rose to protest these measures immediately after Addington's budget speech, but the fears he expressed over the damage to the trade proved groundless. For the brewing industry had begun to recover after January 1802 and brewers were able without problem to increase prices in line with the taxes. To raise the additional funds through the import and export duties, Addington completely overhauled Pitt's convoy tax and replaced it with a tonnage duty, which increased the duty on imports but reduced that on exports. He justified this measure on the grounds that peace would bring a return of commercial prosperity. In addition, the assessed taxes were increased on average by one third, and some of the loopholes for evasion were tightened up.

Two further reforms, which are worth mentioning because they increased revenue and the efficiency of debt reduction, were the consolidation of the sinking funds and the reform of the state lottery. In 1786, Pitt had created a sinking fund of £1 million to pay off the national debt. In 1792, he produced another bill to provide one percent of every loan to be paid into another sinking fund to pay off the new debts. Addington consolidated the two sinking funds into a new fund designed to pay off all of the national debt, and he relaxed all restrictions on the limit of money which could accumulate in the fund. Thus he projected that the new fund would be easier to administer, would extinguish the debt in a shorter period, and would save the public £900,000 per year in taxes.¹ He also abolished private lotteries and overhauled the state lottery to increase its produce by £300,000 to a total of £1,650,000 per year.²

The last of Addington's most important financial measures was

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 896; Pellew, ii. 69n.

²Pellew, ii. 66.

to continue the restriction on cash payments. Many had expected that peace would lead to a resumption of the gold standard, for Pitt had justified the suspension of cash payments on the grounds of the financial necessities of the war. Logically, the end of the war meant the end of the need for this measure. Moreover, there were strong arguments for resuming cash payments, such as the disadvantageous exchange rates, and economic historian Henry MacLeod severely chastised Addington for not acting on these grounds.¹ Nevertheless, there were stronger reasons for not removing the restriction. A return to the gold standard would have caused a severe contraction of the money supply which would have hurt British trade.² British commercial and industrial interests had cried out for relief from the war, and the period of recovery that they desired would have been ruined by a further recession.³ As Addington's priority was to give the country the benefits of peace, he could not implement a measure that made good financial sense but bad commercial and political sense. Moreover, the Bank of England preferred a period of six months' recuperation before it was obliged to resume cash payments.⁴ Addington thus believed it was prudent to wait until he was able to judge the effects of peace on British trade before abolishing the restrictions.⁵ Parliament appeared to concur as his bills met with little opposition, for even traditional critics of the government such as French Laurence and George Tierney approved.⁶

Addington's budget was a political success. Even Canning grudgingly agreed, admitting that, 'Pitt's [being] at the head of the

¹Henry MacLeod, The Theory and Practice of Banking (2 vols, London, 1876), pp. 4-6.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 542-3.

³O'Brien, p. 218.

⁴Edwin Cannan, The Paper Pound of 1797-1821 (London, 1919), p. 70.

⁵Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 543.

⁶Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 545-6.

Treasury is no longer essential to the salvation of the Country.'¹ No one was pleased about the tax increases, but it was clear that these measures were necessary in order to allow the government to abolish the income tax, which was the greatest source of grievance. The tax increases did not prove onerous, however, as peace permitted a revival of overseas trade and the fall in the price of wheat aided internal markets. Nevertheless, the budget did not satisfy everyone. Some in parliament and in the country at large questioned the large peace establishment and the rise in the national debt. Addington realized, however, that, as Britain's diplomatic and economic interests conflicted, a compromise was necessary. He tried to provide a military and naval force sufficient for national security on the one hand, but not too financially burdensome on the other. Some of the war hawks complained that the force was too small, while those concerned about economy complained that it was too large. Addington's compromise did, however, provide the country with most of the benefits of peace that it had expected, while at the same time leaving the military prepared for a sudden renewal of war. Pitt and the King supported him firmly in his decision, and according to Otto and Ziegler, Addington was never more popular than during the months which immediately followed the conclusion of peace and the budget.²

Addington brought down another peace-time budget on 10 December. This one was more controversial as it contributed to the strain on his relationship with Pitt. For Pitt objected to two points. First, Addington borrowed £11 million, half in exchequer bills, to pay for the military establishment proposed for 1803. Pitt complained that he had warned Addington that it was bad financial policy to resort to loans in peace-time, and that all expenses should be met through taxation, even though strangely enough he had not made a similar criticism of Addington's first budget.³ Pitt may have been correct in

¹Canning to Frere, 11 Apr. 1802, Add. MSS 38833, fo. 104.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 16 Germinal X (6 Apr. 1802), AE Angleterre/597; Ziegler, p. 161.

³Stanhope, iii. 86.

a strictly theoretical sense, but not in a practical political one. For Addington did not face a normal peace-time situation.¹ French aggression on the Continent posed a threat to British interests which required that Britain's military remain almost on a war alert.² Thus the circumstances were novel and demanded a level of government expenditure far beyond a typical year of peace. Addington's choice was to increase either taxes or the national debt. He would have provoked violent opposition in Parliament and in the country, however, if he had proposed to increase taxes by £11 million. On the other hand, the obvious drawback to issuing exchequer bills was the danger of flooding the market. Nevertheless, Addington calculated that the increase in trade since the beginning of the war would permit the market to absorb more bills than prior to 1792, and he referred for proof to the high premium on existing bills.³ He could have raised money through taxation, but he wished to avoid further burdens on the taxpayer; Pitt on the other hand did not propose practical alternatives.

The other area of disagreement was over the consolidated fund. Using the returns for the first two quarters, Addington estimated the surplus on the fund for the entire year would reach £6.5 million. Rose and Pitt complained, however, that this was a gross exaggeration. They criticized the method Addington used to calculate the sum and claimed that he had over-estimated by almost £2.8 million.⁴ They were later proved partially correct as Addington had failed to take into account the end of season slump in trade. The actual surplus was only £5.1 million.⁵ Nevertheless, charges of gross fiscal mismanagement were unfair because Pitt and Rose missed the

¹Ziegler, p. 168; Polden, pp. 159-60.

²Addington to the King, 30 Nov. 1802, Aspinall, iv. 64.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1122.

⁴Rose to Tomline, 24 Dec. 1802, Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War, p. 481; Polden, p. 160.

⁵Pellew, ii. 103-4.

most important point. While Addington had estimated the final amount would be £6.5 million he only took credit for £4 million. He explained:

He had proposed a vote so moderate, because it would answer the immediate purpose of enabling him to apply to the public service the sums which might be realised as the surplus of the consolidated fund in the two next quarters, and would afford the means of ascertaining by actual experience, whether the expectations, which he thought himself fully justified in entertaining of its produce during the remainder of the year, were likely to be accomplished. By so cautious a proceeding, the public service would be guarded against the effects of any possible disappointment.¹

Addington's projections may have raised expectations that the revenue would be much higher, but Steele came to Addington's defence by assuring Pitt that the government would receive most of the money that it had projected.² Thus, from a technical standpoint, Pitt and Rose were justified in their criticism, but they made more of it than it deserved.³

Having concentrated on Pitt's criticism of this budget, contemporaries overlooked the subtle but important innovation in Addington's presentation. In the budget speech of December 1802, he provided a general overview of the British economy as he described at length the financial and commercial situation of the country.⁴ This was new, as former budgets had been merely an account of projected revenue and expenditure for the following year. Addington implemented a more extensive examination of the finances to justify his measures, and so provided Parliament and the public with information that they had not previously received, enabling them better to understand the working of the economy and better to judge the budget itself. Consequently, this method was adopted by all

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1124-5.

²Steele to Pitt, 5 Feb. 1803, Pitt Papers, Cambridge University Library, 6958/2925.

³Polden, pp. 162-3.

⁴Colchester Diary, i. 412.

successive chancellors of the exchequer.

Despite the criticism of Pitt and Rose, this budget was even more successful than Addington's first. Castlereagh told Wellesley:

Mr Addington has opened the most prosperous budget this country has witnessed, not even excepting 1792. The revenue has risen above three millions, and the export of British manufactures has increased to an equal amount upon the rated value, between six and seven millions. The effect of this statement has been to raise the funds above four percent.¹

Liverpool noted that the foreign exchanges had changed in Britain's favour and that the merchant interests were behind the government.² Yorke believed that the budget speech did much to stabilize support for the government.³ Dr Farquhar, Pitt's physician, informed Addington:

I can not suffer this opportunity to escape me of congratulating the Prime Minister upon the impression which his conduct has made upon the Country in general, & in a more particular point of view, the Electrical effect upon the Public mind, by his animating, and impressive Speech of Friday last. It has warmed every heart, & enlivened every Countenance. It has inspired Confidence, & met the Feeling of the Country at large.⁴

Even some of Addington's opponents, such as Minto, admitted that the budget had produced beneficial effects that would strengthen the government's position.⁵

¹Castlereagh to Wellesley, 17 Dec. 1802, Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, ed. Montgomery Martin (5 vols, London, 1837), iii. 96. Abbot also claimed that the funds had risen nearly five per cent in one day, Colchester Diary, i. 412.

²Liverpool to Addington, 15 Dec. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ46.

³Yorke to Hardwicke, 20 Dec. 1802, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 68-71.

⁴Farquhar to Addington, 12 Dec. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ103.

⁵Minto to Lady Minto, 14 Dec. 1802, Life and Letters of Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto, from 1751-1806, ed. Countess of Minto (3 vols, London, 1874), iii. 263.

Addington was no financial wizard. Nevertheless, the peace-time budgets that he devised with considerable help from Vansittart did demonstrate a degree of imagination and a keen determination to implement reforms. Their financial measures were far from perfect and many of Addington's individual objectives could have been attained better through different lines of policy. His position as Prime Minister and his role in the formulation of foreign policy, however, gave him a greater breadth of vision as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Fiscal policy could not be formulated in isolation or based solely on concern for the traditional rules of economic management. Addington was equally concerned about Britain's diplomatic position and domestic social problems, and he believed that he ought to arrange his priorities and sacrifice some minor interests to insure that the essential interests were preserved. By December 1802, the naval and military establishments were approximately double their prewar size, while at the same time 'the total savings already resulting from the peace amounted to twenty-five millions sterling annually'.¹ The compromises he chose to make were justified on these grounds.

Social Policy

After the state of the finances, social unrest was the most pressing domestic concern of the Addington ministry. As mentioned, the greatest problem about social unrest was that the government could do little directly to prevent it. For the government could never face the problem head on because it lacked the resources. Instead, ministers could only try to alleviate the primary causes of the unrest, or deploy the military to intimidate the masses. For the ministry the whole question of social unrest was intimately linked to the war: war conditions exacerbated unemployment and high food prices and left fewer troops to suppress riots. Thus the only solution was to end the war.

¹Pellew, ii. 99-100.

In terms of social policy, the signing of the peace preliminaries proved wise. Social historians of the period agree that the peace led to a considerable decline in social unrest, at least in the short term. The great decrease in the reports of riots and other seditious activities received by the Home Office after 1 October point to this conclusion. Disagreement remains, however, as to the duration of the period in which radical activities had effectively ceased. Peace proved an effective deterrent to sedition and conspiracy according to J. Ann Hone and Roger Wells. On the other hand, E. P. Thompson, J. L. Baxter, and F. K. Donnelly, citing the reports of government spies in Yorkshire, suggest that revolutionary activities revived after only a few months. John Dinwiddy denies, however, that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the existence of a revolutionary movement in Yorkshire in 1801-2, referring to the fact that Fitzwilliam consistently questioned the reports of his spies. This debate underlines the fact that there is no conclusive evidence about the nature and extent of social unrest in this period. The government was dependent on information from a variety of spies and local officials, some of whom had incentive to exaggerate reports of unrest and others who were inclined to play them down. Nevertheless, the general impression at the time seems to be that radicalism and social unrest within the country as a whole had subsided considerably below the apparently dangerous levels of the early months of 1801, and this appears to be corroborated by the considerable decrease in the report of riots and the logical assumption that once the major causes of unrest were removed that riots should subside.¹

Thus peace had helped to decrease the revolutionary threat posed by radicalism and unrest. One of the reasons for this was that the announcement of peace coincided with the best harvest in many years, causing the price of grain to tumble. Thus once bread became both plentiful and affordable the poorer classes were less inclined to

¹Hone, pp. 100-1. Wells, Insurrection, pp. 219-225; Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, p. 520; Baxter and Donnelly, p. 129; Dinwiddy, pp. 113-23.

riot. The other reason was that the war had been a major target of radical criticism of the establishment, but as the ministry had put an end to it, the grounds for opposing the government were no longer as strong. Consequently, peace contributed to reducing social unrest by helping to resolve the greatest grievance of the masses, while at the same time undermining the radical leadership.

It seemed, moreover, that Addington was not content merely to sign the peace and hope that all of the social problems would simply disappear, but tried to implement a domestic policy which would pacify Britain, in the same spirit that he used foreign policy to pacify Europe. For example, he removed a great source of friction caused by the suspension of Habeas Corpus for treason and the act designed to suppress seditious meetings. While during his first month in office he became convinced by a considerable body of reports that an insurrectionary movement was afoot that required these repressive measures, once the war was over and social unrest had subsided, he allowed them to lapse without implementing any new legislation in their place, and as a result most of the state prisoners were released.

Even though peace with France removed many of the motives for social unrest, the domestic scene in Britain remained unsettled. Trouble continued to erupt periodically in some areas, particularly Yorkshire, and the Home Office was obliged to respond. Pelham took charge of the Home Office in August 1801 after most of the crises had subsided. While as a Cabinet colleague he proved a thorn in Addington's side, became an absolute anathema to Hardwicke in dealing with Irish affairs, and added little strength to the government bench in the Lords, he nevertheless brought the right temper to the problems of social conflict.

Portland, Pelham's predecessor, had been keen to root out and suppress all possible sources of unrest for fear of insurrection, and where previously local officials had hounded the reluctant Home Office to take action, he was first to implore magistrates to be more vigorous in implementing the laws. Only a lack of resources and administrative machinery prevented him from taking more direct action

himself. Pelham on the contrary was more calm and reserved as Secretary of State. In fact, his style was reminiscent of the period previous to Portland's tenure. While the war continued, he concentrated on using the repressive legislation to remove the leaders involved in seditious activities. He suggested, for instance, that an example be made of the ringleader of the United Irishmen in Leeds,¹ and in response to reports of illegal assemblies in the West Riding, he told Fitzwilliam:

Although I agree with your Lordship in thinking that, from the general complexion of these meetings, they appear rather to be dwindling away than gaining ground, yet I am at the same time of the opinion that, if the Persons of any of the most active Members among them, could be properly identified on sufficient Evidence it might be of advantage to lay the case before His Majesty's Law Servants, with a view to their being prosecuted for an illegal meeting, for such I have no doubt it would be held to be; or, if that could not be effected, even to apprehend them, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, by a Warrant from me for that purpose.²

After the war was over, however, Pelham responded to most reports of unrest by stating that they should be dealt with by the magistrates, and he refused to send London Police officers out into the country except in pursuit of criminals who had escaped from London.³ He was also alarmed by reports of men training in arms without commission, but insisted that seizures could be made only when evidence was strong.⁴

Another example of the moderation of the ministry, was its response to an attack on the King. On 31 August 1801, a man named McLean charged at the King while he was attending the Drury Lane Theatre. McLean was arrested, but Addington, believing him to be mad,

¹Pelham to the Mayor of Leeds, 8 Aug. 1801, HO 43/13.

²Pelham to Fitzwilliam, 19 Aug. 1801, HO 43/13.

³Pelham to Sitwell, 11 Dec. 1801, and Pelham to Davies, 18 June 1802, HO 43/13; Pelham to Pembroke, 9 Aug. 1802, HO 42/66.

⁴Pelham to Fitzwilliam, 22 July 1802, and same to Jones, 2 July 1802, HO 43/13.

rather than an enemy of the state, recommended that he be sent to Bedlam. When it was discovered, however, that McLean was merely trying to present a petition to the King, he was released.¹

The ministry also faced violence which stemmed from industrial disputes. Between April and September 1802, there were frequent outbreaks in the clothing districts of Yorkshire and in Wiltshire, which stemmed from unemployment and low wages. This industrial action consisted of gangs of croppers breaking machines, setting fire to cloth factories, mills, and ricks of manufacturers, and shooting at both workmen and manufacturers.² In Yorkshire, the workers' grievances centred on declining wages which had resulted from the use of machines and violations by the employers of the apprenticeship acts.³ In Wiltshire, the problem was a surplus of agricultural labour exacerbated by the return of ex-servicemen who increased the ranks of the unemployed.⁴

Pelham's first response was to leave the problem to the local magistrates, but as the violence continued through the summer he agreed to Fitzwilliam's request to send troops to Yorkshire.⁵ In August, he too travelled to Salisbury to discuss the problems in that region with Wiltshire magistrates. As the disturbances continued, the ministry became convinced that these outbreaks of violence were not merely isolated incidents but that there was a strong connection between the events in Yorkshire and Wiltshire.⁶ In September Pelham

¹Ford to King, 1 and 11 Sept. 1801, and William Morton Pitt to Ford, 24 Dec. 1801, HO 42/62.

²Inhabitants of Melksham to Pelham, 26 July 1802, Petition of Magistrates, 24 July 1802, and Jones to Pelham, 29 July 1802, HO 42/65.

³Polden, p. 213.

⁴Emsley, p. 96.

⁵Pelham to Jones, July 1802, Fitzwilliam to Pelham, 20 July 1802, and Pelham to York, July 1802, HO 42/65.

⁶Pelham to Fitzwilliam, 30 July 1802, HO 43/13; King to Fitzwilliam, 10 August 1802, HO 42/66.

wrote:

It appears to me from these accounts that the successful Establishment of the Machinery is a Subject of great National Importance in as much as the Preeminence of our Cloths in great measure depends upon it, at the same time ye immediate Interest of the Sheermen & others who may be deprived of their accustomed support & Means of living is not to be disregarded, however irregular & dangerous their mode of Maintaining their Interest may have been; It has occurred to me that a Meeting of some of the principal Clothiers from Yorkshire & Wiltshire might be of use in devising Means for satisfying those People who are likely to be affected by this Machinery, in order that, when Government shall have convinced those who have attempted to redress themselves by Acts of Violence, that the Laws cannot be transgressed with Impunity, there is a disposition to attend to their reasonable complaints & to prevent a recurrence of the same outrages.¹

This demonstrated a desire on the part of the government not only to suppress the violence but also to redress the grievances from which it sprang. Fitzwilliam pointed out, however, that if merchants and manufacturers from Yorkshire and Wiltshire met on their own they would be accused of making a combination, so he suggested that the meeting should be called by the government.² Within a few weeks, however, the workers changed their strategy. Croppers in Leeds went on strike over the policy of the employers using apprentices under fifteen years old.³ Other workers abandoned terrorism and appealed to a statute of Edward VI which prohibited the use of unapprenticed labour in gig-mills. The manufacturers responded by forming a pressure group to move the government to suspend the statute. They carried considerably more clout with the government than did the workers, but the ministry had some sympathy for the latter. The government gave way to the employers but Pelham and Eldon delayed the bill in the Lords until the clothiers modified their proposals. In the end, the government granted a one-year postponement of the bill to suspend the statute of Edward VI pending a general revision in

¹Pelham to Reed, 2 Sept. 1802, HO 42/66.

²Fitzwilliam to Pelham, 9 Sept. 1802, HO 42/66.

³Fitzwilliam to Pelham, 27 Sept. 1802, HO 42/66.

1804.¹

The most important test of the ministry's social policy during peace-time was the Despard conspiracy. Colonel Edward Marcus Despard was an embittered Irish ex-soldier who, after serving in Jamaica in the 1770s, was promoted to King's Superintendent of British Honduras in 1780.² Grenville recalled him in 1790 as part of an investigation into the problems of the settlers, and though he was acquitted of any wrongdoing, his post was abolished and he was not offered any new employment. Furthermore, the government refused to pay some of the expenses he had incurred in line of duty. This experience turned him against the entire system of government and he soon became involved in the United Irishmen and the London Corresponding Society. Implicated in the Irish rebellion, Despard was arrested in 1799, but released when the suspension of Habeas Corpus lapsed in April 1801.

During 1802, Despard had concluded that discontent was widespread and an armed revolt in London could precipitate a revolutionary insurrection. Consequently, he planned a coup d'etat and recruited from among disaffected soldiers, whom he assembled regularly at a number of different taverns in working-class areas of London. After several months of such meetings, the group decided to strike on 23 November, the day of the opening of Parliament, because the King would be an easy target as he rode in from Windsor. The plan was first to attack the Tower to gain munitions, then to capture the Bank, and finally to kill the King. The conspirators expected that they would succeed because the country would then rise with them.

The government had been fully aware of the conspiracy since the summer, as both Pelham and the Duke of York had received intelligence. Pelham knew that Despard was recruiting from among the soldiers and that he had at least two collaborators in the military. The day before the final meeting of the conspiracy, the government

¹Polden, pp. 218-221.

²Charles Oman, Colonel Despard and Other Stories (London, 1922), pp. 2-21.

received intelligence of the subject and location of that meeting. Pelham had to decide whether to arrest the conspirators at the risk of preventing any further discoveries, and chose to arrest the meeting provided that Despard and the soldiers were there.¹ On 16 November, London, Surrey, and Kent patrols raided the Oakley Arms tavern in Lambeth and found Despard in the company of forty working men and soldiers.

Historians have disagreed over the significance of this episode. Peter Holt and Malcolm Thomis contend that the conspiracy was little more than a farce, a last dying gasp of the Jacobin threat. On the other hand, Marianne Elliott and E. P. Thompson insist that there were strong links between Despard and the struggles of Irish nationalists, the London labouring poor, and the croppers and weavers of the north. Elliott claims that Despard looked forward instead of backward: the conspiracy was a premature manifestation of a larger conspiracy which included risings in England and Ireland coinciding with a French invasion. Consequently, the affair seemed to justify government alarm.²

The question remains as to what the government thought of the whole episode. Unfortunately, there is little direct evidence, but a few conclusions can be drawn. The ministry believed that the conspiracy was serious enough to require the arrests, and that it ought to be nipped in the bud, even if this meant missing the opportunity of discovering all the influences behind it.³ The government also gave considerable prominence to the trial by having Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough preside and employing Attorney-General Perceval to prosecute the case. Despite strong rhetoric, however, Perceval admitted that the government did not believe that the conspiracy posed a serious threat to the security of the

¹Memorandum on the Despard Conspiracy, HO 42/66.

²Holt and Thomis, p. 23; Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, pp. 523-7; Marianne Elliott, 'The Despard Conspiracy Reconsidered', Past and Present, lxxv (1977), 46-61.

³Hone, p. 108.

Kingdom.¹ The refusal of the government to reimpose the suspension of Habeas Corpus and the Seditious Meetings Act, demonstrates clearly that the ministers believed that Despard was an isolated case. The explanation that the ministry was too weak politically or too afraid of alarming the magistrates to reintroduce Pitt's legislation is questionable.² First, there is little reason to suspect that just because the Foxite Whigs would have opposed the legislation that they would then have also opposed the ministry's foreign policy. Second, experience had proved that if the situation was serious enough to demand this legislation, it was better to have the magistrates become alarmed. For sometimes the government had trouble motivating local officials. The most probable explanation is that the ministry felt no need for the legislation. Despard and his colleagues were clearly guilty of treason and the government acted wisely in executing them,³ but the situation did not require systematic repression. For as Pelham told the King few of the Guards had been seriously involved in the business.⁴ Addington and Pelham's decision proved wise, as there was ample evidence to convict Despard and yet during the time the peace lasted there were no further conspiracies of that nature which came to light.

It is surprising to note that in several ways Despard was not treated like the leader of an insurrection. General Antoine François Andréossy, the new French ambassador in London, claimed that the affair made little sensation.⁵ Despard had known Nelson well enough to call him as a character witness at his trial, and just before the execution, he sent a petition for reprieve to the admiral, who passed

¹Notes of a Speech, Feb. 1803, Add. MSS 49176, fo. 50.

²Wells, Insurrection, pp. 247-8.

³Starhemberg, to Colloredo, 21 Jan. and 22 Feb. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

⁴Pelham to the King, 20 Nov. 1802, Aspinall, iv. 61.

⁵Andréossy to Talleyrand, 4 Frimaire XI (25 Nov. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

it on to Addington. After reading the letter, Addington and his family wept.¹ This was an unusual display of sympathy by a Prime Minister for a man who had planned a revolution. Nor was Despard given the infamous attention usually granted to state executions, as Fox noted, 'Of Despard nothing is said more than of any housebreaker, who may have been hanged the same day.'²

The ministry's mild response to the Despard conspiracy is further illuminated by a contrast with its response to Emmet's abortive insurrection in Dublin in July 1803. A group of United Irishmen led by Robert Emmet had been storing arms in preparation for an insurrection planned to occur simultaneously with a French invasion of Ireland. While the conspirators waited, an accidental explosion at their arms cache in July 1803 alerted British authorities, and so Emmet decided to initiate the insurrection early. Hardwicke was informed of the plot on 21 July, the eve of the insurrection, but the Irish Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Henry Fox, refused to take the reports seriously, and as a result, British forces arrived on the scene several hours late. Fortunately for them, only a few hundred of the expected several thousand rebels materialized, and the insurrection was easily crushed, but not before Lord Kilwarden, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and several others were murdered.³

In this case Addington suspended Habeas Corpus and declared Martial Law, though both measures were restricted to Ireland. Emmet's

¹Minto to Lady Minto, 14 Dec. 1802, Minto Letters, iii. 274-5.

²Fox to Grey, 28 Feb. 1803, Add. MSS 47565, fo. 73.

³Hardwicke to Addington, 21 July 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ289; Hardwicke to Pelham, 24 July 1803, HO 100/112; Hardwicke to Yorke, 24 July 1803, and 5 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 240-41, 289-91; Pelham to the King, 28 July 1803, Aspinall, iv. 115; Wickham to Addington, 9 Aug. 1803, and Addington to Wickham, 15 Aug. 1803, Wickham Papers, 38M49/1/45/26 and 48/4; Marsden to Castlereagh, 2 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 38239, fos. 77-8; Account of Emmet's Rebellion by W. Wickham, 5 Dec. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OL12.

rebellion required these strong measures because it occurred when Britain was at war with France and there was some fear that the French were planning an invasion of Ireland.¹ Moreover, as the Irish rebellion of 1798 had proved, Ireland possessed a greater potential for general insurrection. In the words of Yorke, emergency legislation was 'necessary to the safety of the King's Government in this Country, which is not yet in a State to be governed entirely upon the mild principles of Law and justice which have so long prevailed in England'.²

Thus in many ways the Addington ministry merely followed the lead of its predecessor in terms of social policy. The Home Office responded to reports of serious social unrest with instructions to implement existing laws to punish the ringleaders, but deployed troops sparingly. Nevertheless, there was a considerable change in the tone of the government in dealing with these issues, which was evident to Lord Holland, who wrote that after the reimposition of the suspension of Habeas Corpus in April 1801: 'Mr Addington seemed disposed to lower the high and insolent tone which his predecessors had assumed both at home and abroad.' This 'had a very beneficial effect on the country, and assuaged, if it did not heal the wounds which the anti-revolutionary and jealous spirit of Mr Pitt's government had inflicted'.³ Southey commented on Addington's dealing with Despard:

With such lenity are things conducted in England. No arrests have followed, no alarm has been excited; the people are perfectly satisfied of his guilt, and only say What a blessing that it did not happen under Pitt--Never had a nation a more perfect confidence in the rectitude of

¹For an examination of the relations between Irish rebels and the French Government see Elliott, Partners in Revolution.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 July 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 270-71.

³Lord Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, i. 183, ii. 214 quoted in Ziegler, p. 153.

their minister.¹

Thus Addington and Pelham tried to resolve problems without exacerbating social tension. In the weavers' disputes, they tried to balance the best interests of the industry with the concerns of the labourers, and with Despard they upheld the law without resorting to repression. For Addington's goal was domestic peace as well as diplomatic peace. The war had caused considerable disruption in every aspect of British life and he wished to return everything to normal.

Addington's social policy during the peace also sheds light on his later career as Home Secretary. During his tenure of that office in Liverpool's ministry, Addington received a reputation as a hard reactionary, and historians have stereotyped him as the typical tory politician, alarmist and adamantly opposed to political change. The policies he pursued as Prime Minister indicate that either his character changed completely between 1802 and 1812, or the traditional description of him was false. In fact he did demonstrate consistency in dealing with social unrest. When he believed that unrest posed a threat to the state, he implemented extraordinarily repressive measures, as in 1801 and 1819, and when he believed that it posed no threat, he merely arrested the ringleaders, as in 1802. It should also be noted that Addington's Six Acts of 1819 were, for the most part, merely the reintroduction of Pitt's repressive legislation of the 1790s. Thus Liverpool had good reason to appoint Addington as Home Secretary rather than leaving him in a less efficient office in 1812. For the one had first-hand experience of how the other dealt with social policy. Addington was no innovator of repressive legislation: he simply adopted tradition measures if and when he believed the circumstances required them.

The Election of 1802

Addington concluded that the summer of 1802 was the ideal time to call an election. For his ministry was firmly established; no

¹Southey, p. 373.

longer did the political experts whisper that he was merely a locum tenens for Pitt. The ministry was also at the height of its popularity, as the platform of peace and retrenchment was very successful. He had responded to nearly all the complaints levelled at the government during the last years of the war, and as long as Pitt demonstrated no desire to return to office, there was really no alternative to Addington continuing in office indefinitely.¹

June 1802 was also a suitable time administratively, as all of the government's important business had been completed during the spring session. The budget was concluded and the peace terms ratified, and there were no further pressing matters. Thus these were truly the halcyon days of the ministry. As a result, the election was fought on no particular issue. For with no national issues at stake, each vote depended almost entirely on patronage or local considerations.

The most remarkable aspect of the 1802 election was the very small role played by the government which had only one seat at its disposal. Moreover, both Hawkesbury and Hiley Addington had to pay considerable sums to ensure their reelection.² The government did, however, give nominal support to candidates in particular constituencies, but this consisted of little more than granting them the status of government candidates.³ Thus for the most part, the ministry merely sat back and hoped that satisfaction with its policies would persuade the country to return the government's majority.

The reasons the ministry took such a careless attitude towards the election are not entirely clear. Part of it probably stemmed from overconfidence that the record of the ministry would ensure it sufficient support. In addition, financial considerations were

¹Glenbervie Diaries, i. 320.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 13 Sept. 1802, Add. MSS 38473, fo. 117.

³Addington to Liverpool, 14 July 1802, MS Loan 72/33, fos. 5-6.

important. For Robinson's techniques were expensive and Addington was concerned about depleting the coffers of the Treasury when the finances of the government were so precarious.¹ Moreover, he realized that one of the most persistent complaints of radical and opposition critics of the government was political corruption. He was not a political animal, for he found many aspects of political life very distasteful and did his best to avoid or ignore them. So while desiring the government to be successful and popular, he did not wish to increase his own personal following by unsavoury methods, such as using government money to purchase elections.²

This attitude was a drawback for any politician, let alone the Prime Minister. Strong and successful governments had a cost, and Addington was not willing to pay it. For example, his relationship with Pitt demonstrates this. As he wished to remain on good terms with Pitt and his closest friends, he did not dream that Pitt would ever become his political rival. Consequently, he had allowed Dundas to continue to manage Scotland throughout the term of his ministry, and gave him virtually free rein in the elections of 1802, even asking his advice on the selections of the representative peerage.³ The problem here was that the Scottish members were loyal to Dundas not to the government, and once Dundas turned against the government, the ministry lost the Scottish votes. Addington was clearly in no position to challenge Dundas's power in Scotland, however, and besides, he considered him a close personal friend. Nevertheless, out of a concern about the strength of Dundas's control of Scotland or out of personal regard for the Duke of Montrose, he considered supporting two of the Duke's candidates in Fife and Stirling against Dundas's. This was a grave mistake. Addington either had to wrest Scotland from Dundas's grasp or concede the country to him, doing his

¹Feiling, p. 227.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 2 Pluviôse X (21 Jan. 1802), AE Angleterre/597.

³Addington to Dundas, 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ41.

best to ensure that he remained a supporter of the government. On the other hand, to grant him control of most of Scotland and then to alienate him by supporting a few of his opponents was absolute folly. In the end, Addington decided not to help Montrose, but as the latter's candidates won anyway, Dundas was annoyed with Addington.¹

The results of the election were about as unexceptionable as the campaign. By estimates on all sides, support for the government and opposition were virtually unchanged.² The only two surprises were Windham's defeat at Norwich and Francis Burdett's victory at Middlesex. Nevertheless, these results mattered little, as Buckingham had been prepared for Windham's defeat and provided him with the safe seat of St Mawes, and the defeated candidate in Middlesex challenged the eligibility of some of the voters who had supported Burdett and when a the Commons found in favour of the challenger Burdett lost his seat.³

Addington seemed completely satisfied with the results of the election but he should not have been.⁴ He was very short-sighted in believing that the ministry could continue on the basis of the support it had at that time. The foundations of that support were too weak; they appeared strong only as long as the opposition remained discredited, Pitt showed no inclination to return to office, and the government followed popular policies. Many MPs would vote for the ministry under those conditions, but Addington did not realize that he needed more who would vote for him in any circumstances. Once the

¹Holden Furber, Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811 (London, 1931), pp. 274-7.

²Addington to Carew, 1 Aug. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ48; Long to Dundas, 26 Sept. 1802, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/67; Pitt to Rose, 10 July 1802, Add. MSS 42772, fo. 151.

³This was a double blow to his family, as the government had withdrawn its secret service money from the bank of Burdett's father-in-law, Thomas Coutts, because of Coutts's support of his son-in-law's campaign. Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 24 July 1802, MS Loan 72/54, fo. 244.

⁴Glenbervie Diaries, i. 328.

government was faced with tough decisions it would understand how soft its support really was. Thus Addington wasted an excellent opportunity to pack Parliament with more of his own supporters, which would have given him the strength to weather tougher times. From the standpoint of sound political management, Addington should have abandoned Pitt and Dundas and used as much money as he could afford to increase loyal support in the Commons. There would have been a backlash, but his stronger position in Parliament would almost certainly have been able to weather it.

This type of speculation is beside the point, however, because Addington was simply incapable of such hard-nosed political tactics. For he considered Pitt and Dundas his friends, and probably would rather have resigned than knowingly commit acts that would have betrayed that friendship. Personal relationships were always more important than politics to Addington, and this was his single greatest fault as a politician and Prime Minister. Instead of building a secure foundation in the Commons that would allow him to pursue policies on their own merit, he was sometimes required to mold his policies according to parliamentary and popular opinion so as to ensure their passage in the House. Moreover, Addington was soon to realize that his 'friends' were quite willing to betray him for political reasons.

The Reform of the Navy

Naval reform was the aspect of Addington's peace-time administration that had the most important long-term consequences. As the British owed their wealth and position in the world to the Royal Navy, any government policy affecting it was bound to be granted high priority in parliamentary and public opinion. The naval reforms of the Addington ministry were interwoven with the realms of both foreign policy and domestic politics. Their origins lay in the experience of the war and their consequences stretched beyond the resignation of the ministry to include the ending of Henry Dundas's

career. The following section will deal with the origins and nature of the reforms, leaving the political consequences for chapter eight.

The idea of reforming the navy did not initiate with the Addington ministry but stretched back to the 1780s. For it was apparent after the American war that the dockyards wasted a large proportion of public expenditure through both carelessness and corruption. Although inefficiency was not peculiar to the navy, as it pervaded all departments and levels of government, it was more apparent in the navy because that department received a large proportion of government expenditure and naval matters received considerable political attention. The problem stemmed from the fact that, while the size and importance of the navy had grown considerably, the administration of the dockyards had hardly changed since the seventeenth century. During the 1780s and 1790s, political pressure for government efficiency and economy moved the Admiralty to force the Navy Board to implement some reforms in dockyard procedure. For example in 1798, after the Finance Committee of the House of Commons recommended an inquiry Spencer commissioned Brigadier General Samuel Bentham, brother of the famous philosopher, to devise a system of reforms for the dockyards. Bentham constructed a comprehensive plan, but owing to the demands of the war, Spencer felt unable to implement many of the reforms until peace was concluded, but promised that an inquiry would be made.¹

Corruption existed at three levels: the dockyard workers, the contractors, and the Navy Board. First, workers cheated the government of a considerable amount of money and theft of supplies was almost institutionalized. Custom had legitimized the practice of workers taking unusable wood 'chips' home for firewood, but it became common practice to cut up good pieces of timber into such chips. This type of theft had grave consequences when the circumstances of the war cut off Britain's timber supplies. Even more serious, some

¹W. V. Anson, Life of John Jervis, Admiral Lord St Vincent (London, 1913), p. 285; Roger Morriss, The Royal Dockyards during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (Leicester, 1983), pp. 189-93; Breihan, p. 166.

workers stole copper bolts and disguised the theft by cutting off the ends, replacing the middle section with wood, and putting them into the ships being repaired. At least two ships were lost when such bolts failed to hold together at sea. In addition, the dockyards frequently charged for work that was not done. At Portsmouth, some artificers were paid for working twenty-one hours of overtime in one day. Moreover, a government survey found that there were 2,361 more men on the payroll than actually worked in the dockyard. The government was also grossly overcharged. Cooperage at Deptford which cost £37 was charged to the government at £1000. As a result of such fraudulent practices the HMS Dedalus cost £8,788 to build, but £13,802 to repair. These practices robbed the government of at least £1 million per year.¹

Contractors made enormous fortunes by defrauding the government further. The worst abuses concerned timber, as the government often paid top price for wood that was rotten. The government was also denied the benefit of competition as many contracts remained in the same families for generations. For example, at Plymouth, the Navy Board gave block contracts to William Taylor of Southampton for periods of seven or more years at a time, without even considering bids from any other firms. Taylor then subcontracted out to other firms for a commission of ten percent. In addition, the cooperage contract remained in one family from 1714 to 1782, after which it was given to another. Moreover, when competitive bids were issued, some firms bid very low and then arranged to increase the price after having been given the contract.²

None of this would have been possible but for the compliance of the Navy Board, for instead of preventing these abuses, officials of the Board often aided and abetted them. Some officials were

¹Brenton, ii. 159-60; Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century, pp. 128-30.

²Bernard Pool, Navy Board Contracts, 1660-1832: Contract Administration under the Navy Board (London, 1966), pp. 118-21; O. A. Sherrard, A Life of Lord St Vincent (London, 1933), p. 188.

bribed, but usually these oversights were the result of laziness and habit. In fact, corrupt practices had continued for so long that they were almost legitimized. The Board was also afraid of antagonizing the workers or contractors, and therefore officials preferred inefficiency to the disruption which might have resulted had they tried to correct it.¹

St Vincent was well aware of at least some of the abuses before he became First Lord of the Admiralty. For during the ten years of war, his ships had often suffered the consequences of faulty workmanship, and he had obtained first hand knowledge of the dockyards while in Gibraltar which convinced him that the navy required substantial reforms. He had often said that if he were ever given the power he would change the system,² and as soon as he was appointed First Lord he expressed his intention to act:

There is much to do, and a late attempt of my great Predecessor meets with every species of opposition and obloquy. I mean `a partial reform in our Dock Yards' and comparing small things with great (which must come, or we are ruined) I shall have a very difficult task to perform, if I preside at this Board in times of Peace.³

Time was all that he required: `I flatter myself, if I have a reasonable tenure of my present situation, I shall be able to correct some of the gross abuses, which clog the wheels of the service, and if permitted to go on much longer must swallow up all the means of the Country.'⁴ He believed that all that the Admiralty had lacked before was will and vigour, and he was determined to succeed. For during his career in the navy, he had always been very heavy-handed, and had almost always got his own way. The country admired him for his success, but many of his own men despised him for his harsh

¹Sherrard, p. 189.

²Brenton, ii. 155.

³St Vincent to Collingwood, 15 Mar. 1801, Add. MSS 31158, fo. 21.

⁴St Vincent to Fanshaw, 25 Feb. 1801, Add. MSS 31170, fo. 18.

treatment.¹ The first crisis he faced upon taking office demonstrated that he would carry such tactics over into politics. Dockyard workers struck for higher pay at the time of preparing for Hyde Parker's expedition to Copenhagen in March 1801, and riots ensued at Plymouth on 31 March and Sheerness on 13 April. St Vincent considered this action as bordering on mutiny and treated it as such. While the rest of the Cabinet were prepared to give in to the workers' demands, St Vincent ordered the ringleaders discharged and sent troops to drive the rest back to work, and he did not stop there. On 27 April, he ordered a tour of the dockyards and discharged workmen involved in the combination. By May, he had dismissed 340 workers.²

St Vincent not only wished to eliminate wastage in the navy but also agreed with Addington that naval expenditure should be cut substantially when peace was made. At the end of October 1801, Hobart directed the Admiralty to begin to reduce expenditure.³ St Vincent responded immediately by ordering some ships to be discharged,⁴ and set about trimming the dockyards down to a peace-time establishment. In November, he laid off 500 labourers and 300 shipwrights from Deptford, 325 men at Woolwich Warren, and 150 coopers and yardmen from the victualling office.⁵ After the signing of the definitive treaty of peace, Hobart ordered further cuts in Naval expenditure.⁶ Believing that the peace would last for some time, St Vincent discharged both ships and seamen in great numbers. Consequently, he reduced the naval establishment to 130,000 with a projected reduction

¹Breihan, p. 164.

²Roger Morriss, 'Labour Relations in the Royal Naval Dockyards, 1801-5', *Mariner's Mirror*, lxxiii (1976), 38-40; Sherrard, p. 174; Breihan, p. 167.

³Hobart to Admiralty, 27 Oct. 1801, Adm 1/4188.

⁴Admiralty to Duckworth 29 Oct. 1801, and same to Campbell, 7 Nov. 1801, Adm 2/142.

⁵Emsley, p. 95.

⁶Hobart to Admiralty, 5 April 1802, Adm 1/4189.

to 70,000 by the end of 1802, and a further reduction to 30,000 by the end of 1803.¹ These reductions were essential to the success of Addington's financial policies, and the Prime Minister took the opportunity to boast about them during his budget speech of December 1802.

While reducing expenditure was important, St Vincent's real desire was to reform the abuses in the dockyards. As early as July 1801, he began investigating 'instances of misconduct lately discovered' at Sheerness,² and by June 1802, he had decided to order an inquiry, to seal and secure the yardbooks, and initiate a full inspection of the dockyards.³ Addington persuaded him to postpone the inquiry until after the election, so as not to alienate government supporters in the southwest.⁴ In August and September, however, St Vincent personally visited the dockyards and conducted the investigation, and the problems he discovered were worse than he had ever imagined. He wrote to Addington from Plymouth on 29 August that his time had been, 'fully occupied since my arrival at this place where we find abuse to such an extent as would require many months to go thoroughly into, and the absolute necessity of a Commission of enquiry to expose them appears to the Admiralty Board here in a much stronger light than ever.'⁵

The visitations not only uncovered the extent of the abuses but also the culpability of the Navy Board in covering them up. Although provided with adequate information, the Board refused to investigate a number of complaints. For example, Commissioner Isaac Coffin had registered a number of complaints to the Board concerning extra

¹Watson, p. 412.

²Board Minutes, 7 July 1801, Adm. 3/145.

³Letters of Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl of St Vincent, 1801-1804, ed. David. B. Smith, Navy Records Society (2 vols, London, 1922-7), ii. 1-7.

⁴St Vincent to Grey, 6 Aug. 1801, Smith, ii. 191.

⁵St Vincent to Addington, 29 Aug. 1802, Add. MSS 31169, fo. 125.

payments made to workers at Sheerness. It was clear that the master shipwright was guilty of involvement but the Board sheltered him from punishment. The Board had also given the master blacksmith a rise in pay, even though he was accused of corruption. The clerk of the cheque had not kept his books current and aged and infirm workers were kept on salary, but the Board thought these matters too trivial even to investigate. The Board also failed to notice that children had been admitted as ropemakers at Woolwich. The Admiralty decided to reprimand the Board for 'by their failure in the execution of their duty, the public has been suffered to be defrauded to a very considerable amount, and delinquencies passed unpunished'.¹ Nevertheless, official reprimands alone could not solve the problem.

St Vincent therefore continued to press the Cabinet for a parliamentary commission of inquiry to expose these abuses. There was also a more personal reason for this policy, as he had concluded that he could not reform the dockyards as long as the existing members of the Navy Board held their positions. While the regulations allowed the First Lord of the Admiralty to appoint new members to any vacancies on the Board, he could not dismiss existing members because they had been appointed under the Great Seal. Thus St Vincent hoped that the inquiry would cause many to resign, leaving him a free hand to appoint a more efficient Board.²

The Cabinet was quite reluctant to comply, however, because although Addington supported the principle of reform, he was wary of the political consequences of a parliamentary inquiry. For his experience with the political backlash caused by Abbot's reforms in Ireland seems to have made him reluctant to agree to any measure that might cause similar problems in England. Nevertheless, St Vincent was adamant and eventually carried the Cabinet. Consequently, in December 1802 the government introduced a motion to establish a commission of

¹Board Minutes, 16 Oct. 1802, Adm 3/127.

²Morriss, The Royal Dockyards, p. 150; A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Marsden written by Himself with Notes from His Correspondence, ed. Mrs E. W. Marsden, (London, 1838), p. 103n.

inquiry into the navy empowered to call for documents and examine witnesses on oath. Eldon, who was concerned with the legal implications of this measure, stalled the debate in the Lords, and eventually forced through an amendment which enabled a witness to avoid self-incrimination while under oath.¹

St Vincent also tried to implement some immediate reforms. Following Bentham's recommendation he instituted the office of Timber Master to examine the wood supplied by contractors. He also recognized that the navy's heavy dependency on merchant building was costing dearly, and he believed that building ships in government dockyards would save money. Therefore, after the peace he abstained from making contracts for ships of the line owing to the high price of timber. He believed that the price would stabilize and availability increase if merchants were not competing in the market. His plan was to increase dockyard building by classing shipwrights by ability and employing the best to build rather than repair ships. For a government study indicated that forty-six shipwrights could build a seventy-four-gun ship in one year. Thus under this system the dockyards could build ten new ships of the line each year and the whole fleet could be kept in repair.²

Overall, St Vincent's reforms were both important and necessary, and in the long term almost every one of his ideas was implemented with great benefit to the Royal Navy and the country. Nevertheless, they caused serious difficulties in the short term. For regardless of how much the Admiralty abhorred the inefficiency and corruption in the dockyards, contractors, and Navy Board, it could not escape the fact that the navy could not function without their cooperation. In addition, St Vincent's manner was ill-suited to the task he wished to perform. He imputed malevolence to every inefficiency, even though many were the result of mere neglect or carelessness. William Marsden, who accompanied St Vincent on the visitations, stated that, 'the general character of the naval administration was one of

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1146.

²Morriss, The Royal Dockyards, p. 29.

harshness particularly as it respected the officers of the subordinate departments, with which some personal ill-will was mixed up: the object seeming to be to find grounds for delinquencies presumed in the first instance'.¹ St Vincent's opponents, moreover, were not cowed by his hard and uncompromising attitude. Dockyard workers pelted him with mud, but more important the contractors balked at his reforms. Timber contractors, who became annoyed when the Timber Master rejected rotten wood, refused to sell any wood, while other contractors also became reluctant to deal with the government. At the same time the Navy Board obstructed many of St Vincent's reforms. The result was that when the government needed ships and repairs upon the renewal of war, they were much more difficult to obtain. Thus, in pursuing reforms that would be of considerable benefit to the country, St Vincent created problems in the naval administration which hurt the interest of the country. The British were fortunate that, even in such a weakened state, the Royal Navy was still strong enough to accomplish all of its goals.²

In comparison with the rest of the government's peace-time policies, St Vincent's naval policies stand out as somewhat inconsistent. While Addington tried to obtain benefits from the peace through both retrenchment and reform, he was very careful to provide for the contingency of an immediate renewal of war. St Vincent, on the other hand, managed the navy as if he expected the peace to last for many years. His reductions in naval spending were much more drastic than those in the military departments, and the chaos he created in the dockyards certainly inhibited a sudden return to a war-time establishment. If he had been given ten years of peace, he might have been able completely to overhaul the system and have it in better working order for the next war. The diplomatic situation, however, did not justify the assumption that peace would last so long. This is an example of how St Vincent's determination to manage the navy separately prevented the Cabinet from developing a cohesive

¹Marsden Memoirs, p. 103.

²See below, chapter 8, pp. 263-77.

system of policy. Addington, who assumed that somehow he could bridge the gap, must shoulder some of the blame for the failure to coordinate the navy with the rest of the government departments.

For the first half of the term of the Addington ministry domestic politics held primacy: the stress and strain evident on society and the economy demanded the immediate attention of the government, which was obliged to mould its foreign policy to deal with the internal crisis. Addington and Hawkesbury concluded that peace was necessary for several reasons, the most important of which was the financial and social health of the country. Once peace had been concluded, Addington was able to implement measures that alleviated the social and economic crises, and on the whole his policies were successful. The repeal of the income tax for example was extremely popular. Peace also led to a resurgence in overseas trade, even though the European ports under French control remained closed to British ships. Social unrest decreased dramatically with the reduction in the price of grain owing to a good harvest and the reopening of the grain trade, and the social policies of the government helped to decrease social tension. Finally, financial reforms helped to restore the financial health of the government. While Addington had been concentrating on domestic policy, however, Bonaparte was taking advantage of the peace to strengthen his power at the expense of other states. As domestic concerns became less pressing for Addington, foreign concerns became more pressing, so that by the end of 1802 the entire orientation of government policy had to be reversed.

Chapter Six

The Renewal of War, October 1802 to May 1803

'I do in my conscience believe that the nation anxiously wishes for the continuance of peace, but is not afraid of war--it hopes for the best, but desires to be prepared for the worst--that it will not suffer any unworthy compromise of its honour; but that it will not permit any impassioned feelings and exaggerated representations to bear down what is due to prudence. ... I have no hesitation in confessing, that I consider war as a dreadful evil. But dreadful as is that evil, I shall never hesitate between the alternative of the sacrifice of our honour and war.'

Henry Addington¹

The French proved to be just as difficult to deal with in peace time as they had been in war. If for Clausewitz, war was the continuation of diplomacy by other means, then for Bonaparte diplomacy was the continuation of war by other means, in the sense that he was as determined to use the opportunities presented by the peace to acquire new territory and increase French power as he had been to use the war. In September 1801, however, Addington and Hawkesbury had not known that this would be Bonaparte's response to the peace. At that time they had had to give him the benefit of the doubt by assuming that he would honour the terms of all of his treaties and use the period of the peace to concentrate on internal affairs.

By April 1802, however, Addington and Hawkesbury had sufficient evidence that they could not trust Bonaparte to contain his aggression. Nevertheless, peace had been made and there might have been a tremendous outcry if the government had declared war again at that point. In addition, Addington still believed that peace was necessary for the financial and social health of the country. Most MPs and the majority of the public seemed to care more about the repeal of the income tax than who controlled northern Italy or

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 986.

Louisiana. Thus as unsatisfactory as the peace was, it was for the time being still preferable to war. But Addington believed that Bonaparte's continued aggression might sometime in the future push the British government to the point that a renewal of war would become preferable to continuing peace, and in order to remain prepared for this eventuality, he decided that he had to sustain the military and naval resources of Britain on a strong footing. This detracted, however, from one of the great advantages for which the peace had been made: to enable the government to cut spending, especially in the military sphere. Pushed on one side by social and financial pressure, and on the other by the external threat to British interests, he chose to compromise. It was an armed peace, and the government was determined to resist future French aggression.

The Peace of Amiens brought little respite to Anglo-French tension, as Bonaparte sustained diplomatic pressure on the British. Even before the definitive treaty was signed, he sent accusations through Talleyrand to the British representative Francis Jackson that the attacks made upon him in the British press were directed by the British government. Talleyrand warned that, if the British newspapers did not cease to insult the First Consul, the French government would direct the French newspapers to attack the British and would buy control of a London newspaper to issue Bonapartist propaganda.¹ The accusation against the British government was false, however, and Bonaparte undoubtedly knew it. Although British governments of this period had made arrangements with some newspapers, trading money and inside information in return for favourable bias in the presentation of news, they controlled none.² Besides, the British government hardly wished to see open criticism of the man with whom it was negotiating a controversial treaty of

¹Jackson to Hawkesbury, 4 Mar. 1802, FO 27/61.

²Arthur Aspinall, Politics and the Press, 1780-1850 (London, 1949), pp. 66-120.

peace. On the contrary, the government found such criticism of Bonaparte very embarrassing.

In June, the French renewed the attack. Talleyrand told Merry, the new British representative, that the French government objected to the way the British government allowed French royalists and bishops to parade around the British court. He claimed that this provided encouragement to the disaffected in France, and the only remedy was to expel the emigrés from Britain.¹ Hawkesbury tried to reassure the French that the British wished to maintain a peaceful disposition and that they would not aid projects against the French government, but that as long as the emigrés did not break any British laws he could not deport them. In addition, he insisted that most of the emigrés were in retirement and there was no evidence that they were plotting against Bonaparte.² Unsatisfied with this response, Bonaparte directed Otto to complain to Hawkesbury. On 25 July, Otto pointed out articles written by both English and French journalists which were highly inflammatory against Bonaparte and complained of the continued presence of Chouan chiefs on Jersey and the illicit correspondence between that island and France.³

The Cabinet had difficulty deciding how it should respond. On the whole, the government considered the British press to be a nuisance and the new French criticisms justified. The problem, as Hawkesbury told Merry, was that

We have no power whatever of preventing such publications--our only power is to punish them; and even the Success of prosecution is extremely doubtful, and the delay that must necessarily take place between the committal of the offence and the conviction and punishment of the offender, renders prosecution in most cases unadvisable [sic].⁴

¹Merry to Hawkesbury, 4 June 1802, FO 27/62.

²Hawkesbury to Merry, 10 June 1802, FO 27/62.

³Otto to Hawkesbury, 25 July 1802, FO 27/66.

⁴Hawkesbury to Merry, 13 Aug. 1802, FO 27/63.

Nevertheless, the government was under considerable pressure to prevent the issue from causing a rupture in Anglo-French relations. Consequently, Hobart wanted to expel Jean Peltier, the French author of the most offensive of the articles of which Bonaparte complained, and suppress the offending newspapers. He argued that these articles were not based on any evidence, that they attacked a government with which Britain was at peace, and that the author was not a British subject deserving of the protection of the British constitution.¹ Ellenborough agreed that the government should deport Peltier, but Pelham and Hawkesbury demurred.²

Consequently, the Cabinet as usual developed a compromise. Rather than taking any direct action that might arouse public attention, the government referred Peltier's case to the Attorney-General's office to consider a prosecution for libel.³ To prevent a similar offence in future the government placed pressure on newspapers not to publish similar articles. Vansittart, for example, threatened otherwise to remove government protection from the True Briton.⁴

Unfortunately, the French government was not satisfied, and on 17 August, Otto delivered another strong rebuke to Hawkesbury. He completely dismissed the argument that the British government was bound by the British constitution to preserve the freedom of the press. He claimed moreover that sometimes one good had to be sacrificed for a higher good, and in this case the Law of Nations overrode the British constitution. As there existed a conspiracy to defame the entire French nation, the French government demanded that the British suppress all criticism of the French; expel the Bishops

¹Hobart to Addington, 14 Aug. 1802, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B39.

²Glenbervie Manuscript Diary, vii. 31 Aug. 1802; Otto to Talleyrand, 11 Vendémiaire XI (3 Oct. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

³Hawkesbury to Merry, 13 Aug. 1802, Sackville MSS, U269/O200/1.

⁴Heriot to Addington, 10 Aug. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ126.

Arras and St Paul, all emigrés who wore royalist orders, and all enemies of France from Jersey; deport Georges Cadoudal and his adherents to Canada, and the princes of Bourbon to Warsaw.¹

The Cabinet was extremely concerned over how seriously the French appeared to be taking the issue. Liverpool argued that 'those who were most disposed to censure the Administration for making the peace, will censure them with greater Justice, if they do not take every proper Measure to secure the Continuance of it'.² As a result the government began seriously to consider curbing the activities of the emigrés, and Addington decided to write directly to Bonaparte in English in his own hand to refute him on the press issue.³

Hawkesbury believed that the hostile disposition of the French government was owing to the ego and bad temper of Bonaparte rather than any concerted policy of bullying the British government, and he hoped that frank discussions would clear the air. Instead of speaking with Otto, however, Hawkesbury thought that directing Merry to explain the matter to Talleyrand would be more effective.⁴ On 28 August, he outlined the British position to Merry: 'His Majesty cannot, and never will, in consequence of any representation or any menace from a Foreign Power, make any concession which can be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the Press as secured by the constitution of this Country.' The French government, like the British government, were entitled to recourse through the existing laws of England to prosecute the offenders for libel. The British government desired no further protection and would not grant it to another. If the French were dissatisfied with British laws they

¹Otto to Hawkesbury 17 Aug. 1802, FO 27/66.

²Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 18 Aug. 1802, MS Loan 72/51, fo. 39.

³Liverpool to Eldon, 24 Aug. 1802, Eldon Papers; Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, ministre d'état sous Napoléon, le Directoire, le Consulat et la Restauration (10 vols, Paris, 1829), iv. 306.

⁴Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 17 Aug. 1802, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 129.

could punish the distributors of the offending articles in France or prohibit their importation. Although Otto had mentioned employing the Alien Act, it was designed to remove foreigners who were fomenting unrest or disorder in Britain or in any other ways threatening the security of the kingdom. In response to Otto's demands, Hawkesbury stated that the emigrés were already leaving Jersey, that any of the bishops who were found to be distributing papers on the coast of France would be deported, that the government was already considering deporting George Cadoudal and his adherents, that the Bourbon princes could not be expelled although the British government wished they would leave, and that emigrés could not be deported merely for wearing ancient orders. Finally, he asserted the necessity of the British and French coming to a complete understanding on the issue. He wrote,

That after a War in which the Passions of Men have been roused beyond all former examples, it is natural to suppose that the Distrust, Jealousy, and other hostile Feelings of Individuals should not immediately subside & under these circumstances it appears to be both the Interest and the Duty of the two Governments by a mild and temperate conduct gradually to allay these Feelings, and not on the contrary to provoke and augment them by untimely Irritation on their part, and by ascribing proceedings like those abovementioned, to causes which they have no reference.¹

The French, however, were still not satisfied. Rather Talleyrand stated that the British could do more to resolve French grievances. He argued that they could not claim that they must adhere to the constitution, as Pitt had violated it in the 1790s when he suspended Habeas Corpus and introduced the other repressive legislation, and he had also deployed both legal and financial measures to coerce the press. Talleyrand claimed further that the British could deport any Frenchmen without redress. Consequently, Bonaparte had decided to defer adopting regulations for facilitating commercial intercourse until the British granted him redress.²

¹Hawkesbury to Merry, 28 Aug. 1802, FO 27/ 63.

²Merry to Hawkesbury, 5 Sept. 1802, FO 27/64.

The issue of Anglo-French trade was also a sore spot. While the lack of a commercial agreement was hardly the underlying cause of the rupture of the peace,¹ it certainly added tension to an already delicate situation. The British did wish to resume Anglo-French trade in the manner of the prewar period, even though they did not want to negotiate a specific commercial treaty,² and commercial interests had pressed for peace in 1801, assuming that it would lead to the resumption of Continental trade which had been interrupted by the war. The British did not require a commercial treaty with France and its allies, but merely permission to trade under such tariffs and conditions as each government felt necessary to impose. Peace did lead to a revival of British trade with most ports on the Continent, but Bonaparte refused to allow any Anglo-French trade under any conditions.

The ministry's parliamentary critics and some historians blamed Addington and Hawkesbury for the failure to revive trade by neglecting to include a commercial agreement in the Treaty of Amiens. While it is true that they deliberately avoided such an agreement, it is also clear that Bonaparte would not have given them one even if they had sought it. For he was determined to strengthen the commercial and industrial position of France, where the chaos of the Revolution had impeded advanced methods of manufacture and caused France to fall behind the British even further. Moreover, the commercial treaty of 1786 had been injurious to France, and it was clear that French goods would not be competitive with British. Bonaparte felt that the British market for French goods would not compensate for the loss of Continental markets once the British were allowed in. Therefore, he was determined to preserve the markets of France and those of its allies and dependencies for French goods. Consequently, on 19 May he passed a new series of tariffs and

¹Conrad Gill, 'The Relations between England and France in 1802', English Historical Review, xxiv (1909), 73.

²See above, chapter 4, pp. 129-30.

invoked an old law of Robespierre which required the seizure of all British ships of over 100 tons entering French ports.¹

Hawkesbury and Liverpool had expected that normal trading relations would resume after the signing of the peace, and they were extremely annoyed at the news of Bonaparte's trade restrictions. Hawkesbury sent a remonstrance through Merry:

Various reports having been received in this Country of strict prohibitions being enforced with respect to the Admission of British Commodities and Manufactures in France, and of very rigorous restrictions being imposed on British Vessels entering the Ports of that Country, I have to signify ... that you take an early opportunity to impress upon the French Ministers, the necessity of some understanding being established between His Majesty's Government and that of France, on the subject of the commercial intercourse between the two Countries.²

Hawkesbury also sought an explanation from Otto, who indicated that Bonaparte really wanted a commercial treaty without delay, and this seems to have satisfied the British government.³

Nevertheless, Bonaparte refused to revoke his restrictions on British trade. He was prepared, however, to take advantage of the concern of the British to resume normal trading relations to send Coquebert Montbret to London as Commissioner General of Commercial Relations. But he had no intention of resuming trade, and Montbret under the guise of a consul, was really a spy instructed to gather intelligence concerning social unrest, public opinion, and the state of the military in the United Kingdom. Another agent, Louis Marès, was instructed to obtain a detailed description of the port of Hull, and a third, Louis Antoine Fauvelet, to obtain similar information

¹Deutch, pp. 97-8; Sorel, vi. 211-2; Martin Philippon, 'La Paix d'Amiens et la Politique générale de Napoléon Ier', Revue Historique, lxxv (1901), 303-4.

²Hawkesbury to Merry, 20 May 1802, FO 27/62.

³Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 24 May 1802, Ms Loan 72/51, fo. 37; Hawkesbury to Merry, 29 May 1802, FO 27/62; Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 30 May 1802, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 72.

in Dublin.¹ Having intercepted some of the agents' correspondence, Hawkesbury knew that they were spies. Moreover, after receiving reports of British ships being seized upon having been driven into French ports by storms, Hawkesbury refused to recognize any commercial agents until some commercial arrangements had been made.²

The disputes over the press and commercial relations were really of relatively minor importance. Although they prevented the establishment of truly cordial relations and were a source of minor tension, they were in themselves unlikely to provoke a war. Hobart argued that, 'If we are to renew the War with France let it be for a great Political object--but nothing in my opinion can be so impolitic or so wicked as to hazard the interruption of Peace by Newspaper invectives against the Government of France.'³ Pitt made light of the situation in stating that he would stay at Walmer, 'till the Pacificator of Europe takes it into his head to send an Army from the opposite Coast to revenge himself for some newspaper paragraph'.⁴

Another irritant was the delay by the French in sending their new ambassador to Britain. They did not announce that they would send Andréossy until June, and he did not arrive until November. Correspondingly, the British did not announce the appointment of Whitworth until after the French had announced that of Andréossy, and he spent several months ready and waiting to sail.

The ministry could deal with these issues without political interference as they received little attention in Parliament before it was prorogued in June. Very soon after, however, Addington and Hawkesbury believed they had found a great political object which

¹P. Coquelle, 'Les Responsabilités de la Rupture de la Paix d'Amiens en 1803', Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, xvi (1902), 274-8; Pellew, ii. 164.

²Hawkesbury to Otto, 18 Sept. 1802, FO 27/66; Gill, p. 75.

³Hobart to Auckland, 11 Aug. 1802, Add. MSS 34455, fo. 513.

⁴Pitt to Addington, 5 Sept. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ186.

would justify war, if they chose to resort to it. In September 1802, the Swiss had rebelled against the puppet regime that Bonaparte had installed. Claiming to be coming to the defence of a legitimate government, Bonaparte issued a warning to the rebels to desist and restore the old regime, or he would send 30,000 French troops across the border to restore order. For he desired a strong frontier to cover the Franche-Comté, and this required a firm and settled government in Switzerland friendly to France.¹ Moreover, he saw his proclamation as a defensive not an aggressive measure, as it was intended to support an existing government. The British, however, considered it as interference in the internal affairs of an independent country and an attempt by Bonaparte to incorporate further territory more firmly under his control. To them it appeared another in an endless series of acquisitions which the French had made despite the peace.

On 2 October, Hawkesbury learned from Merry that as the new Swiss government had been overthrown and the previous one reestablished, the Swiss minister in Paris had requested Bonaparte to intervene, and Merry surmised that the French would use the crisis as a pretext to occupy Switzerland.² By 6 October, the British government was aware that Bonaparte had issued a warning to the Swiss to restore the government, and that the Swiss had sent an agent to solicit the support of the British, Austrians, Spaniards, Prussians, and Russians to prevent Bonaparte from interfering.

At first, Addington and Hawkesbury thought that this was an excellent opportunity to take a stand against French aggression. At a hastily assembled Cabinet, the government decided to take several lines of attack. The first was to make a firm but mild remonstrance to Otto, in hopes of delaying any French action. For the British wished to buy time for a special agent to travel to Switzerland, acquire information, and offer to grant a subsidy to the Swiss to

¹Bonaparte to Talleyrand, 23 Sept. 1802, Napoleon's Letters, p. 98.

²Merry to Hawkesbury, 29 Sept. 1802, FO 27/64.

help them to resist a French invasion. Consequently, on 10 October, Hawkesbury presented a note to Otto which expressing alarm at Bonaparte's ultimatum to the Swiss. He asserted that Switzerland was an independent country and its people should be left to settle their own affairs. The ministry's other intention was to concert action with the Austrians and Russians, whom Addington and Hawkesbury believed had sufficient interest in the future of Switzerland to make a strong stand against French interference.¹ As early as December 1801, the British had been convinced of the necessity of securing an alliance with Russia and Austria,² and the Swiss affair appeared to provide an issue around which the three courts could unite.

Hawkesbury wrote to Sir Arthur Paget, minister in Vienna, to discover whether the Austrians were prepared to send assistance to the Swiss.³ He also wrote to Sir John Borlase Warren, the ambassador in St Petersburg, to inquire after the Russian response to the news of Bonaparte's ultimatum.⁴ Addington and Hawkesbury had great hopes that the Swiss would fight the French, and that with the help of the Russians and Austrians, the British could score a decisive diplomatic victory over Bonaparte. Such a victory would have greatly enhanced the prestige of the ministry in Parliament and might have curbed Bonaparte's aggressive schemes in the future. Addington and Hawkesbury believed that they had finally gained the upper hand, and the Prime Minister ordered the immediate suspension of further

¹Cabinet Minute, n.d. 1802, Add. MSS 38357, fo. 185; Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 Oct. 1802, Add. MSS 35702, fo. 34; Hervey to Liverpool, 9 Oct. 1802, MS Loan 72/13, fo. 21; Hobart to Wellesley, 14 Nov. 1802, The Wellesley Papers, ed. L. S. Benjamin (London, 1914), pp. 158-9.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 11 Dec. 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142.

³Hawkesbury to Paget, 9 Oct. 1802, FO 7/66.

⁴Hawkesbury to Warren, 10 Oct. 1802, FO 65/51.

restitution of colonies until the crisis had been resolved.¹ The Swiss issue, however, dissolved rather quickly. Francis Moore, the British agent sent to Switzerland, was delayed by bad weather, not arriving until the Swiss had capitulated, and Hawkesbury knew by 20 October that the Swiss had given in to Bonaparte's demands.²

Although the government played down the Swiss affair for parliamentary and public opinion, the ministry was seriously considering military action. Camden noted that Addington appeared 'extremely warlike'.³ Hobart also suggested that if the Portuguese went to war with the French, the British should join them.⁴ On 27 October, Hawkesbury instructed Warren to take advantage of a recent change in the Russian Government, which had brought to power Alexander Vorontsov, the brother of the anglophile ambassador to London, 'to propose a System of Defensive Alliance between His Majesty and the Emperor of Russia'. Hawkesbury proposed an agreement based on three points: both countries would guarantee their respective possessions; 'make common cause' if France attacked either of their possessions; and work together with Austria to prevent the further expansion of French power into Europe.⁵

Unfortunately, while agreeing with all the important points that Hawkesbury had raised, Alexander Vorontsov argued that Russia required a few more years of peace to restore its finances and sources of strength, and that even a defensive treaty would prompt the French to build counter-alliances likely provoking a war. While

¹Addington to Hobart, 13 Oct. 1802, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B52; Hobart to Dundas, Wellesley, and Grinfield, 17 Oct. 1802, WO 6/183.

²Merry to Hawkesbury, 17 Oct. 1802, FO 27/64.

³Camden to Bathurst, 24 Oct. 1802, Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on the Manuscripts of the Seventh Earl Bathurst (London, 1923), p. 30.

⁴Hobart to Addington, 28 Oct. 1802, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B55.

⁵Hawkesbury to Warren, 27 Oct. 1802, FO 65/51; Beeley, 499. A project of the treaty is in Add. MSS 38357, fos. 238-42.

being seriously alarmed and annoyed at Bonaparte's violation of Swiss independence, the Russians wished to avoid giving the French the impression that they were concerting measures with the British.¹ The British received a similar response from Austria.

Nevertheless, while they were waiting for the answers from Vienna and St Petersburg, the Cabinet and its friends considered war a distinct possibility. Nelson informed Addington on 25 October, that he had, 'only one object in view (that of giving an early and knock down blow to our Enemy and getting again the blessings of Peace)'.² On 30 October Addington told Hardwicke that the government was preparing for the renewal of hostilities, 'with as little Bustle as is consistent with a Degree of Activity, & Exertion, & public observation has not reached all the material steps which have been take with a View to that object'.³ Hobart had directed the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, to begin preparing for an invasion by the French.⁴ On 5 November 1802, Hawkesbury told Liverpool,

I am inclined to think there will be war. ... I did not think it probable that Bonaparte would have ventured to march an army into Switzerland & in that case it might not have been difficult to have come to some compromise. But this Circumstance attended with the Defiance which he had given us not to interfere in any Continental Concerns renders any accommodation extremely difficult, if not impossible.⁵

¹Warren to Hawkesbury, 11 Oct. and 27 Nov. 1802, FO 65/51; Alexander I to S. Vorontsov, 18 Nov. 1802, VPR, i. 327; Alexander I to S. Vorontsov, 20 Jan. 1803, AKV, x. 304-6; A. Vorontsov to Morkov, 5 Jan. 1803, SIRIO, lxx. 616.

²Nelson to Addington, 25 Oct. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/ON7.

³Addington to Hardwicke, 30 Oct. 1802, Add. MSS, 35706, fos. 75-7.

⁴Hobart to York, 17 Oct. 1802, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/C48.

⁵Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 5 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 205.

While Hobart, Hawkesbury, and Addington had begun seriously to consider war, they first wished to hear from Castlereagh, whom they had sent to Walmer to ask Pitt's opinion.¹ Prior to the Swiss crisis, Pitt had considered war inevitable, but had hoped that it would not occur for six months to two years so as to give time for the funds to rise and for Britain to go to war with better prospects.² Pitt told Castlereagh that it was important to determine if the Swiss were willing to fight, and if the Austrians and Russians would intervene. If Austria and Russia did not act then war was out of the question, but the British should refuse restitution of the remaining colonies if the French were not accommodating.³ After considering the issue further, Pitt wrote to Addington on 10 November, expressing his belief that there was little hope of support from Austria or Russia and that withholding the restitutions would be unwise. He added:

I am by no means sure that we should not affectually [sic] consult our real security, preserving at the same time the advantage of Peace, by contenting ourselves with a State of very encreased [sic] and constant Preparation both Naval & Military and by endeavouring in the mean Time to lay the Foundation of a defensive System in Europe; rather than by involving ourselves immediately in a separate war for the advantage of being to carry it on with their Possessions still in our Hands.⁴

¹Pitt to Castlereagh, 3 Oct. 1802, Castlereagh Papers, D3030/1697. Castlereagh had replaced Dartmouth at the Board of Control in July and was promoted to the Cabinet in October.

²Canning to Leveson Gower, 23 Sept. 1802, Granville Papers, PRO 30/29/8/3, fo. 248.

³Castlereagh's Memorandum on Switzerland written at Walmer, October 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OP22; Memo of Castlereagh at Walmer 1802, Pitt Papers, Cambridge University Library, 6958/2919; Pitt to Tomline, 5 Nov. 1802, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/42.

⁴Pitt to Addington, 10 Nov. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ193. An inaccurate copy of this letter is in Pellew, ii. 86.

Pitt's response did not so much influence government policy as merely reinforce a decision that had already been made. In his response to Pitt's letter Addington stated that

The Opinions, to which you incline, are those to which I had previously brought my mind after a good deal of anxious Reflection. The Question is not one of Justice, but of Discretion; & after what has passed, it is somewhat difficult to give the Weight that is due to prudential Considerations.¹

The Cabinet had met on 8 November and decided that as the Swiss had already submitted to the French and the Austrians and Russians were unlikely to give any military support, they could not renew the war.² Hawkesbury and Hobart had been ready to resume hostilities, but St Vincent was adamantly opposed and threatened to resign.³ His claim that the navy was not fit for battle was not entirely false (Yorke claimed that it was in good shape⁴), but he probably used this argument to cover up his real concern which was not to let war interrupt his commission of naval inquiry. The primary consideration in the ultimate decision of the Cabinet, however, was that, if war eventually broke out, it was important that British and foreign opinion believe without a doubt that Britain was acting fairly: in Addington's words, 'We must however take Care, not only to be right, but very right.'⁵ Consequently, Hawkesbury told Whitworth,

It is important however for me to inform you that it was found upon the whole prudent to adopt a lower and more pacific Tone than had been originally intended. ... It

¹Addington to Pitt, 12 Nov. 1802, Dacres Adams Papers, 30/58/4/86.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 9 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 220; Hobart to Wellesley, 14 Nov. 1802, Wellesley Papers, i. 158-9.

³Minto to Lady Minto, 26 Nov. 1802, Minto Correspondence, iii. 259; Thomas Grenville to Buckingham, 26 Nov. 1802, Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III, iii. 220.

⁴Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 Oct. 1802, Add. MSS 35702. fo. 34.

⁵Addington to Hiley Addington, 4 Nov. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/F1; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 210; Hobart to Wellesley, 14 Nov. 1802, Wellesley Papers, i. 161.

would be impossible even if it were prudent to engage the Country in a War under the present circumstances on account of any of the aggressions which have been hitherto committed by France. Our Policy will be to endeavour to make those aggressions the Groundwork of a Defensive System conjointly with Russia and Austria for the future.¹

The ministry still hoped that, given time to rebuild their economies and armies, the Russians and Austrians would be prepared to form either a diplomatic or a military coalition against France. To this end, the British decided to play for time in their relations with the French, while working hard to win over Russian and Austrian support.²

Although the government had ruled out war for the time being, it was determined to take a stronger stand against France and prepare for war in the future.³ Addington decided that

Under the present Circumstance, the necessity of increased Security, & even of placing ourselves in a State of Preparation, is so evident, & the conviction of it, as I trust, so general, that I am unwilling to delay the Settlement of our Peace Establishment: which, it is proposed, shall consist of 40,000 Seamen for the present Year, & of a permanent Land Force, which will give 40,000 Regular Troops to the Defence of England, & Scotland, 25,000 to Ireland, 15,000 to India, & little short of 30,000 to our other foreign possessions.⁴

Hobart believed that this policy was the best means of securing peace, for `Our best security for the Continuance of Peace, until some imperious Policy drives Bona Parte [sic] into War at all hazards, is in the respectable Naval and Military Establishments

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 25 Nov. 1802, FO 323/4, also quoted in Beeley, p. 502n.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 11 Nov. 1802, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 8; Yorke to Hardwicke, 22 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 35702, fo. 57.

³Memorandum on the Treaty of Amiens, 1802, Castlereagh Papers, D3030/1728.

⁴Addington to Pitt, 12 Nov. 1802, Dacres Adams Papers, 30/58/4/86.

recently voted, & the Possession of Malta, a Possession which if ever relinquished can never be regained.'¹

This brings up the one issue which more than any other dominated Anglo-French diplomacy in the six months prior to the renewal of war. Although Addington insisted that 'Malta forms an entirely separate Question',² British policy concerning the island was directly influenced by the deterioration in Anglo-French relations after the Treaty of Amiens. As late as 6 September 1802, the ministry fully intended to evacuate Malta in conformity with the treaty, as Hobart had instructed the Admiralty to protect the Maltese against the Barbary pirates after the British troops had left.³ Less than two weeks later, however, Hobart admitted privately to Auckland that, 'for the present we have determined to take no step respecting Malta being inclined to hold it as long as we can'.⁴ This was probably the result of the frustration of the British government over obtaining the fulfillment of all the provisions of the article on Malta in the treaty. Even though the three months as provided in the treaty had elapsed, Russia and Prussia had not yet guaranteed the settlement, the Neapolitan garrison was not ready to take possession, and the appointment of a new grand master of the Knights of St John had not been settled. The British had always maintained that they would be willing to evacuate the island as long as it remained independent of France. In the circumstances of September 1802, however, Malta would have been easy pickings for a French invasion.

As mentioned, the Swiss crisis initially persuaded Addington to refuse further restitutions, including Malta, but because the

¹Hobart to Hawkesbury, 21 Dec. 1802, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B60.

²Addington to Pitt, 12 Nov. 1802, Dacres Adams Papers, 30/58/4/86.

³Hobart to Admiralty, 6 Sept. 1802, WO 6/49.

⁴Hobart to Auckland, 16 Sept. 1802, Add. MSS 34455, fo. 521.

ministry did not want to risk war at that time it changed its policy and decided to fulfill its end of the Amiens bargain. Hobart thus issued new orders to restore the colonial conquests including the Cape, but not Malta,¹ for although the ministry had not decided to keep Malta at all costs, it intended to use it as a bargaining counter. In the Cabinet meetings of 6 and 8 November, the ministers discussed how the French had made additional conquests by violating the spirit of the Treaty of Amiens and the letter of the Treaty of Lunéville. As during the negotiations the French had recognized the principle that French conquests on the Continent had justified the British to retain some of their colonial conquests, the ministry felt that these further French conquests might justify the British withholding some additional colonies, particularly Malta. In response to Otto's assertion of 'Tout le Traité d'Amiens et rien que le Traité,' Hawkesbury demanded, 'L'Etat du Continent, tel qu'il était alors et rien que cet Etat'.² According to a Cabinet memorandum,

As the System of Encroachment pursued by France since that period has not only added greatly & unexpectedly to the Power of France, but may lead to further Encroachments in other quarters, His Majesty thinks He is warranted in not giving up those Securities which He still possesses, and particularly that it is His Determination, in conformity to the wishes of the Inhabitants, to appropriate the Island of Malta as part of His dominions.³

Nevertheless, the Cabinet was far from making a final decision. Instead, the ministers were willing to await the results of further consultations and negotiations in London and Paris, after the belated arrivals of the new ambassadors Andréossy and Whitworth.

¹Hobart to Grinfield, 15 Nov. 1802, same to Wellesley, 16 Nov. 1802, same to Dundas, 16 Nov. 1802, and same to Stuart, 26 Nov. 1802, WO 6/183.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 7 Brumaire XI (29 Oct. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

³Cabinet Memorandum, 6 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 38357, fos. 203-25; Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 9 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 38236, fos. 216-21.

Initially, Andréossy made a good impression on the British government. Bonaparte had chosen him because he believed that his personality would carry weight with the British. He was of an established Italian family, had spent twenty years in the army, and had reached the rank of major general in command of Strasbourg.¹ After their first dinner together, Hawkesbury believed him to be a man of moderate principles who might be able to facilitate the compromise necessary to avoid war. Andréossy's professing to disapprove of Bonaparte's intervention in Switzerland was also encouraging.² Nevertheless, he displayed little sympathy for the British position in his dispatches to Talleyrand. Otto, on the other hand, had tried to relax the stand of his own government as well as that of the British while negotiating the preliminaries of peace. He had recommended to Talleyrand that the French give in on some points to facilitate an agreement, but Andréossy did not. In his dispatches he merely blamed the British for all the problems and made no suggestions on how they could be resolved.

It is difficult to assess the role played by Andréossy in the breakdown of Anglo-French relations, because the real negotiations were taking place in Paris. For Addington and Hawkesbury believed that the fundamental problem lay with Bonaparte. He was completely in charge of French policy and could not be expected to abide by the decisions of his diplomats, and therefore the only effective way of resolving Anglo-French relations was to negotiate directly with him. On the other hand, Hawkesbury spent little time discussing affairs with Andréossy, choosing instead to concentrate on writing instructions for Whitworth in his discussions with Talleyrand and Bonaparte, and the amount of both government and private correspondence which passed between Hawkesbury and Whitworth from

¹P. Coquelle, Napoleon and England, 1803-13: A Study from the unprinted Documents, translated by Gordon D. Knox (London, 1904), p. 3.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 11 Nov. 1802, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 8; Lord Hervey's Journal, 3 Jan. 1803, Hervey Papers, 941/56/15.

November 1802 to April 1803 was remarkable. Even so, Hawkesbury respected Whitworth's diplomatic experience and gave him considerable leeway in his dealings with the French government.

The basic outline of Hawkesbury's initial instructions to Whitworth was to assert the determination of the British government to preserve British interests, but not to commit the government to any particular line of policy on the questions of Malta or peace and war. Hawkesbury wanted Whitworth to assert that the British considered the French to have recognized the principle that French acquisitions on the Continent justified the retention by the British of some of their colonial conquests as compensation, but not to indicate which conquests they would keep or in what particular circumstances. For Addington and Hawkesbury wanted to apply diplomatic pressure on the French, but they wanted to avoid the possibility of war for some time yet hoping that eventually the Russians and Austrians would become willing to form an alliance.¹

At the same time, both Hawkesbury and Addington assured Otto and Andréossy that they desired peace to continue.² They indicated, however, that French expansion in Europe made the position of the British government very difficult and at some point the ministry would have to respond to preserve its standing in Parliament and in the country. According to Andréossy,

Il est à craindre aujourd'hui que, si Mr Addington n'a pour lui que cette bonne cause [peace], et s'il ne trouve par un appui dans quelque condescendance du Gouvernement français, le plus grand nombre de ses amis l'aura abandonné d'ici en 1er Janvier; et, dès sous, il n'y aura plus du digue à opposer aux efforts de l'ancienne administration qui ne manquera pas de l'agiter pour ressaisir le timon des affaires.³

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 14 Nov. 1802, FO 27/67, also in Oscar Browning, ed., England and Napoleon in 1803 (London, 1887), pp. 6-10.

²Otto to Talleyrand, 23 Vendémiaire and 8 Brumaire XI (15 and Oct. 1802), Andréossy to Talleyrand, 28 Brumaire XI (19 Nov. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

³Andréossy to Talleyrand, 7 Frimaire XI (28 Nov. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

Consequently, Anglo-French relations remained in limbo for several months. There was no progress in resolving the outstanding issues, but neither side was prepared to provoke hostilities. During the last two months of 1802, the British government received the expected, but nonetheless disappointing, news that the Russians were not prepared to form an alliance, so the ministry turned its attention to domestic affairs including the military and naval establishments and the budget.¹

The publication of Colonel Sebastiani's report in Le Moniteur on 30 January 1803, however, stirred Anglo-French relations into turmoil. In the report, Sebastiani complained that the British had not evacuated either Malta or Egypt, as they had pledged to do by the Treaty of Amiens, and added that it would take only a small French force to dislodge the British troops from Alexandria. The British government had been aware that Sebastiani had been sent on a mission to the Mediterranean, and both Merry and Whitworth had received information that the mission had a much more sinister intent than that professed by the French government which was that Sebastiani was sent to negotiate trade treaties in the area.² Hawkesbury had even heard from Elgin in Constantinople that Sebastiani had enquired from the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Egypt, General Stuart, why the British troops had not left.³ The British were not as concerned about the mission as about the publication of the report, however, because Le Moniteur was the official organ of the French government. Addington and Hawkesbury took the publication of the report, which they believed to have been on Bonaparte's personal authority, that Egypt could easily be reconquered as a sign that the First Consul was considering another invasion of Egypt. This rendered Britain's possession of Malta even

¹See above, chapter 5, 133-45.

²Merry to Hawkesbury, 25 Sept. 1802, FO 27/64; Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 22 Nov. 1802, FO 27/67, also in Browning, pp. 15-6.

³Elgin to Hawkesbury, 13 Nov. 1802, FO 78/36; Andréossy to Talleyrand, 7 Frimaire XI (28 Nov. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

more important from a defensive standpoint, as it was the only base from which the Royal Navy could effectively protect the Turks.

One problem with retaining Malta was the attitude of the Russians. The British did not know at the time, but it seems clear that the Russians had long since decided that they preferred the British to keep Malta. Alexander Vorontsov had begun hinting to Warren, as early as 10 December 1802, that the British should retain the island.¹ Prince Adam Czartoryski, the new foreign minister, suggested on 18 January that the British army's evacuating Malta was at that time impossible, and the next day the Chancellor told Warren the British might do whatever they wished with the island.² The following day Czartoryski stated that the Tsar wished Britain to keep Malta.³ This was the news Hawkesbury and Addington had been waiting for: they had decided to keep Malta pending confirmation of the attitude of the Russians and, having been given permission, fixed their course. They received the news on 8 February, and the next day Hawkesbury told Whitworth to refuse to discuss the island with the French.⁴

Believing that the French had confirmed their designs on Egypt, on 1 February 1803 Hawkesbury instructed Warren to propose another arrangement to the Russians. If they would not agree to a defensive alliance, he hoped they would consent to a more limited arrangement, either public or secret, to guarantee the Ottoman Empire against French aggression. He argued that, as the distances between London, St Petersburg, and Constantinople were so great, the British, Russians, and Turks could not cooperate in an emergency unless some previous arrangements had been made, giving authority to their

¹Warren to Hawkesbury, 10 Dec. 1802, FO 65/51.

²Warren to Hawkesbury, 18 and 19 Jan. 1803, FO 65/52.

³Warren to Hawkesbury, 20 Jan. 1803, FO 65/52.

⁴Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 9 Feb. 1803, FO 27/68, also in Browning, p. 65; Beeley, p. 500; Same to same, 9 Feb. 1803, FO 323/4.

respective ambassadors.¹ Again the Russians declined, reiterating their old arguments and emphasizing that, as it would be impossible to keep such an arrangement secret, it would provoke a war. The only consolation they could provide was that they doubted the French would attack Naples or Turkey in the near future.² Between themselves, however, the Russians did admit that they would have preferred, if secrecy could have been preserved, to continue communications with the British over the future of Turkey.³

At the same time, Hawkesbury made preliminary overtures to Starhemberg. He did not offer a treaty of alliance but suggested that the British and Austrians confer secretly about their relations with France. He was particularly interested to know how far the Austrians were willing to permit the French to go before declaring war. He wished to discover what would be *'la dernière goutte d'eau, que ferait répandre le verre'*.⁴ The goal of the British government seemed to be to determine at what point it could declare war with the expectation that it would be joined by the Austrians. Unfortunately, the Austrians were equally unsure about the answer themselves.

In many ways Addington and Hawkesbury found themselves in the same position on the question of peace and war as in the summer of 1801, only in reverse. In the first case, the question had been whether the costs of war outweighed the sacrifices necessary to negotiate peace, and in the second it was whether the sacrifices necessary to maintain peace outweighed the likely costs of renewing the war. Hawkesbury summarized the position for his father:

there is no precedent to govern ones conduct; but the sentiment seems to be that it is hardly possible to

¹Hawkesbury to Warren, 1 Feb. 1803, FO 65/52.

²A. Vorontsov to Warren, 21 Mar. 1803, and S. Vorontsov to Alexander I, 25 Mar. 1803, VPR, i. 393, 399; Warren to Hawkesbury, 25 Mar. 1803, FO 65/52.

³A. Vorontsov to Morkov, 5 Jan. 1803, SIRIO, lxx. 616.

⁴Starhemberg to Colloredo, 8 Feb. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

continue the relations of peace & amity with a power whose conduct & whose language are so professedly hostile and on occasion of this nature we might be exposed to the clamour of the public and of the Army. On the other hand it cannot be denied that the pro-crastination of hostilities even if they should ultimately be unavoidable for a few months would be very desirable.¹

Addington and Hawkesbury believed that the great uncertainty in Parliament and the country over the question of peace and war, and even greater uncertainty how France and the Continental powers would react, meant that a final decision should be postponed until everyone's position became clearer.² Once again the complexity of the problem persuaded the ministry to compromise. On the question of the restitutions required by the Treaty of Amiens, the ministry chose to fulfill all of them except for Malta. However, although they had no wish to maintain an army in Egypt, the army could not leave until a settlement had been arranged between the Mameluke Beys and the Turkish government.³ For the Mamelukes were involved in a constant struggle trying to resist Turkish control, and if war erupted after the British left, it might facilitate French intervention. While Hobart did press the British commander to evacuate as soon as possible,⁴ Stuart had great difficulty arranging a peaceful settlement. On the contrary, the Turks granted the Mamelukes a semi-autonomous province only after failing to subdue them by military force in November 1802.⁵ Hence, the British army was not able to embark until 11 March 1803.

¹Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 6 Feb. 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fos. 17-18.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 14 Jan. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³Memorandum on Egypt enclosed in Hawkesbury to Elgin, 28 July 1801, Elgin Papers, 60/17/4.

⁴Hobart to Stuart, n.d. May 1802, Elgin Papers, 60/6/12.

⁵Elgin to Hawkesbury, 24 Dec. 1802, FO 78/36; Same to same, 15 Jan. 1803, FO 78/38.

Addington and Hawkesbury had decided to retain Malta until the French government had provided a satisfactory explanation of Sebastiani's report, but Hawkesbury admitted that no explanation that was likely to be given would be considered wholly satisfactory.¹ The French government, however, firmly demanded that the British evacuate Malta, and Otto told Hawkesbury that there would be war if Britain refused.² On 20 February 1803, Bonaparte demanded to see Whitworth at the Tuileries. In a long and stern lecture he insisted that he would never acquiesce in Britain's retaining Malta, and claimed, in Whitworth's words, that 'of the two he had rather see us in possession of the Faubourg St Antoine than Malta'. Bonaparte asserted that the question of peace or war depended on Malta, and that if war recommenced he would invade England.³

Addington and Hawkesbury were stunned by this threat and Bonaparte's claim to have 480,000 troops ready for war, but they were somewhat confused over how to respond. While emphasizing Bonaparte's fiery temper and inclination to fight, Whitworth's dispatches and private letters also suggested that he was very unpopular in France and that the government finances were in extremely poor shape. Addington and Hawkesbury could not predict whether he would really risk war or was merely bluffing. For they considered that even if he lacked the proper military and financial resources, he was so unpredictable and unstable that he might still provoke a war. Liverpool speculated rather hopefully, 'It is possible that Bonaparte may go mad, and may die in his Delirium.'⁴

Addington and Hawkesbury therefore decided that the only sensible policy was to prepare for war, while continuing to

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 9 Feb. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

²Otto to Hawkesbury, 24 Feb. 1802, MS Loan 72/43, fo. 66.

³Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 21 Feb. 1803, FO 27/67, also in Browning, pp. 78-85.

⁴Liverpool to Hervey, n. d., Hervey Papers, 941/56/8.

negotiate for a peaceful resolution. On 8 March the King issued a proclamation in Parliament to augment the British armed forces in response to the naval and military build up on the French and Dutch coasts.¹ The government then moved to embody the militia and augment the navy by 10,000 men. This provoked Whitworth and Robert Liston, the ambassador at the Hague, to complain that the British government had unnecessarily heightened Anglo-French tension because the French military and naval preparations were intended for the West Indies, particularly St Domingue, where the French government was still trying to suppress the negro rebellion.² The ministry was already aware of this, but believed, quite rightly, that if war resumed between Britain and France Bonaparte would divert those military resources away from the West Indies and towards Britain.³ The government could not afford to leave the country exposed to such a threat, as the resumption of war seemed likely. Hawkesbury tried to soften the blow this initiative would give to Anglo-French relations, by informing Andréossy of it before the message was given in Parliament.⁴ He stressed both to the French ambassador and Whitworth that these measures were entirely defensive in nature and that they would not be directed towards France.

Bonaparte did not accept these assurances, and on 13 March, he accosted Whitworth at the Tuileries, and flying into a rage in front of a large audience, began a long and loud diatribe against Whitworth and the British government. He went around all the foreign ministers yelling that the British wanted war and he would give it

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1162-3.

²Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 17 Mar. 1803, MS Loan 72/18, fo. 89; Liston to Hawkesbury, 15 Mar. 1803, FO 37/61.

³Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 7 Mar. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4; Yorke to Hardwicke, 8 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 135-6.

⁴Andréossy to Talleyrand, 17 Ventôse XI (7 Mar. 1803), AE Angleterre/600.

to them.¹ Talleyrand later claimed that Bonaparte had merely lost his temper,² but regardless Anglo-French tension and mutual distrust had increased considerably. Each side had become more firmly committed to its position, and the opportunities for a peaceful resolution had decreased even further.

The foreign policy of the ministry had a direct effect on its standing in Parliament. As mentioned, by negotiating peace the ministry had won over the support of the Foxite Whigs but had lost the support of the Grenvillites and others. Despite Grenville's denials, his group did form a factious opposition, which opposed almost every move the government made, and it seemed that Addington had lost their support no matter which policy he pursued. On the other hand, he could not count on the support of his new found allies among the old opposition. For though Fox was satisfied with the peace, he opposed the strong peace establishment and any display of firmness towards the French government. In late 1802 and early 1803, the government's difficult crisis in Anglo-French relations was thus complicated further by a curious parliamentary position. In trying to determine the best policy in relation to France, the ministry was hampered by the realization that anything short of outright war would be opposed by the Grenvillites, while any defensive precautions would be opposed by the Foxites.

The government still maintained a majority strong enough to overcome a united opposition of the Grenvillites and Foxites, which in any case appeared unlikely at the time. Nevertheless, it felt increasingly vulnerable, especially in parliamentary debate, as Anglo-French relations worsened. Addington was also aware that there seemed to be general agreement throughout the country that, if war were renewed Pitt was the only man capable of managing it successfully. Considering his previous record it is strange that

¹Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 14 Mar. 1803, FO 27/67, also in Browning, pp. 115-7.

²Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 17 Mar. 1803, FO 27/67.

anyone would have come to this conclusion (unless they were misled by government propaganda), but many including some members of the Cabinet had. By January 1803, Addington had therefore decided that it would be for the best if he handed the reins of power back to Pitt.

For the ministry had been able to carry on truly confidently only so long as it kept Pitt's active support. After the debates of the spring of 1802 on the Treaty of Amiens, Pitt left London, and physical distance increased the political distance between him and Addington. Moreover, in September, Pitt became so ill that he almost died, and since Farquhar proscribed complete rest, Pitt was kept even longer than he had intended, first at Walmer and, when he was well enough to take the waters, at Bath. Addington tried to maintain channels of communication with Pitt through Hiley and Castlereagh, but over such a distance he could not sustain the kind of intimacy of the previous year. Moreover, Canning, Rose, and Tomline tried to keep Pitt isolated from Addington as much as possible, hoping to create a political rift, and they were largely successful. By November 1802, Pitt was discussing the possibility of returning to office with Grenville who was being pressed by his family to urge that Addington and Hawkesbury be dismissed.¹ At the same time as he was discussing displacing the ministry, however, he claimed to be fully in agreement with its policies.² Thus it is clear that Pitt was as confused as Addington about the best course of action.

Quite ironically, however, Pitt's absence from Westminster in the autumn of 1802 in a strange way appeared to strengthen the position of the government, as the ministers were able to demonstrate that they could stand on their own. Hawkesbury claimed that the `Government is stronger in Publick Opinion at the present moment that it has been at any Time since its formation and that in

¹Grenville to Pitt, 8 Nov. 1802, Dropmore Papers, vii. 123-4; Grenville to Buckingham, 2 Nov. 1802, Stowe Papers.

²Pitt to Tomline, 5 Nov. 1802, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/42; Pitt to Canning, 31 Oct. 1802, Canning Papers, 30.

one point of view We have gained Strength even from the absence of Pitt'.¹ Nevertheless, Addington could see that the position of the government was likely to get worse as diplomatic relations with France deteriorated, because the Foxites would oppose the government taking a line that was too firm while others would oppose a line that was too conciliatory. He was also aware that enough pressure from Grenville and Canning might persuade Pitt to join the opposition, unless the ministry fought hard to tie him to the government and the best means of ensuring that was to have him join the ministry.

In January 1803, Pitt met Addington to discuss politics at Downing Street and then again at Addington's home in Richmond Park, where Addington first broached the subject of Pitt's returning to office.² Nothing came of these discussions, possibly because Addington's overtures were either too vague or too speculative. Moreover, Pitt's physical health was still very poor and he had not yet completely made up his mind to return to office. Within two months, however, Anglo-French relations had worsened as a result of Sebastiani's report and the King's proclamation, and the ministry decided that it was still very necessary to gain further support to deal with the crisis. Therefore, Addington employed Dundas, to whom he persuaded the King to grant a peerage as Viscount Melville in December 1802, to negotiate Pitt's accession to the ministry.

Armed with specific proposals, Melville set out for Walmer in the middle of March. Addington proposed that he and Pitt should be on equal footing in the ministry as secretaries of state with a mutually acceptable third party, Chatham, to act nominally as First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt refused outright, however, any arrangement on that basis. Melville explained in his own peculiar syntax,

¹Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 9 Jan. 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 16.

²Addington told Abbot that Pitt said at that time that he was less disinclined to return to power, Colchester Diary, i. 413.

The moment of a negotiation still in suspense he considers in every view unfit for his taking part; but, in any event, nothing could induce him to come forward except an urgent sense of public duty, and a distinct knowledge that his services (such as they may be) are wished and thought essential both in the highest quarter [the King], and by all those with whom (in consequence of any arrangement that might be formed on that ground) he might have to act confidentially. He is firmly of opinion that he could not, on this supposition, have any chance of answering his own ideas of being useful to the country in one of the great points on which he lays a principal stress, but by returning to the management of its finances. Besides this consideration, he stated, not less pointedly and decidedly, his sentiments with regard to the absolute necessity there is, in the conduct of the affairs of this country, that there should be an avowed and real minister possessing the chief weight in council and the principal place in the confidence of the King. In that respect there can be no rivalry [sic] or division of power. That power must rest in the person generally called the First Minister; and that minister ought, he thinks, to be the person at the head of the finances.¹

Addington was dismayed at Pitt's cold response, but he did not wish to let his own personal feelings stand in the way of the great benefit to the ministry and the country that he believed would have been provided by Pitt returning to office.² Therefore, on 3 April he sent another overture to Pitt through Charles Long, whom Pitt had authorized to send Addington a counter-proposal. This time he tried to address all of Pitt's objections as stipulated in Melville's letter and his discussions with Long. First, Pitt would not return to office until the negotiations with France had terminated. Second, he would be head of the government and in charge of finance. Third, he would have ultimate control over the distribution of offices. Addington planned to bring in at first Pitt and Melville, whom he had already arranged to take the Admiralty.³ But while Addington was

¹Melville to Addington, 22 Mar. 1803, Pellew, ii. 115-6.

²Colchester Diary, i. 414.

³Pelham to Addington, 14 Apr. 1803, Add. MSS 33111, fos. 162-3; Grenville to Buckingham, 15 Feb. 1803, Stowe Papers; Andréossy to Talleyrand, 26 Ventôse XI (16 Mar. 1803), AE Angleterre/600.

perfectly willing to dismiss Pelham and Bragge in order to accommodate these changes, he hoped that some office could be found so as to keep Hobart in the Cabinet. He also proposed that the Grenvillites be brought in during a second series of ministerial changes sometime in the future, as the immediate admission of them would be a public slight to his original colleagues.¹

Addington arranged to meet Pitt at Long's home in Bromley Hill on 10 April to work out the details of Pitt's returning to office. From their subsequent correspondence it is easy to deduce the nature of these negotiations. Addington was shocked to discover that Pitt was not prepared to negotiate. For Pitt refused to take office unless the ministry resigned en masse and the King asked him to form a government granting him a clean slate. Pitt had discussed the formation of a new Cabinet with Grenville prior to speaking with Addington, and Grenville had insisted that the existing ministry be dismissed and that Addington and Hawkesbury not be given positions of efficient business.² Pitt intended that Addington should be Home Secretary and a peer, Hawkesbury should be demoted, and Hobart, Pelham, Liverpool, Bragge and the rest of the Addingtonians be dismissed.³ He also demanded that the new Cabinet include Melville, Spencer, Grenville and Windham.⁴ Realizing that Addington would never agree to his proposals, Pitt hoped that the former would resign and allow him to design the new ministry as he chose.

Addington was very hurt by this response, but he submitted Pitt's proposal to the Cabinet and let the other ministers decide. But while several of them, including Eldon, Hawkesbury, and Castlereagh, wanted Pitt to join the ministry as much or more than Addington did, they were not prepared to hand over their positions

¹Long to Pitt, 3 April 1803, Dacres Adams Papers, 30/58/4/93i.

²Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of George III, iii. 282-90.

³Rose Diaries, ii. 34-7.

⁴Colchester Diary, i. 416.

to the Grenvillites, whom they expected Pitt to bring into office. Therefore, the Cabinet rejected his proposal.¹

Pitt's behaviour, while somewhat understandable, was rather unfair. The incessant pleading of Canning, Grenville, and others that he must return to office as he was the only man who could save the country certainly swelled his ego, while Addington's overtures confirmed his exaggerated view of his own importance. Therefore, believing that his return to power was inevitable, he thought that he did not have to make any compromises. He was also very concerned that it should not appear publicly that he was scheming for office. In order to preserve the illusion that honour was so important to him that it was the sole reason that he resigned in the first place, he had to appear to be returning to power solely because it was the overwhelming desire of the King and the country. He treated Addington as if their relative positions had not changed since 1789, but those positions had indeed changed. Pitt had been out of office for over two years and his personal power and influence had declined considerably. Addington, on the other hand, no matter how strange the circumstances, had been Prime Minister for two years and therefore deserved to be treated with more respect and deference than when he was merely an MP. In the same way, the rest of the ministry had gained two years of experience in high office and could not merely be pushed around as if they were still Pitt's lackeys. No matter how great Pitt's reputation had become, it did not justify his treating so lightly men who were in office when he was not. He could not expect them to play his puppets and go in and out of office when he pulled the strings.

Even some of Pitt's closest supporters believed that he had acted unreasonably. For example, Lord Redesdale protested that the ministers had only accepted office on his insistence, and that if he had remained in office in the first place, there would have been no problem. He asserted,

¹Pellew, ii. 119-30.

But, my dear Sir, you have yourself taken steps which makes it almost impossible to bring back things, immediately, to that state. Permit me to intreat [sic] you to consider whether it is not your duty, in some degree to submit to a necessity which you have yourself in a considerable degree created. ... You have brought several persons who were your best friends, into a situation, which now brings them to the verge of hostility with you; & that you have a duty which you owe them. ... You cannot, in honour, permit [them] to suffer for acting according to your declared wishes, & sacrifice them to those who apparently acted contrary to your declared wishes. ... They therefore rendered you a great personal service, & you owe them gratitude.¹

Melville was also very disturbed by Pitt's response, because he believed that Addington's ministry had been more loyal to Pitt than the Grenvillites had been, and that bringing them into a new ministry would be a mistake. He claimed:

If you professing to adopt a part of the present Government as Colleagues in your's [sic], should accompany that declaration with an avowed intention of commencing your Government with a Measure distinctly degrading and hostile to every member of the present Government, it would be harsh and unjust, and I mistake greatly the general Feeling of the World, if the Public would hold you up in refusing at so critical a moment, taking the Government upon you, upon such a ground.²

Pitt's conduct was also disapproved of by Chatham, Castlereagh, Hawkesbury, and Steele.³ Later Cornwallis fairly summarized the whole episode:

I do not think in the negotiation in March last, that Addington, supported as he was by a large and very respectable majority in Both Houses of Parliament, and by no means unpopular with the nation at large, could have been justified in laying the King, his colleagues in office, and all his friends in Parliament, at the feet of Mr Pitt, without venturing to enquire to what degree of humiliation they were to be expected to submit, by a

¹Redesdale to Pitt, 31 Oct. 1803, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/170/2, fos. 211-4.

²Melville to Pitt, 14 April 1803, Add. MSS 40102, fo. 106.

³Colchester Diary, i. 416.

public declaration of his own total inability to go on with the Government.¹

Pitt was asking more than could have been reasonably expected of Addington. The resignation of the ministry at that time would have been seen as an admission of failure, and it was clear, however, that the ministry had not failed. Each of Addington's major policy decisions had been ratified by a majority in Parliament and received favourably by popular opinion. Almost everyone other than the Grenvillites or Pitt's toadies seemed to believe that the performance of the government was satisfactory.

Pitt assumed, quite arrogantly, that the interests of the country would be better served if he were running the government. This implies that he would have adopted different policies, but his correspondence appears to indicate that he was in complete agreement with most of Addington's policies. About the only real difference in their thinking was demonstrated on 2 March, when Pitt suggested that the government prepare for immediate war and strike a blow at a vulnerable point.² Pitt of course did not suggest what this vulnerable point might be. Nor did he admit that after nearly ten years of fighting the French himself, he had failed to find such a point. Moreover, Pitt did not seem to know what he would do if he came into office. His absence from Parliament in the early months of 1803 was perhaps not so much the result of ill-health as of the realization that the political issues involved were so complex that he could not with confidence commit himself to a particular line of policy.³ If he returned to Westminster he would be asked to declare whether he supported the continuance of peace or the renewal of war, and he might publicly commit himself to the wrong side. So he

¹Cornwallis to Ross, 8 Dec. 1803, Cornwallis Correspondence, iii. 506-7.

²Pitt to Chatham, 2 Mar. 1803, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/101, fo. 177.

³Pitt to Tomline, 18 Mar. 1803, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/42.

preferred to stay away until war was declared at which point the difficult decision was no longer necessary.

Addington and Hawkesbury could not afford the luxury of hiding away until the issue was resolved. Instead, they had to make a decision and take the responsibility for it. It is clear that they believed that the eventual renewal of war was inevitable, but wished for further time to prepare the military and financial resources of the country. Nevertheless, Bonaparte's obvious intention to attack Egypt, combined with the perception that the government had made too many concessions to him already, convinced Addington and Hawkesbury that Britain would have to keep Malta, at least for the time being. During the negotiations for peace in 1801, Hawkesbury had believed that the benefits of peace outweighed the sacrifice of conquered colonies, but by 1803, he had realized that the strategic position of the country and the political position of the ministry would suffer gravely if it did not resist the aggressive foreign policy of the French. Standing firm on Malta was at that point necessary to preserve British interests in the eastern Mediterranean and likely to prove popular in Parliament.

Having realized that the French would not accept the British retaining Malta in violation of the Treaty of Amiens, even though several of the stipulations had not been met, Hawkesbury became willing to strike a deal with Bonaparte. In a private letter to Whitworth of 9 February, he suggested bribing the First Consul with an offer of £10-20,000.¹ Whitworth looked into the matter further and received assurances that members of Bonaparte's family would indeed be willing to exert their influence in Britain's favour for a satisfactory sum.² Hawkesbury then raised his offer to £100,000

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 9 Feb. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

²Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 14 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 38238, fos. 102-3. This episode is covered in detail in Carl Ludwig Lokke, 'Secret Negotiations to Maintain the Peace of Amiens', American Historical Review, xlix (1943-4), 55-64.

and added that the British would recognize the King of Etruria and the French acquisition of Elba.¹ Whitworth had sounded out Joseph Bonaparte, who seemed well disposed, but felt that £100,000 was insufficient and that the deal would require at least £1-2 million.²

Nevertheless, these secret negotiations proved unsuccessful. For on the one hand, Joseph Bonaparte and Talleyrand while appearing agreeable to the idea never made any firm commitments, and on the other, Hawkesbury and Addington changed their minds. The sums of money demanded were more than the government could afford, and the repercussions for the government, if the details of the deal were discovered by the British public, would have been devastating.³

Hawkesbury was still willing, however, to pursue a more open line of negotiation. On 4 March, he suggested that the British should be allowed to occupy Malta for a period of no less than six years, after which they would hand the island over to the Maltese, and one month later, he offered to recognize the new regimes in Italy in return for keeping Malta.⁴ The French, however, firmly refused to consider these proposals. After Joseph Bonaparte suggested unofficially that the French might be willing to allow the British to obtain another naval station in the vicinity of Malta, Hawkesbury drew up a final proposal which he submitted both directly to Andréossi and through Whitworth to Talleyrand. The British were to obtain the island of Lampedusa from the King of Naples, British troops would remain in Malta until Lampedusa had been fortified and prepared as a naval station, and the British would recognize the King of Etruria and the Italian and Ligurian Republics. In return the French would provide compensation for the King of Sardinia and

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 17 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 38238, fos. 104-5.

²Whitworth to Hawkesbury, 24 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 38238, fos. 111-2.

³Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 31 Mar. and 7 April 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

⁴Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 4 Apr. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

evacuate all French forces from Holland and Switzerland.¹ Hawkesbury was willing to trade Malta for Lampedusa because

It is important ... that if the effort with respect to Malta should be found desperate, the course we have proposed should be taken for the purpose of satisfying the public here that Malta is not the cause of the war, and that if the object for which we require to keep Malta can be obtained by any other means we shall be satisfied.²

During the process of these negotiations, the attitude of the British ministry changed completely. At first, Addington and Hawkesbury were looking to delay a settlement, as in February Hawkesbury had told Whitworth that the government wanted more time. By April, however, the ministry had decided that it could no longer bear the uncertainty of the protracted negotiations. For commercial investors had grown weary from this uncertainty, and the favourable spirit of the country would soon evaporate.³ Even Andréossy noted that the funds were falling and commercial speculation had been virtually suspended owing to the uncertainty.⁴ The main reason that the ministry had supported a delay in the first place was to determine whether the Russians would agree to an alliance or some form of close diplomatic cooperation, but as it had become clear that the Russians would not agree, the British had to be prepared to take their own line. On 31 March, Hawkesbury asserted that there must be `some treaty or Convention by which the differences of the

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 7 May 1803, FO 27/68, also in Browning, pp. 224-6; Andréossy to Talleyrand, 17 Floréal XI (7 May 1803), AE Angleterre/600.

²Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 4 Apr. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

³Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 4 Apr. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

⁴Andréossy to Talleyrand, 25 Ventôse XI (16 Mar. 1803), AE Angleterre/600.

Two countries will be settled or War',¹ and two weeks later he insisted that the decision be made immediately.²

This determination to bring the negotiations to an end implied a willingness to renew the war if necessary, and this point deserves examination. That the ministry worked so hard to negotiate peace and then within two years was willing to renew the war certainly requires explanation. For either the policies of the ministry were inconsistent or some considerable changes had occurred. Grenville believed mistakenly that the ministry had learned from its errors and finally come around to his point of view. On the contrary, there was some underlying consistency in its policies. In both 1801 and 1803 the ministers recognized that there were strong arguments for peace and war and came to a final decision only with great difficulty. In 1801 there were five important considerations: Britain was diplomatically isolated; government finances were in poor shape; levels of social unrest were alarming; popular opinion in general favoured peace; and peace with France could not be evaluated until it had been tried.

By May 1803, all five of these conditions had changed. Britain's relations with Russia were much stronger. In March 1801 Britain had been diplomatically isolated and virtually at war with Russia. Even after the Anglo-Russian convention of June 1801, diplomatic relations between the two were still cool. But during the peace, the careful attention of the British government and the aggressive policies of the French rendered the Russians better disposed to the British than at any time since the formation of the Second Coalition. Even though the Russians refused British overtures of alliance for the time being, Hawkesbury could reasonably expect that the two governments would cooperate against the French in the future.

¹Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 31 Mar. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

²Hawkesbury to Whitworth, 13 Apr. 1803, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

Equally important, the domestic situation was much improved. The peace and a good harvest had caused a sharp decline in the price of bread, which put an end to food riots. Some isolated disturbances continued, but potentially revolutionary social unrest appeared to have ceased. Even Ireland seemed much more settled. According to Liverpool the Despard affair was the only example of disaffection.¹

The revival of trade and Addington's financial policies had also restored the health of the government finances to a remarkable degree in a short a time. The period of peace had provided a necessary breathing space for the recovery of the British economy, as trade with Russia, Germany, and Italy had resumed to a sufficient extent to save many commercial interests in Britain. As a result customs and excise duties were more productive, enabling Addington to repair the state of the government finances, and permitting the government to bear the expense of a war establishment.² Hawkesbury told Lord Holland that it was in fact the remarkable recovery of the finances that allowed the government to consider the renewal of war as an option.³

Finally, the period of peace had proved to both the ministry and the country as a whole that Bonaparte could not be trusted to contain his aggressive ambitions and that the British government could not merely remain idle while he increased the extent of French territory and power. The exuberant joy at the announcement of peace in October 1801 had indeed soon subsided. For supporters of the peace were disillusioned, first by the long delay in the negotiation of the definitive treaty and then by the discovery of Bonaparte's further Continental and colonial acquisitions. In October 1802, Otto claimed that popular opinion was incensed by each new development

¹Liverpool to Whitworth, 6 Dec. 1802, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 34-5; Liverpool to Whitworth, 6 Dec. 1802, Whitworth Papers, FO 323/4.

³Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, i. 191.

on the Continent.¹ By 1803, Pitt and many others who had supported peace in 1801 had turned against Bonaparte and were willing to support a renewal of the war. Consequently, in March 1803 Starhemberg speculated that the renewal of war would be extremely popular.²

Moreover, it was clear that Bonaparte was bent on war eventually.³ In early 1803 the French navy was not prepared to challenge the British, but the First Consul expected that war would be renewed sometime after September 1804.⁴ Addington and Hawkesbury did not know Bonaparte's timetable, but they did realize that if they did not make the first move, he would strike when he was ready, and as Anglo-French negotiations deteriorated it seemed likely that the French would begin to prepare for a rupture. If the British were to fight a naval war with any success, they had to strike before the French were prepared. At that time, in fact, Bonaparte was not well prepared, as the navy needed at least ten years before it could challenge the British, and he had just sent off colonial expeditions to the West and East Indies which would be easy pickings for the Royal Navy. Nevertheless, Bonaparte was unwilling to agree to a compromise that would have avoided war, and he continued to insist that the British fulfill the Treaty of Amiens.⁵

Sensing the haste of the British government, the French tried to delay Whitworth's departure as long as possible, without actually giving in to the British demands. On 29 April, in order to keep

¹Otto to Talleyrand, 23 Vendémiaire XI, (15 Oct. 1802), AE Angleterre/600.

²Starhemberg, to Colloredo, 1 Mar. 1803, HNSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³Coquelle, 'Les Reponsabilités de la Rupture de la Paix d'Amiens', pp. 294-7.

⁴Sorel, vi. 211; John Holland Rose, The Life of Napoleon (2 vols, London, 1916), i. 375; Coquelle, Napoleon and England, p. 36; C. Northcote Parkinson, The War in the Eastern Seas, 1793-1815 (London, 1954), p. 195.

⁵Deutch, pp. 101-17.

Whitworth in Paris, the French promised him a favourable response, but after a further delay, the proposal turned out merely to consist of giving Malta to Russia. After Whitworth had left Paris, the French sent him a proposal that the British should keep Malta for ten years during which the French would maintain forces in Otranto and Taranto, and a similar proposal was made directly to Hawkesbury through Andréossy.

Addington and Hawkesbury had already decided to declare war because the French were clearly trying to protract the negotiations further and the ministry felt that it could no longer bear the uncertainty. On 18 May in the Commons, Addington declared war. But while the uncertainty was finally over, a whole new series of problems began.

Chapter Seven

The Diplomacy of War, May 1803 to April 1804

'The Court of Vienna appears to be very feeble, that of Petersburg very flat & that of Berlin very false.'

Lord Hawkesbury¹

The declaration of the renewal of war seemed very popular. Parliament overwhelmingly supported the decision, as speaker after speaker rose to criticize the French and entreat the government to pursue a vigorous war effort. Even some of the Foxite Whigs reluctantly admitted that Bonaparte's policies justified a renewal of the war. In fact, Fox was almost the only one to criticize the government for making a hasty and unjustifiable decision. Popular opinion, which less than two years before had welcomed the peace with great joy and celebration, seemed almost to welcome the war. For the war began with a display of patriotic fervour, according to Emsley who has substantiated this claim by quoting opinions from a cross-section of British society.² Moreover, the voices which had demanded peace in 1801 did not press the government to maintain it in 1803. For example, commercial interests, which required the breathing space in 1801, found the prospect of war preferable to the uncertainty of the early months of 1803. Thus Addington had timed his decision well. He had sustained the peace long enough to demonstrate that he did not enter the war lightly and to allow the continued aggressions and arrogant attitude of Bonaparte to alienate both British and foreign opinion.

While winning over domestic opinion was essential to the survival of the ministry, securing favourable foreign opinion was

¹Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 16 July 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 30.

²Emsley, pp. 112-5.

necessary for a successful prosecution of the war. For Addington had no grand illusions about defeating the French singlehandedly, and he knew that only a strong Continental alliance could overcome the French army and impose a durable peace. One of the major reasons that he had chosen to negotiate peace in 1801 was because the prospects of a coalition were remote and the British could not fight effectively on their own. Having declared war, Addington was faced with a similar problem. Nevertheless, the prospects for a Continental coalition were much better in May 1803 than they had been two years before. As Hawkesbury had confided to Minto in May 1801, the policy of the British government had been to cultivate close relations with the powers on the Continent,¹ and this policy had been largely successful. Britain's relations with Russia, in particular, had improved dramatically, even though it was still reluctant to enter a formal alliance. Thus the British no longer had to worry that the Russians would be working against them, as had been the case with the League of Armed Neutrality, and it seemed only a matter of time before the Russians had developed sufficient resources to enable them to enter the war against France. The problem was, however, that the British could not afford to wait. For they could not survive for long on their own against the French without suffering severe strains on their economic and military resources. Consequently, Addington and Hawkesbury set out immediately to win the support or at least the neutrality of the other powers of Europe.

Origins of the Third Coalition

Addington's declaration of war had caught Bonaparte off guard, for the First Consul had not expected that war would resume for at least another year and a half and consequently was not prepared. Thus Bonaparte found the rupture of the peace inopportune,² and his first response to the declaration was to pursue a negotiated settlement.

¹See above, chapter 3, pp. 62-77.

²Deutch, p. 147.

While Britain and France had been moving closer to war in March 1803, Bonaparte had asked the Russians to mediate in the dispute. He did not want the Russians to offer a compromise but to chastise the British and insist that they evacuate Malta.¹ The British, who had hoped for the cooperation of the Russians in the event of a renewal of hostilities,² also looked favourably on Russian mediation as they believed mistakenly that the Russians would officially condone their possession of Malta, thus justifying the British position in the eyes of the world. The Russians, however, did not want to commit themselves in this dispute for fear of antagonizing either side, as they were not yet prepared militarily or financially to enter another war. On the other hand, they had realized that if they did not mediate, war would ensue. Thus to preserve peace for themselves in the long run, they had to prevent war between France and Britain.³

As Anglo-French relations approached a crisis, the Tsar proposed to mediate and on 22 April, sent an offer direct to London through Simon Vorontsov. Unfortunately, the usual delay in correspondence between St Petersburg and London prevented the note from arriving until 14 May,⁴ by which date Whitworth had already left Paris and war had effectively resumed. The problem caused by this bad timing was exacerbated by a serious misunderstanding on Simon Vorontsov's part. For on 24 May, he read a report in the newspapers that in the Commons Addington had declared a willingness to welcome the intervention of the Tsar or anyone else. Vorontsov accused Addington of lying, as the British had rejected the Tsar's offer when it arrived, and he was seriously worried that the Russian government would accuse him of

¹Bonaparte to Alexander I, 20 Ventôse XI (11 Mar. 1803), SIRIO, lxxvii. 55; Jacques Petrel, 'La Russie et la Rupture de la Paix d'Amiens', Annales de l'Ecole Libre de Science Politiques 12e année, (1887), p. 72.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 1 Apr. 1803, HNSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³S. Vorontsov to A. Vorontsov, 18 May 1803, AKV, x. 205-6.

⁴Hawkesbury to S. Vorontsov, 26 May 1803, FO 65/52.

failing in his duty.¹ Hawkesbury tried to repair the damage quickly. He insisted that what Addington had said was not inconsistent with his own reply to the Russian offer, which in any case was only a vague proposal to be a channel of communication between Britain and France.² With the declaration of war the situation had changed completely, and it would be impossible for Britain 'to suffer the Negotiation to be further continued, except on the Basis of some distinct proposition by which the present Differences might be immediately and satisfactorily adjusted'.³ Realizing that Vorontsov was not sufficiently convinced, Hawkesbury wrote again, explaining that the British were indeed anxious for the intervention of Russia, provided that it did not require them to suspend their military activities until the French were brought into line. He stated:

Your Excellency must be aware, from the communications which I have had the Honor of making to you during the course of the negotiation, that the French Government, without having ever shown a sincere Disposition to listen to the just pretensions of this Country, have manifested a considerable anxiety to defer the period of a Rupture, and have thought it material to their interests to employ every means in their power for that purpose. This Country has, on the other hand, undergone serious inconvenience from the great expense of the armament, from a long and irksome state of Suspense, and from the opportunity which has been thereby afforded to France for extending her Preparations. It is clear therefore that the delay arising from any new negotiation would, in the first instance, operate to the advantage of France and to the Injury of Great Britain, whilst its ultimate success would remain extremely precarious.⁴

Addington and Hawkesbury had good reason to suspect that the French were trying to manipulate the Russians. For the French seemed to

¹S. Vorontsov to Hawkesbury, 25 May 1803, FO 65/52.

²Hawkesbury's interpretation is verified by the text of the document, a copy of which is in SIRIO, lxxvii. 98-100, the Tsar's covering letter, VPR, i. 410, and the report of Addington's speech in Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1489.

³Hawkesbury to S. Vorontsov, 26 May 1803, FO 65/52.

⁴Hawkesbury to S. Vorontsov, 28 May 1803, FO 65/52.

desire a suspension of hostilities, not as a prelude to an arrangement which would satisfy British interests, but to nullify the advantage gained by the British with their unexpected declaration of war. There was thus no reason to expect that these new negotiations would be any more satisfactory than those that had been carried on by Whitworth in Paris. Nevertheless, the British had to justify their refusal to the Russians in order not to alienate their support, as the British could not appear unreasonable in their determination to continue with the war.

Even though the prospects of a resolution of the dispute were remote, the Russians persevered. On 8 June, Alexander I offered to take Malta, if it would prevent bloodshed,¹ while Simon Vorontsov and Count A. I. Morkov, the Russian ambassador in Paris, sent peace proposals back and forth across the Channel. On 12 June, Bonaparte proposed to Morkov that if the Russians would take Malta, the British could have Lampedusa and the French would agree to a European settlement which provided indemnity for the King of Sardinia.² Bonaparte also claimed that if the Tsar insisted that the British keep Malta, he would abide by the decision.³ Simon Vorontsov passed on the offer to Hawkesbury on 16 June, and discussed it with him the next day. Britain's answer relayed to Morkov was, however, that it would only accept the state of possessions at the beginning of the war which would require the French to retreat from north Germany and the British to retain Malta.⁴

By this time, Addington and Hawkesbury's policy of conciliating Russia was beginning to show benefits, as during the negotiations, Morkov and Vorontsov were sympathetic to the British and gave them

¹Petrel, p. 87.

²Morkov to S. Vorontsov, 13 June 1803, FO 65/52; Petrel, p. 76.

³Petrel, p. 77.

⁴Draft of Declaration against France, n.d., FO 27/69.

effective support.¹ Vorontsov even reciprocated one of Hawkesbury's established policies by showing him copies of Morkov's correspondence with Talleyrand.² Moreover, Alexander I had become annoyed with Bonaparte for refusing to accept Russian terms for a peace settlement. In fact, the Russians finally had become convinced that the French could not be trusted, as Alexander Vorontsov told Morkov:

Si je ne m'étonne pas du peu d'ouvertures qui vous ont été faites par m. d. Talleyrand au sujet de leurs dernières explications avec l'Angleterre, après les offres de nos bons offices agréés par eux, c'est que j'en trouve les motifs dans la duplicité et l'arrogance extrême, qui caractérise [sic] le gouvernement français et qui lui fait envisager les démarches même des principales puissances de l'Europe comme de simples instruments de la volonté française.³

At this point, having read the signs that the Russians were becoming increasingly more favourable to the British position, Addington and Hawkesbury decided that the time was right to reap the harvest of their Russian diplomacy. They were also impelled by their military position which had stagnated. For having already sent amphibious operations to recapture the French colonies, they realized that there was little else they could do on their own to strike a blow at French power. Moreover, the possibility that the French would invade became increasingly more likely.⁴ Thus the only solution was to persuade the Russians to reenter the war, and Hawkesbury made two overtures. The first was to Simon Vorontsov. On 11 July, Hawkesbury attempted to justify Britain's actions once again as defending European, not solely British interests. He then emphasized that Europe could not be saved without the assistance of Russia and, instead of merely trying to strike a political deal, appealed to the vanity of the Tsar and the true interests of Russia. He claimed:

¹Petrel, pp. 84-90.

²Ibid., p. 92.

³A. Vorontsov to Morkov, 18 June 1803, SIRIO, lxxvii. 217.

⁴See below, chapter 8, pp. 243, 247.

The Emperor of Russia is placed in a Situation which may enable Him to render the most important Services to Europe. It is in consequence of His Interposition that Europe can alone expect that the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin should suspend their ancient Jealousies; should relinquish those lesser Interests which have hitherto divided them, and which by dividing them, have left them successively at the mercy of a common Enemy. It is to him that they look for that General Concert which can alone effectually remedy those evils, which must in a great measure be ascribed to the Separate Treaties of Peace which have been so improvidently concluded by many other Powers with the French Government. . . . His Majesty trusts that the Emperor of Russia will view the causes of the present War in their true light . . . and that He will perceive, that the only hopes of Tranquility for Europe, must be derived from a Combination of the Great Powers of the Continent, with His Imperial Majesty at their Head, who shall be steadfastly determined to make new and extraordinary efforts for the purpose of circumscribing the Power, and restraining the Ambition of the Government of France.¹

The British were also prepared to play their traditional role: on 12 July, Hawkesbury sent the other offer to St Petersburg through Warren proposing that, if the Russians would arrange a coalition of the Continental powers against the French, the British would sign a treaty to provide subsidies.²

Hawkesbury's overtures were premature, for the Russians were still not ready either militarily or financially to reenter the war. In fact, Hawkesbury's dispatch to Warren crossed with one of Warren's relaying the Tsar's latest suggestions for peace terms. Alexander Vorontsov had also pointed out to Warren that the distance between France and Russia was so great that there was little the Russians could do effectively to reduce French power.³ The Russians had to wait until the Austrians were strong enough to reenter the war and provide the Russian army with safe passage to French territory. When the Russian chancellor received the formal offer of alliance on 10

¹Hawkesbury to S. Vorontsov, 11 July 1803, FO 65/53.

²Hawkesbury to Warren, 12 July 1803, FO 65/53.

³Warren to Hawkesbury, 19 July 1803, FO 65/53.

August, he argued that the Tsar was not yet ready to fight and still retained hopes that his peace proposals would succeed. He intimated that if the French did not cooperate something might have to be done to protect northern Germany and the Turkish empire. Warren did hold out some hope for the future, however, as 'The Chancellor observed that if Bonaparte made His attack on England and failed, as every one here hoped and wished He might; that then perhaps the Courts of Vienna and Berlin might be induced to come forward with effect.'¹ At the time this was little consolation for the British.

Addington and Hawkesbury were also trying to win the support of Austria and Prussia. The first moves Bonaparte made after the renewal of the war were to invade Hanover and occupy the port of Hamburg, and the British hoped that by advancing into Germany he would provoke a response from the two German powers.² This may have been a foolish hope considering that they had refused to oppose French intervention in Switzerland only nine months before. In January 1803, Arch Duke Charles had told Paget that Austria would require six to eight years of peace to restore its financial and military resources,³ but Hawkesbury still believed that Austria would continue to play an important role in European affairs. Hawkesbury had always intended that Austria should be a third partner in an alliance with Russia,⁴ and therefore it was necessary to keep the Austrians well disposed, even if they refused to enter the war immediately.

Consequently, Addington and Hawkesbury worked hard to gain the cooperation of Starhemberg. From the moment Addington took office, he tried to remove all grounds of conflict between Britain and Austria. The key issue was the repayment of the Austrian loans contracted during the 1790s. Under the terms of the loans, Austria

¹Warren to Hawkesbury, 10 Aug. 1803, FO 65/53.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 21 June 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³Paget to Hawkesbury, 21 Jan. 1803, FO 7/67.

⁴Hawkesbury to Warren, 11 Sept. 1802, FO 65/51.

was to have begun to repay within six months of the conclusion of peace, but owing to the expenses of the war, they were unable to do so in 1801. Addington was willing to postpone the payments to maintain Austrian goodwill, but this carried a political price as Parliament had guaranteed the loans and was committed to pay the interest. Nevertheless, Addington was so anxious to obtain Austria's assistance that he went far out of his way to conciliate them, by cooperating with Starhemberg to provide pretext for delaying the payments.¹

After the war resumed, Hawkesbury discussed with Starhemberg Austria's reentry into the war. Starhemberg insisted that Austrian policy was to maintain strict neutrality, but if it did consider entering the war in the future, it would require a subsidy of £2 million.² Hawkesbury claimed that the British government could not afford that amount, but in July, Hawkesbury promised £3-400,000 and proposed that they enter a secret convention immediately.³ The Austrians, however, did not consider the amount to be sufficient. Moreover, Starhemberg recognized that Britain's foreign policy was focused on Russia and that her relationship with Austria was only of secondary importance.⁴ This was true. Austria was important to Britain, but the attitude of Russia was more vital. The same reasons for the British to focus on Russia existed in 1803 as had in 1801,⁵

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 24 July 1801, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/142; Karl, Helleiner, The Imperial Loans: A Study in Financial and Diplomatic History (Oxford, 1965), p. 136.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 24 June 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³Starhemberg to Colloredo, 26 July 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144. This offer was increased to £500,000 in March 1804, but the Austrians refused. Same to same, 30 Mar. 1804, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/145.

⁴Starhemberg to Colloredo, 1 July 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

⁵See above, chapter 3, p. 76.

but moreover Russia had begun to demonstrate a greater interest in curbing French expansion, and the Tsar's attitude towards Malta was always an important consideration.

While discussing the war with Starhemberg, Hawkesbury also directed Paget to try to win the support of the Austrian government. He instructed Paget to convince the Austrians that

the whole of His Majesty's conduct during the late discussion with France, has been dictated by no other motive than by His solicitude to provide for the safety of His own Dominions and in as far as his single exertions conduce to that salutary end, to promote the tranquility and independence of the Continent, so seriously menaced by that restless spirit of ambition and aggrandizement by which the councils of France appear at present to be uniformly actuated.¹

To corroborate these assertions, Hawkesbury sent along copies of the papers presented to Parliament. This was important because Talleyrand was also presenting the Austrians with the French version of the negotiations.² The British and French were in effect involved in a diplomatic as well as a military and naval struggle, both sides vying for the support of the other powers of Europe. This competition was important because the disposition of these powers, even if they remained neutral, could influence the course of the war. The British had no hope of winning the war without the support of the Russians and Austrians, but, more significant, they had no hope of surviving the war, if these powers supported the French.

Hawkesbury believed that the Austrians had the right inclination but lacked the resources. The problem with the Prussians was the exact opposite: they possessed the resources but lacked the inclination. The British view was that the Prussians had adopted a position of neutrality benevolent towards the French after having so cowardly abandoned the war and left their allies in the lurch in 1795. The Prussians' view, on the contrary, was that they had made the best of a bad situation, striking a deal with the French before

¹Hawkesbury to Paget, 28 May 1803, FO 7/67.

²Paget to Hawkesbury, 8 June 1803, FO 7/67.

their own position deteriorated. As part of the deal Prussia obtained recognition of its predominance in northern Germany. The French invasion of Hanover, however, was a direct threat to that position, and Hawkesbury hoped to take advantage of that development by instructing Francis Jackson, the minister in Berlin, to make an overture:

If the Prussian Government should appear to be at last sensible of the difficulties of their own situation in consequence of the System of Inertness and Indifference which they have been induced to adopt--if they should be really disposed to make a sincere and vigorous effort for the defence of the North of Germany--but if you should judge it impracticable to secure their exertion without some promise of pecuniary succours, you are authorized to make them the following offer: That upon the commencement of Hostilities against the French Armies, His Majesty will advance to them the Sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds, and that upon the Evacuation of the Electorate of Hanover by the French Forces (for the purpose of it's [sic] being restored to His Majesty and of the repassage of the Rhine by the French Army) His Majesty will make a further advance of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds.¹

Hawkesbury did caution Jackson to make the offer only if the Prussians appeared likely to accept, but, unfortunately that was not the case. For Jackson realized that the Prussians were averse to assuming the risks that would be required by engaging the French. There was some hope that the Prussians would be willing to act in future, however, if they were assured of Russian military support. In the mean time, Jackson chose to withhold the offer.² Six months later, Hawkesbury asserted that the subsidy offer should remain open but reiterated that it should not be made unless it was likely to be accepted.³

During the remainder of 1803, Russia and Britain continued to move closer together but without the Russians entering the war. In London, Hawkesbury took Simon Vorontsov further into his confidence,

¹Hawkesbury to Jackson, 28 June 1803, FO 64/63.

²Jackson to Hawkesbury, 16 July 1803, FO 64/63.

³Hawkesbury to Jackson, 6 Dec. 1803, Jackson Papers, FO 353/43.

even inviting him along in September to an interview at Coombe Wood with the emigré, General Pichegru, to discuss a proposal to finance insurgents in eastern France.¹ Hawkesbury also continued to warn Warren:

to abstain from every thing which can have the effect of irritating the Russian Government. It is highly desirable that all conciliatory means should be used to bring them to a just Sense of the present situation of Europe, and of the exertions which their own Security and Honor must at last infallibly require from them.²

Although the British had made no visible progress in bringing the Russians into the war, Hawkesbury was determined to pursue his line of policy, as 'Changes of opinion & of Men are in such Govts. frequently sudden; We should never lose sight of this, & consequently never be discouraged in pursuit of our Ultimate object.'³

Addington and Hawkesbury's hopes of drawing the Russians into the war revived at the beginning of 1804, as Alexander Vorontsov retired owing to poor health and was replaced by Czartoryski, who had concluded that Anglo-Russian cooperation was vital. He believed that Hawkesbury's overtures deserved serious consideration because Britain was a necessary ally in the defence of Turkey, which he feared would soon be under threat. He was also convinced that the Russians had to persuade the British that their confidence was well placed or they would turn to the Austrians to find support in the war.⁴ Although he believed that Russia was ready to declare war, when circumstances required, the time had not quite arrived.⁵ Thus, when Warren pressed

¹S. Vorontsov to Hammond, 16 Sept. 1803, FO 65/53. See below, pp. 224-6.

²Hawkesbury to Warren, 23 Sept. 1803, FO 65/53.

³Hawkesbury to Warren, 23 Sept. 1803, Warren Papers in the possession of Lord Vernon, Sudbury House, Derbyshire.

⁴Czartoryski to Alexander I, 29 Feb. 1804, VPR, i. 619-24, also in SIRIO, lxxvii. 486-98.

⁵Czartoryski to S. Vorontsov, 9 Mar. 1804, VPR, i. 638; Czartoryski Memoirs, ii. 14.

him once again to join a coalition, he refused.¹ He was struggling with the dilemma of having to postpone Russia's entry into the war, while keeping the British in line. Consequently, as the tenure of the Addington ministry drew to a close, Czartoryski continued to argue that Russia should not move until Austria and Prussia were ready.²

This contradicts the assertion of John Sherwig that in early 1804 Czartoryski made an offer of an alliance to the British, upon which Hawkesbury placed some unreasonable conditions.³ Sherwig's references include a letter from Hawkesbury to Simon Vorontsov which is no longer in the Foreign Office file 65/54, and a letter from Czartoryski to Vorontsov, which he seems to have misinterpreted. Warren had suggested that the British would prefer that Austria and Prussia join in a grand alliance and that the status quo ante bellum would be the best basis for a peace settlement, but he never asserted that British offers of subsidies would be contingent upon these two points.⁴ Nor is there any record of Hawkesbury stipulating these conditions to either Warren or Vorontsov. Moreover, from both the British and Russian diplomatic documents it is clear that it was indeed the Russians who were holding back from joining the war.

The failure to persuade the Russians, Austrians, or Prussians to form a coalition left the British in a very difficult position. Unless the French were somehow diverted on the Continent, they would concentrate all their forces on the Channel in preparation for an invasion of England. In this situation, even the reckless schemes of the French royalists appeared attractive. During the previous war, Addington and Hawkesbury had ignored the royalists, as having decided

¹Warren to Hawkesbury, 2 Dec. 1803, FO 65/53; Same to same, 17 Feb. 1804, FO 65/54.

²Warren to Hawkesbury, 27 Apr. 1804, FO 65/54; Same to same, 12 May 1804, FO 65/55.

³Sherwig, p. 146.

⁴Warren to Hawkesbury, 12 May 1804, FO 65/55; Czartoryski to S. Vorontsov, 12 May 1804, FO 65/54 (This is the same letter referred to by Sherwig dated 30 April old style). A copy in Russian is in VPR, ii. 52-3.

to negotiate peace with Bonaparte, they could hardly scheme at his overthrow. Moreover, they considered the royalists a spent force: all their plans had failed, and few in France appeared to favour a restoration because Bonaparte had appeared to have achieved political stability and quelled the spirit of Jacobinism. Thus, British had only used the royalist for their own ends and they were no longer useful.¹

By October 1803, the British government had received a series of reports that opposition to Bonaparte was growing in France. Royalist and republican conspiracies were forming throughout the country, and in this context the emigré General Pichegru met with Hawkesbury and Vorontsov at Coombe Wood to discuss his plan for the overthrow of Bonaparte. In addition, Addington, although reluctantly,² met with Méhée de la Touche and Prince Jablonowski, who claimed to be royalists and offered to travel to Paris and provide intelligence for the British government.³ They proposed to determine the sentiments of the French people and to stimulate resistance and rebellion to overthrow the French government. Consequently, Hawkesbury arranged for Francis Drake, the minister at Ratisbon, to correspond with de la Touche and Jablonowski and to provide them with funds from the secret service accounts.

Unfortunately, de la Touche was a spy for Bonaparte and passed all this information on to the French government, while providing faulty information to the British.⁴ In February 1804, Pichegru was exposed and arrested, along with his accomplices Georges Cadoudal and General Moreau. The French were unable to arrest Drake because he was not on French territory, but reports of his activities were published

¹Norman F. Richards, 'British Policy and the Problem of the Monarchy in France, 1789-1802', (Ph. D., London, 1955), pp. 444-5.

²Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 262.

³The detailed correspondence concerning this conspiracy is located in Add. MSS 38239, 38240, and 38569.

⁴Holland Rose, Life of Napoleon, i. 448-9.

in the French press, and at the beginning of April, Talleyrand sent copies of these reports to the Russian and other governments accusing the British ministry conspiring to assassinate Bonaparte. This prompted a quick denial by Addington in the Commons on 16 April, and a circular letter from Hawkesbury to all foreign ministers on 30 April.¹

While the British government was not involved in a plot to assassinate Bonaparte, it was involved in a conspiracy of another sort. Between October 1803 and April 1804, Drake corresponded with disaffected royalists and republicans in eastern France. These groups were planning local insurrections in Besançon, Auxonne, Dijon, Mâcon, and Auxerre with the intention of declaring the independence of these districts and establishing arsenals and magazines. The goals of the insurrections were to be proclaimed in France, Switzerland, Holland, and Italy and all those who opposed the French government were to be invited to join at Auxerre.² In April, Hawkesbury told Drake that the British government approved of these plans but was in no position to give them any direction, and therefore he gave Drake considerable latitude in dealing with the conspiracy:

As nothing more than a general outline of the plan in agitation has as yet been received from you, as it must ultimately be regulated by the course of Events, and as its success may, in great degree, depend upon prompt and immediate decision, it is impossible for me to furnish you with any instructions upon the Subject. The final arrangements of the plan itself with Mr Jablonski [sic], the details of its execution, and the objects which it is intended to effect, must therefore be left entirely to your own discretion.³

Therefore, Addington and Hawkesbury were aware of the conspiracy and provided a small amount of funds but had neither initiated the plan nor taken any part in the direction of events. In fact, the French

¹Circular to Foreign Ministers, 30 Apr. 1804, FO 115/13.

²Drake to Hawkesbury, 8 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 38569, fos. 57-9.

³Hawkesbury to Drake, 3 April 1804, Add. MSS 38240, fos. 279-80.

government exposed Drake before any of the insurrections had begun. Drake then offered to be the scapegoat for the government and arranged to destroy his private papers.¹ Consequently, while this policy ended in absolute failure, Addington and Hawkesbury were able to keep the episode secret.

Defensive Diplomacy

Hawkesbury's approach to diplomacy was certainly more realistic than his predecessor's because he better understood the limitations of other European states. Grenville expected other governments to consider French aggression as important a threat to them as it was to the British, and hoped that they would continue to fight even when their financial and military resources were exhausted and their existence as a great power was threatened.² Hawkesbury realized that other states would fight effectively only for their own interests, and that they sometimes found continuing the war against France to be contrary to those interests. Rather than pressing them to sustain a failing war effort, Hawkesbury often encouraged them to strike a deal with the French. As mentioned, soon after assuming office, he had advised both the Neapolitan and Portuguese governments to accommodate France, even if this meant agreeing to terms which were contrary to British interests, such as excluding British shipping from their ports.

When the war resumed in 1803, Hawkesbury divided the states of Europe into two classes. In the first group he included those powers which possessed the potential military strength to manage a successful offensive war against the French. These were Russia, Austria, and Prussia. In attempting to build a Continental coalition, he concentrated on these three because they were the only states that could be expected to fight the French with some hope of success. He

¹Drake to Hawkesbury, 8 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 38569, fos. 150-51.

²Schroeder, p. 283.

also realized that there were several states that were unhappy with the position of dominance obtained by the French but were unable to enter the war on the side of the British because the French would attack and defeat them. So instead of pressing them to enter the war, he tried to persuade them to remain neutral. His diplomacy therefore had two sides. On the one hand, he was trying to win over allies for Britain, and on the other, he was trying to prevent France from doing the same.

On the subject of possible French allies, the most important were Spain and Holland. They had been France's strongest allies during the Revolutionary Wars, and their proximity to vital British interests rendered it important that they not join the French again. The problem with Holland was that French troops were still stationed in the country despite that fact that their presence contravened both the Lunéville and Amiens treaties. Holland could not become effectively neutral until the French soldiers left the country, which they were unlikely to do. Nevertheless, Hawkesbury tried to use persuasion mixed with threats to get them out. On 20 May 1803, he instructed Robert Liston, the British minister at The Hague, to tell the Dutch that if the French troops withdrew and respected the neutrality of Holland, Britain would also respect the neutrality and return all of the captured Dutch ships. On the other hand, if the French used Dutch territory or shipping to attack the British, Britain would have to take military measures against Holland.¹ The French, however, began arresting British subjects in Holland, and Hawkesbury felt obliged to sever diplomatic ties.²

Hawkesbury had better hopes for Spain, as it was not occupied by French troops and possessed much greater military resources with which to resist them. Hawkesbury fully expected that the French would press the Spaniards to join the war, and right from the commencement of hostilities the Admiralty instructed the navy to watch the Spanish

¹Hawkesbury to Liston, 20 May 1803, FO 37/ 61.

²Hawkesbury to Liston, 29 May, FO 37/61.

fleet.¹ Hawkesbury told John Hookham Frere, the minister at Madrid, that the British wished that the Spaniards would remain neutral, but if they gave any assistance to the French, or allowed the French to cross Spanish territory to attack the Portuguese, the British would declare war.² Frere replied that the Spaniards were trying to avoid war with the British, but had not decided how to act. They had hoped to join Russia in mediating between the British and French. The French, however, were blackmailing the Spaniards to join them by demanding 24 million livres a month in return for recognizing Spanish neutrality. The Spaniards did their best to delay, but in the end it was cheaper to fight the British than pay the French. They hoped, however, that the British would consider their declaration of war merely nominal and that they would not attack them or interrupt Anglo-Spanish commercial dealings.

The Spaniards did declare war on 12 August 1803, but the British retained their minister in Madrid. Frere explained that the Spaniards were still well disposed to the British and had persuaded the French to drop the price of recognizing their neutrality in the event that Spain withdrew from the war to 6 million livres per month.³ Considering the circumstances, Hawkesbury had difficulty deciding what to do with Spain. Preserving peace was his constant goal, but the Spaniards had to be truly neutral and the French had to respect that neutrality. Even the payment of 6 million livres a month was not acceptable, as it aided the French war effort. Hawkesbury was willing, however, to excuse the payments on the understanding that it would be only a temporary expedient. Nevertheless, he demanded that French not use the Spanish navy to attack the British and French troops not cross the Spanish border, and he insisted the Spanish

¹Admiralty to Admiral Cornwallis 18 May 1803, FO 72/48.

²Hawkesbury to Frere, 8 June 1803, FO 72/48.

³Frere to Hawkesbury, 9 Oct. 1803, FO 72/50.

ports remain open to British shipping. If these demands were not met he was determined to begin a real war with Spain.¹

Although this dispute dragged on for months without a satisfactory resolution, the delay actually benefitted the British. Hawkesbury was in fact trying to forestall Spain's effectively entering the war. He explained to Frere in January 1804:

The intelligence which had been received from the Court of Saint Petersburg, and from the other Courts of Europe, though it affords no certain prospect of any confederacy being formed amongst the principal Powers of the Continent, for the purpose of opposing the extravagant ambition of the present government of France, is however so far more favourable with a view to that object than any communications which have been made from the same quarters since the renewal of Hostilities that his Majesty feels additional reasons, (conformably to the system of Policy which He had already laid down) for endeavouring to preserve the relations of Peace with Spain as long as is compatible with his Honour, and a due attention to the essential interests of His Dominions.²

Hawkesbury was still disturbed by the financial assistance that Spain was giving France, but this alone was not a sufficient justification for hostilities, especially while the British were anxiously waiting for the Russians to enter the war. Therefore, Hawkesbury wished to preserve the status quo unless French troops invaded Spain.

Hawkesbury also realized the importance of maintaining good relations with Denmark and Sweden. The League of Armed Neutrality had posed a serious threat to Britain in 1801, and Hawkesbury wished to avoid a repetition. Although Russia, the key to the League of Armed Neutrality, was this time well disposed, Danish and Swedish navies could still cause trouble if they became allied with the French. In addition, with the French invasion of Hanover, the position of Denmark became even more important. Hawkesbury realized that the French would probably close the Elbe and Weser rivers to British shipping. As these rivers were important lifelines for British trade into Europe, British merchants would have had to look for alternative

¹Hawkesbury to Frere, 24 Nov. 1803, FO 72/50.

²Hawkesbury to Frere, 21 Jan. 1804, FO 72/51.

routes, and Hawkesbury was hoping to use Denmark as an entreport. To this end, in June 1803, he sent Liston, whom he had recalled from The Hague, on a special mission to Denmark. His instructions were to persuade the Danes to remain neutral and to keep their ports open to British shipping. Hawkesbury also instructed Liston to propose an alliance to Denmark, by which the British would agree not to make peace with the French until all of Denmark's possessions were restored, if the Danes would agree not to make peace until the French had evacuated northern Germany.¹

Hawkesbury did not expect that the Danes would accept the offer of alliance but did hope that they would acquiesce with his other proposals. The Danes were very alarmed by the French invasion of Hanover and feared that their own territory was in danger. Therefore, they took precautions by sending 15,000 troops into Holstein.² They became even more concerned in November 1803, when the French began enforcing requisitions from the imperial towns of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck. Their only consolation was a promise from Russia to come to their aid if they were attacked.³ As a result, the Danes wished to maintain good relations with the British, and complied with most of Hawkesbury's requests, including removing Gyldenpalm, the chargé d'affaires in London, who had become odious to the British government.⁴ Nevertheless, they could not join a military alliance with the British for fear of being attacked by the French.

The position of Sweden was not as important as that of Denmark, but Hawkesbury still wished to cultivate good relations to secure access to the Baltic and to keep the Swedish fleet out of French control. Anglo-Swedish relations had remained cool during the peace, as the Swedes were late in acceding to the Anglo-Russian Convention

¹Hawkesbury to Liston, 23 June 1803, FO 22/43.

²Hill to Hawkesbury, 30 May 1803, FO 22/43.

³Liston to Hawkesbury 15 Oct. and 22 Nov. 1803, FO 22/43.

⁴Hawkesbury to Liston, 26 July and 20 Sept. 1803, FO 22/43.

of 1801. The Swedes, moreover, were still attached to the principles of the Armed Neutrality and were angry at having been betrayed by the Russians. They were also unhappy with some of the provisions of their existing trade treaty with Britain. Nevertheless, in 1803, they favoured an accommodation because they were on very poor terms with the Russians, and after the French invasion of Hanover they feared for their territory in Pomerania. Having been informed that the Swedes favoured an accommodation, Hawkesbury in July agreed to negotiate a new trade convention and to compensate them for the two Swedish convoys which the British had captured during the previous war.¹ Hawkesbury also agreed to resolve Swedish claims on the island of St Bartholomew and the Swedish East India ships detained in 1801. His intention was to remove all grounds for complaint on the part of Sweden.² These demonstrations of good will did achieve his modest aims and helped to lay the groundwork for Sweden's accession to the Third Coalition in 1805.

Persuading the Kingdom of Naples to stay neutral was more difficult. Although Naples was technically independent, the French had refused to remove their garrisons from Otranto and Taranto until the British had evacuated Malta, which meant that they were still there when the war resumed. The Neapolitans also feared that a large French force would invade from the north through France's Italian satellites. Nevertheless, Naples was important commercially and strategically to the British, and before the war resumed, Hawkesbury had sent Hugh Elliot on a special mission to Naples. Hawkesbury hoped that Naples would remain neutral, but his most important consideration was that the British should receive equal treatment with the French in Neapolitan ports. If the Neapolitans refused entrance to British ships of war, Hawkesbury would only accept it as long as the French were excluded as well. The centre of British attention was the island of Sicily. Besides being the major supplier

¹Hawkesbury to the King, 21 July 1803, Aspinall, iv. 113; Hawkesbury to Silverhjelm, 25 July 1803, FO 73/30.

²Hawkesbury to Hobart, 19 Jan. 1804, FO 73/32.

of food and water for Malta, Sicily was an important naval base in itself. Thus the British position in the Mediterranean would have been in serious jeopardy, if the French obtained control of the island. Consequently, Hawkesbury was determined that the British should man the Forts of Messina, if the French received special privileges in Naples.¹

Considering the difficult pressures upon the Neapolitan government, the British were fortunate to receive the cooperation they did. First, the Neapolitan government kept its ports open to the British as in times of peace.² Second, General Sir John Acton, principal advisor to King Ferdinand, cooperated fully with British representatives. He consented to a proposal to permit the British forces to take the Forts of Messina, but only when the French had put Sicily in real danger. Together the British and Acton devised a plan under which the Neapolitan forces intended for Malta would be transferred to the Forts of Messina, and the British would provide financial assistance to renovate the fortifications.³ During the term of the Addington ministry, the Neapolitan government was able to keep the French forces at bay, but when the full-scale invasion finally began in 1806, the British felt obliged to seize the island of Sicily.⁴

Hawkesbury also feared that Bonaparte had designs on Portugal and the Turkish empire, Britain's only remaining allies at the end of the last war. The British did not even dream that their old allies would provide any real assistance in the war against the French, but rather merely hoped that these allies would withstand French aggression. In June 1803, Hawkesbury informed Baron de Souza, the

¹Hawkesbury to Elliot, 18 May 1803, FO 70/21.

²Elliot to Hawkesbury, 19 July 1803, FO 70/21.

³Hawkesbury to Elliot, 11 Nov. 1803, FO 70/21; Elliot to Hawkesbury, 10 Jan. 1804, FO 70/22.

⁴Desmond Gregory, Sicily: The Insecure Base. A History of the British Occupation of Sicily, 1806-1815 (Rutherford, NJ, 1988).

Portuguese minister in London, that the British expected Portugal to remain neutral. If the French attacked Portugal, the British would help, he said, but he could not make any firm promises concerning men, equipment, or subsidies.¹ For the Addington ministry was not prepared to commit itself to the defence of Portugal until it had discovered whether the Portuguese were absolutely determined to resist the French. In July, despite the King's observation that it was 'impossible for troops to be in a more hopeless state than the Portuguese are at present', Hobart sent Colonel Robert Stewart to Portugal to assess the state of the Portuguese troops. Both Colonel Stewart and Donald Campbell, a British officer who acted as commander of the Portuguese naval forces in Brazil, informed the Cabinet that the Portuguese were in no state to resist the French. Recruiting for the peace establishment was poor owing to low levels of pay, and the Portuguese army suffered from poor leadership and a lack of discipline in the ranks, which meant that irrespective of its physical means, its morale was too low to resist a French attack. Therefore, sending a small British force to aid the Portuguese would have been a waste of valuable resources.²

While the independence of Portugal was important for strategic reasons, Hawkesbury's greatest concern was over the future of Brazil because he feared that recent French failures in Louisiana and St Domingue would direct the French towards South America. Therefore, the prime consideration was to ensure that the French did not obtain control of the Portuguese fleet and Brazil. Consequently, Hawkesbury suggested that the Prince Regent of Portugal prepare to sail with his fleet to Brazil 'and endeavour to establish there a great, powerful and independent Empire'. He promised that the British navy would help facilitate the evacuation and provide protection for the Portuguese

¹Hawkesbury to de Souza, June 1803, FO 63/41.

²Hawkesbury to the King, 30 June 1803, and the King to Hawkesbury, 1 July 1803, Aspinall, iv. 111-12; Abstract of Colonel Stuart's final report upon his mission to Portugal, 25 Sept. 1803, and Donald Campbell to the Cabinet, 26 Sept. 1803, FO 63/42.

navy.¹ Hawkesbury had, in effect, anticipated the policy Canning was to adopt towards Portugal five years later, when the British navy did facilitate the evacuation of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil. In Hawkesbury's time, however, this proved unnecessary because the Portuguese acceded to the Spanish treaty of neutrality signed with the French on 8 November 1803. Under the terms of the treaty, Portugal agreed to pay the French one million livres, but as there were no territorial concessions, the British were satisfied with the arrangement.²

The Turkish empire was in less immediate danger, but the threat of a French attack on Egypt or the Morea greatly influenced the planning of the British Cabinet. Sebastiani's report seemed to corroborate these threats, and fear concerning the future of the Turkish empire was one of the most important reasons that the British decided to keep Malta. After the war resumed, Hawkesbury merely hoped that the Turks would avoid giving any territory to the French. Therefore, it was better that the Turks remain neutral because if they formed an alliance with the British, they might encourage the French to attack them. Hawkesbury was prepared to form an alliance, only after the French attacked the Turkish empire, or if Russia joined Britain in a coalition, as the Russians would divert most of the French forces into central Europe.³

The Turkish government agreed to cooperate fully with Hawkesbury's suggestion and continued to profess great friendship for the British. As a symbol of that friendship the Grand Vizier granted Hawkesbury the Order of the Crescent.⁴ Harmonious relations between the British and the Turks were soon strained, however, not by the French but by the Mameluke Beys. The relationship between the Beys

¹Hawkesbury to Fitzgerald, 6 Oct. 1803, FO 63/42.

²Hawkesbury to Fitzgerald, 21 Jan. 1804, and Fitzgerald to Hawkesbury, 23 Feb. 1804, FO 63/43.

³Hawkesbury to Drummond, 31 May 1803, FO 78/40.

⁴Grand Vizier Youssuf Pasha to Hawkesbury, enclosed in Drummond to Hawkesbury, 12 July 1803, FO 78/40.

and the Turkish government had caused the British trouble before. British troops remained in Egypt for a year after the Treaty of Amiens because they were the only means of maintaining peace between the Beys and the Turkish troops.¹ Stuart thought that he had arranged a permanent settlement before he withdrew the British troops, but the conflict broke out again in the summer of 1803.

A rebellion by the Beys in Egypt soon spread to disaffected regions of Asiatic Turkey to the point at which William Drummond, the new ambassador at Constantinople, believed that the empire was in great danger.² The Beys had also sent Elphi Bey to London to try to win the support of the British government. Hawkesbury was thus caught in the middle. On one hand, he wished to preserve the integrity of the Turkish empire and to avoid any measure which might harm Anglo-Turkish relations. On the other, the Beys had proved valued allies during the Egyptian campaign, and, if the British did not support them, they might look towards the French. The greatest danger posed by the entire situation was that it would give the French an excuse and an opportunity to intervene. Consequently, Hawkesbury decided to press the Turks to arrange a compromise with the Beys, in order to avoid a prolonged struggle which would play into the hands of France.³ The Turks refused, however, to follow these suggestions, and the British were fortunate that Bonaparte was either unwilling or unable to take advantage of the situation.

The other country that the British had to watch closely was the United States. Relations between Britain and the United States had improved dramatically since the Treaty of Paris of 1783. John Jay had been able to resolve many outstanding Anglo-American disputes with Grenville in 1794, initiating what Bradford Perkins has termed the

¹See above, chapter 6, p. 194-5.

²Drummond to Hawkesbury, 19 Aug. 1803, FO 78/40.

³Hawkesbury to Drummond, 20 Dec. 1803, FO 78/40

first rapprochement between the two countries.¹ Nevertheless, by 1801 the Americans along with the Danes and the Swedes had become annoyed by the way that the British navy was interfering with their attempts to acquire the French trading routes that had been interrupted by the war, and the impressment by the Royal Navy of British and sometimes American seamen on American ships was an added source of grievance.

Upon the accession of the Addington ministry, Rufus King, the American minister was on the verge of negotiating an amendment to the Jay-Grenville Treaty. The Americans had become dissatisfied with the sixth article of the treaty which provided for a commission to resolve outstanding private debts owed by Americans to British creditors. The Americans hoped to settle the question by paying a lump sum to be distributed to the creditors by the British government. The Americans suggested the sum of £600,000,² but British estimates of the outstanding debts were closer to £6 million.³ King pressed Hawkesbury to come to a quick settlement on American terms and became extremely annoyed at the way the British Cabinet neglected the issue. As Addington and Hawkesbury were completely preoccupied with the course of the negotiations with Otto,⁴ it is not surprising that they found little time for an issue that was rather trifling in comparison. Hawkesbury did, however, find some time to discuss the matter with Eldon during the summer of 1801,⁵ but a final settlement was not reached until January 1802.

King then pressed Hawkesbury to arrange further agreements on the subjects of British impressment of American seamen, American

¹Bradford Perkins, The First Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1795-1805 (Philadelphia, 1955).

²King to Hawkesbury, 16 Apr. and 20 Aug. 1801, FO 5/32.

³Document of British Claims against US, undated, enclosed in Committee of North American Merchants to Hawkesbury, 18 Mar. 1803, FO 5/40.

⁴Rufus King Correspondence, iii. 521.

⁵Eldon to Addington, 16 June 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OZ137.

access to the British West Indian Trade, and the British Crown's possession of Maryland stock which was left over from the time of the American war. But as King proposed settlements that were unattractive to the British,¹ Hawkesbury refused to negotiate. In the spring of 1803, Hawkesbury and King were able to negotiate a boundary through disputed territory west of the Great Lakes and between Maine and New Brunswick.² Nevertheless, the treaty was never ratified because the United States Senate made amendments that were unacceptable to the British.

The crux of Anglo-American-French relations in 1803 was, however, the territory of Louisiana. The Americans were alarmed when they discovered that Spain had ceded the territory to France because the French were more likely to establish a lasting presence on the frontier of the United States. As a result, the Americans became increasingly hostile towards the French and looked towards the British for support. Edward Thornton, the British minister in Washington, informed Hawkesbury on 3 July 1802, that President Jefferson

not only regards the cession of Louisiana and New Orleans as a certain cause of war between the two countries, but makes no scruple to say, that if the force of the United States should be unable to expel the French from those settlements, they must have recourse to the assistance of other powers, meaning unquestionably Great Britain.³

By May 1802, Hawkesbury had already deduced that the Louisiana question was likely to facilitate closer relations between Britain and the United States.⁴ Even though at that time France and Britain were no longer at war, he was looking to obtain as many diplomatic allies as possible. To this end Thornton suggested that the British should seize the island of New Orleans and hand it over to the

¹See King to Hawkesbury, 9 Mar. 1801, FO 5/34; Same to same, 3 Feb. 1802, FO 5/37; Same to same, 7 May 1803, FO 5/40.

²Convention of 12 May 1803, FO 5/40.

³Thornton to Hawkesbury, 3 July 1802, FO 5/35.

⁴Hawkesbury to King, 7 May 1802, FO 5/37.

Americans, as a means of cementing stronger Anglo-American relations.¹ This was not feasible, however, as long as Britain and France remained at peace, but by April 1803, when the resumption of war appeared inevitable, Addington proposed such an enterprise to King.²

At the time the war resumed, Anglo-American relations were more favourable than ever, but this rapprochement was short lived. Immediately after the British declared war, the American government learned that James Monroe, the American minister in France, had successfully negotiated the purchase of the Louisiana territory. This single event completely transformed the nature of Anglo-American relations, as Thornton noted:

when I compare the Complexion of Mr Merry's Correspondence with that of my own, particularly during the Course of the last summer, before the Intelligence of the Louisiana Purchase reached this Country, I can scarcely credit the Testimony of my own Senses in examining the Turn which Affairs have taken, and the manifest Ill-Will discovered towards us by the Government of the present moment.³

It is easy to exaggerate the nature of the apparently sudden shifts in Anglo-American relations. For the improvement of relations during 1802 and 1803 was based solely on common hostility to France, which on the Americans side was caused by the French acquisition of Louisiana. Once the question of Louisiana evaporated Anglo-American relations merely returned to normal.

For Addington and Hawkesbury the issue of the Louisiana purchase became a dilemma. At first, they were extremely pleased that the territory was out of French control. For example, Addington told Sir Francis Baring that he approved of the Franco-American treaty and believed that it would have been worthwhile even for the British

¹Thornton to Hawkesbury, 3 Jan. 1803, FO 5/38.

²King to Secretary of State, 2 Apr. 1803, Rufus King Correspondence, iv. 241.

³Thornton to Hammond, 29 Jan. 1804, FO 5/41.

government to pay £1 million to facilitate the transfer.¹ Upon reflection, however, Addington began to have doubts. The British Cabinet soon realized that the Americans had decided to raise the capital to pay the French through the London stock exchange, and as a result, the Baring bank was paying the French government two million francs a month. On the one hand, this was providing the French with much needed capital to finance the war with Britain, while on the other, these payments constricted the money markets in Britain, hurting both industry and the government. Consequently, in December 1803 Addington instructed Baring that, as the French were going to use the money to finance their invasion of England, the government could not allow British subjects to facilitate the transfer. He therefore suggested that the bank abandon its involvement with the Louisiana purchase and that it could claim that government interference had forced the move.²

The Baring's continued to pay the money, however, and in the end Addington and Hawkesbury decided to do nothing about it. Although these funds were aiding the French, to have overtly interfered could have produced grave consequences. For if the Americans learned that the British government had prevented the completion of the Louisiana purchase, the American government might have formed a military alliance with the French and invaded Canada, which would have placed an enormous strain on Britain's resources. If the American war had taught the British anything, it was that Britain had at all cost to avoid fighting the Americans while allied with the French.

Hawkesbury's war diplomacy achieved mixed success. Although able to improve Britain's relations with most countries, he failed to persuade the Russians, Austrians, or Prussians to put troops in the field. Thus Britain remained alone in the war, unable to strike an

¹Philip Ziegler, The Sixth Great Power: Baring's, 1762-1929 (London, 1988), p. 71.

²Addington to Baring, 16 Dec. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ214.

effective blow at French power. As financial subsidies could not entice powers that were not already disposed to enter the war, Britain possessed very little leverage with these powers. Consequently, Britain's position in the war was based largely on forces beyond its control. Hawkesbury was unfortunate that the Russians, Austrians, and Prussians would not form a grand coalition in 1803. Conversely, he was fortunate ten years later, when for their own reasons they did form such a coalition. Thus the British government could do little beyond merely ensuring that it did not alienate the Continental powers. In this at least, Hawkesbury was successful.

Hawkesbury also helped to ensure that most of the lesser powers remained neutral rather than joining an alliance with France. Again, this was largely a result of their own inclination, but Hawkesbury's flexible attitude towards developments that might have provoked a British declaration of hostilities kept several small states out of the war. This was important because the problems of the war would have been compounded, if the French had obtained effective allies. Nevertheless, sustaining the good will of Russia and the neutrality of Spain and Naples was not sufficient to enable the British to survive the war. Britain could not win a long war of attrition. Fortunately, however, Hawkesbury's policies did lay the groundwork for the formation of the Third Coalition in 1805, which diverted the French forces towards central Europe and gave the British a respite.

Moreover, it is clear that Addington and Hawkesbury handled Foreign diplomats with more skill than they have been given credit for. The traditional view of the ministry's relations with diplomats was derived from George Rose, who claimed that all foreign ministers said that the ministry was held in contempt.¹ Rose's source was Simon Vorontsov, whose strong friendship with Grenville prejudiced him against Addington and Hawkesbury. Starhemberg, on the other hand, told a completely different story:

¹Rose Diaries, ii. 41-2.

J'étais personnellement au moins aussi lié d'amitié avec Lord Grenville et Monsieur Pitt, mais malgré leurs talens aussi distingués qu'incontestables je ne puis nier que leurs successeurs ne soient infiniment mieux pour nous. Je trouve dans Mr Addington et Lord Hawkesbury moins d'égotisme et surtout moins d'obstination que les précédens, qui même actuellement et quoique hors de place ne nous pardonnent point de n'être pas en guerre avec la France.¹

He often reiterated that the previous ministry was not as reasonable towards Austria as was Addington's.² He had criticized Addington severely for signing the Treaty of Amiens, but he stated that it took great courage to declare war again after having made such sacrifices to obtain the peace. From the moment Addington declared war, Starhemberg was completely satisfied with what he called 'des Ministres les plus sages, qu'ayant peut-être depuis longtems gouverné l'Angleterre'.³ Starhemberg looked unfavourably upon the prospect of Pitt's returning to power and criticized severely the way the opposition attacked Addington's ministry. The sentiments of most of the foreign diplomats including, Otto, Rufus King, and Bernstorff were closer to those of Starhemberg than Vorontsov.⁴ Therefore, the refusal of the Continental powers to reenter the war prior to 1805 cannot be attributed to either the substance or the manner of Addington and Hawkesbury's diplomacy.

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 21 Oct. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 6 Mar. 1804, HHSA Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/145.

³Starhemberg to Colloredo, 1 May 1804, HHSA Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/145.

⁴For the opinions of Otto see his letters to Talleyrand in AE, Angleterre/594-597; For King see Rufus King Correspondence, iii and iv; For Bernstorff see his intercepted dispatches in the Liverpool Papers, Add. MSS 38237.

Chapter Eight

Military and Naval Policy, May 1803 to April 1804

'But this is a War unlike any former and must be Differently treated. Defence and Security in the first Instance is the first Duty owed to the Kingdom after which New Scenes might open.'

Admiral Lord Keith¹

Although as mentioned the declaration of war received considerable support in the country and overwhelming support in Parliament, it also proved to be the first major step toward the collapse of the ministry. For while the war continued popular, the way that the Addington ministry managed it did not. After one year of fighting, enough MPs had been persuaded to join the opposition in questioning the wisdom of the military and naval policies of the ministry that its parliamentary majority was reduced to the point at which defeat appeared imminent. Managing the war presented the government with many complex problems, the ministry's solutions to which were never wholly satisfactory. That the ministry's predecessors and successors never found adequate solutions either, did not stop contemporaries or historians from singling out military policy as a prime example of the incompetence of the Addington government.

Addington was not accused of incompetence, however, in the way he managed the war between February and October 1801 because British forces enjoyed success against the French in Egypt and the League of Armed Neutrality in the Baltic. Moreover, diplomacy took precedence over military planning as the government concentrated on negotiating peace. The situation in 1803 was completely different, however, for having just declared war, the ministry was expected to take aggressive action. Nevertheless, Addington faced the perennial

¹Keith to Pitt, 10 Mar. 1804, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/149/1, fo. 37.

question of how to deploy the resources of a naval and colonial power to strike an effective blow against a strong Continental military power. The only answer was to enlist the aid of another strong Continental power, and until then the British remained essentially on the defensive.

Home Defence

The new war began where the last had ended: Bonaparte soon had 100,000 soldiers poised to cross the Channel, as the troops that the French had claimed were intended originally for Louisiana or St Domingue were redirected towards England. At the end of the previous war during the summer of 1801, Addington had begun to take seriously reports of Bonaparte's military preparations along the Channel coast and had discussed plans for responding to an invasion with Pitt and Colonel Twiss.¹ Therefore, in 1803, he expected that Bonaparte would again consider an invasion of either England or Ireland, and early intelligence reports confirmed this view. For other than invading Hanover, the French had no other means of striking a major blow against Britain, and as the British had no allies, Bonaparte could concentrate a large force on this mission without the fear of having to divert troops to another front. Thus, this time it appeared that the war between France and Britain would be fought across the Channel rather than in Europe or overseas.

That Bonaparte never actually attempted an invasion has raised the question as to whether he really intended to. Was he merely trying to intimidate the British? Holland Rose concludes that Bonaparte did plan seriously to invade England on several different occasions between 1803 and 1805. Such an invasion was well within traditional French military strategy and characteristic of the First Consul, who was always willing to take a risk if the odds were in his

¹See above, chapter 3, p. 95.

favour and the reward sufficient.¹ His extensive preparations along the coast appear to indicate that he wished to give himself the option of attempting a crossing, if favourable circumstances arose.

From the point of view of defensive strategy, Bonaparte's true intentions were not as important, however, as the British government's perception of them. In fact, the general opinion in Britain, and among foreign governments, was that Bonaparte would have to have been mad to have attempted an invasion, because he would have had little chance of success.² Nevertheless, almost everyone was willing to grant that he was so reckless that he might attempt it regardless. For example, Hobart told Wellesley that 'This Country I can almost venture to assure you is out of the reach of Danger from Invasion but I am not sufficiently sanguine to think that no attempt will be made.'³ In any case, the Addington ministry could not afford to take the threat lightly, and Hawkesbury stated that the country had to be prepared for an invasion regardless of how unlikely it was.⁴ Moreover, the Royal Navy could not guarantee that it would be able to defeat the invasion force at sea. For Admiral Lord Keith admitted that the right combination of weather conditions could disperse the Channel fleet and present a short opportunity for the French to cross safely.⁵

Consequently, the Addington ministry spent most of its time and energy raising a large force for home defence. Addington's foresight in maintaining large peace-time establishments for the army, meant that Britain entered the war better prepared than ever before. The

¹John Holland Rose, 'Did Napoleon intend to Invade England?', in Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters (London, 1912).

²Liverpool to Mrs Johnson, 28 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 167.

³Hobart to Wellesley, 29 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 37309, fos 9-10.

⁴Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 272.

⁵Keith to York, 21 Oct. 1803, Keith Papers, ii. 52.

British had 132,000 regular forces, 80,000 of which were stationed at home. After the crisis over Switzerland in October 1802, the government had also suspended many of the army reductions.¹ This was exclusive of supplementary forces, such as the militia and the volunteers, to which the government had also paid careful attention during the peace. The spending cuts required by the poor state of the government finances and the necessity of repealing the income tax meant the government had to disband a large proportion of the regular forces as well as the militia and volunteer regiments, and many enrolled in these services wished to leave. In the event of the renewal of war, however, Addington wished to reassemble these forces as quickly as possible.

The period of peace provided an excellent opportunity for revising the laws concerning the militia. Pitt had made several haphazard amendments to the militia but there had been no comprehensive legislation since 1756. Addington's militia bill of 1802 was designed to increase the size of the militia and to consolidate various reforms into one bill. J. R. Western points out, however, that Addington neglected to take advantage of an opportunity to make sweeping changes to facilitate a rational defensive system.² The main reason was that there were almost insurmountable political obstacles to permitting the regular army to recruit from the militia or to eliminating the provision for substitutes. The main priority of the ministry was to provide a large but inexpensive force that could be raised and disbanded quickly. For it was important to raise the force quickly in the event of an invasion, but it was also necessary that the men be able to return easily to their civilian occupations.

The bill Yorke presented to the Commons on 12 April 1802 provided for a militia of 70,000, which was an increase of 10,000

¹John Fortescue, A History of the British Army (14 vols, London, 1899-1930), v. 175.

²J. R. Western, The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1965), p. 240.

over the bill of 1756. Hobart justified this increase on the basis on the increased length of the French coastline which resulted from the annexation of Belgium and the subjugation of Holland. Of this force, 50,000 was to be raised in the first instance as the old militia and then 20,000 as a new or supplementary militia. The militiamen were to be divided into five classes according to their suitability for service based on age and number of dependents. Each county was given a quota to be raised by ballot, with the provision that those balloted could pay a substitute to serve. Counties were to be fined £10 per man for deficiencies in their quota, and the Lords Lieutenant were to use the money to hire recruits. To save money the government cut the annual period of peacetime training from twenty-eight to twenty-one days. The total estimated cost was £230,000 in peace-time.¹

This new legislation was first implemented on 11 March 1803, when in response to the French military preparations on the Dutch coast, Hobart called out the old militia. After the renewal of war two months later, he called out the supplementary militia on 28 May.² Therefore, in the first few months of the war the combined force of the regular army and militia in Britain was over 130,000, and this was greater than the size of the army the French could have sent across.³

There were several problems with the militia legislation, however, the most apparent of which was the principle of substitution. For by permitting those balloted to pay a substitute to serve, the militia cut into the market from which the regular army recruited. This problem was exacerbated by the rise in the price of the bounties paid to militia substitutes to the point at which it was

¹Statutes at Large from Magna Charta to 1806, ed. Danby Pickering (Cambridge, 1807), 42 Geo. III, cap. 90; Western, pp. 236-40.

²Hobart circular to Lords Lieutenant, 11 Mar. and 28 May 1803, WO 6/190.

³Richard Glover, Britain at Bay: Defence against Bonaparte, 1803-14 (London, 1973), p. 43.

much higher than those paid by the army to new recruits. Fortescue compared the price for substitutes of £20 to £30 with £7 12s. 6d. by the army.¹ Thus men who might otherwise have been looking for a career in the army were enticed away by higher bounties and better terms as a substitute in the militia. Nevertheless, there were insurmountable political obstacles to eliminating the provision of substitution. For any attempt to enforce conscription on the French model would have met strong resistance in Parliament and the country, because the extent of the power of the crown was an important political issue, and the suggestion of the crown forcibly creating a strong standing army would have been perceived as an attack on the rights of Englishmen.

Another criticism of the militia voiced by Windham and supported by Pitt was that it comprised too large a proportion of the nation's military force: by concentrating too heavily on home defence the government was neglecting to provide for offensive operations. 'A war that should be completely defensive, would ... be both dishonourable and ruinous,' claimed Pitt.² Addington agreed in principle with these remarks, but the government could not ignore that the most pressing concern was the extensive preparations being made by the French for an invasion. The home base had to be secure before the government could even consider offensive operations. Thus, there was an urgency to the situation that Pitt and Windham did not perceive, as the Duke of York believed that the French would try to take advantage of Britain's unprepared state to launch an early invasion. He expected the French to cross the Channel by the summer of 1803, as did St Vincent, who told Keith to refrain from leaving his post to come to London.³ The only way that the British could defeat a large force of veteran French soldiers, according to York, was to meet it with an even larger British force as soon as possible after it had landed,

¹Fortescue, History of the British Army, v. 202.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1578.

³St Vincent to Keith, 24 June 1803, Add. MSS, 31169, fo.

in order to deprive the French of the opportunity to organize. Under these conditions a massive but relatively untrained force was preferable to a small, well-trained one.

In response to this immediate necessity of greatly increased manpower, in June 1803 the government brought forward the Additional Forces Act, usually referred to as the army of reserve.¹ This was to provide a further 50,000 men under terms similar to the militia. All men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were eligible to be balloted for the army of reserve unless they were already serving in another branch of the British forces. The force was to be divided into five classes along the lines of the militia, and the principle of substitution was also permitted. There were two important differences, however, between the army of reserve and the militia. One was that the reserve could be stationed anywhere in the United Kingdom, whereas the militia was restricted to its particular parish or county. The other, adopted upon the suggestion of the King, was that members of the reserve were permitted and encouraged to volunteer for the regular army.² One of the most serious problems with the militia was that militia officers wanted to keep it separate from the regular army and strongly objected to the officers from the regular forces recruiting from the militia, but the regular army, on the other hand, was starved for recruits. The Addington ministry tried to please both parties by structuring the militia on a basis satisfactory to the militia officers and providing the army of reserve from which the regular army could recruit. Addington and Yorke succeeded in winning over the support of Pitt and Melville, contrary to the former's comments on the militia.³ This owed something to Yorke's having requested Pitt's advice on the measure, although claims that he was responsible for the idea appear

¹Statutes at Large, 43 Geo. III, cap. 82, 83, and 85; Hobart to the King, 17 June 1803, Aspinall, iv. 107.

²The King to Hobart, 18 June 1803, Aspinall, iv. 108.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1622; Melville to Robert Dundas, 26 July 1803, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 1/51/63/10.

unfounded.¹

While the government implemented these measures immediately, it was aware that even further provisions might be necessary in the future. Instead of waiting for an emergency to arise, Addington decided to have legislation ready enabling the government to call upon the services of the entire country. In July, Yorke introduced the Military Services Bill which became the Defence of the Realm Act, often referred to as the Levy en Masse.² This legislation merely confirmed a constitutional precedent that the King could exercise an ancient prerogative to require military service of all his subjects in case of invasion. The bill, besides stating that all subjects not already enrolled in some branch of the military forces could be called to arms to resist an invasion, also provided for measures to ascertain the strength and resources of the different parts of the country and to indemnify individuals who suffered by measures taken by the government for internal defence. On one hand, the legislation was a measure to be held in reserve only to be used in case of actual invasion. On the other, it was also to press men into volunteering for another branch of the military forces.

The branch most successful in obtaining recruits, however, was the volunteer force. The volunteers were raised and administered by a local aristocrat or Lord Lieutenant. In return for a period of annual training, the government granted a small payment, arms and equipment, and an exemption from the ballots for the other military services. Coordinated loosely by the Home Office, the volunteers often acted as a police force in regions where social unrest was prevalent but were also on guard to resist invasion. As the members had joined the force voluntarily, there was often strong loyalty within the regiments, although they might have been of limited effectiveness if faced by a foreign army. Volunteer forces were

¹The legislation was devised largely by the Duke of York and Charles Yorke. See Yorke to Hardwicke, 14 June 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 203-6 and Brownrigg to York, 18 June 1803, WO 133/12.

²Statutes at Large, 43 Geo. III, cap. 96.

usually disbanded during peace-time, but in 1802 Addington decided to permit certain regiments to continue service. This was part of a policy of maintaining a strong peace establishment, but also owed something to the desire of the troops to remain embodied and the fear of the government over a resurgence of social unrest.¹

At the beginning of the war, Addington was reluctant to allow the creation of further volunteer regiments owing to their expense,² but York required a large force immediately. In Addington's haste, he gave little thought to the size, function, and character of the volunteer force, and consequently, the new legislation caused administrative chaos.³ The government did not believe that it had the time to develop a comprehensive plan for utilizing the force. Instead, in June 1803 Hobart merely informed Lords Lieutenant of the terms under which offers to join the volunteers would be accepted and the provisions that the government would grant. The usual incentive of an exemption from the ballot for the militia was supplemented by a provision that suspended the Levy en Masse in districts that raised a sufficient volunteer force. These incentives combined with a massive outpouring of patriotic fervour resulted in overwhelming numbers of offers to join the volunteers.⁴

The government was extremely pleased by the sentiment behind this response and the assistance that this would provide in resisting an invasion, but despite the necessity of raising a large force in a short period of time, too many men volunteered. Addington would have concurred with Melville's comment that, 'I would have greatly preferred a much smaller number to have secured more effectively

¹Hobart to Pembroke, 26 Apr. 1802, and same to Wyse, 31 Mar. 1803, WO 6/201.

²Twiss, i. 416.

³Hobart to Buckingham, 1 Aug. 1803, Courts and Cabinets of George III, iii. 318; Polden, p. 342.

⁴Philip J. Haythornthwaite, 'The Volunteer Force, 1803-04', Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, lxiv (1986), 193-4.

their uniform efficiency.'¹ A government memo of 18 March 1803 stated that, as the volunteer force was originally intended to counteract seditious activities and preserve the public peace, a large force was very desirable. In the event of foreign invasion, however, 'It may be less desirable to have a very numerous body of Volunteers, than a well regulated one.'² Hobart had told Melville that he wished to discourage volunteers, for there were two problems.³ First, the exemptions provided by the volunteer legislation rendered it difficult for many districts to raise their militia and army of reserve quotas. As the militia and army of reserve were better trained and under closer government control, they would have been more effective in resisting the French. While a large volunteer force was desirable, the government could not let this impede the recruiting of the other military forces.⁴

The second problem was that the government was unable to provide sufficient weapons and allowances for all the regiments offering service. At the beginning of the war the stocks of arms at the Ordnance were low. They were higher than usual for peacetime--twice as high as in 1801--but too low to meet the initial demand at the beginning of the war.⁵ Yorke told Hardwicke in September 1803:

Entre Nous, the Ordnance have much to answer for in various ways; Except the actual Military State of the Battalions of Artillery, Horse Brigade and Field train which I understand to be very good, very little attention appears to have been paid to other objects during the Peace and the great arrangements appear very little

¹Melville to Hope, 16 Dec. 1803, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/157/2, fos. 294-7.

²Memo on the Volunteers, 18 Mar. 1803, WO 1/407.

³Melville to Addington, 29 July 1803, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/63/9.

⁴Sullivan to the Bishop of Durham, 3 Sept. 1803, WO 6/120.

⁵State of Ordnance: Guns and Equipment, 1801 and 1803, 7 Dec. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OM1.

provided for.¹

The Ordnance could supply enough weapons for about 150,000 soldiers, but returns for the volunteers alone soon approached 300,000 and the total force, including those stationed in Great Britain, Ireland, and overseas, was projected at 600,000.² The production of weapons was slow, however, as gun making was not on production line, and the governments had difficulty procuring foreign supplies.³ Nor could the Treasury afford the allowances as stipulated in June for all the regiments offering service. Therefore, while York was busy training the growing ranks of the British forces and the Ordnance was overburdened with a desperate search for arms, Addington, Hobart, and Yorke were struggling with the political problems caused by their legislation.

Having issued the original volunteer legislation in haste, the government later had to make several amendments. The first was to suspend accepting offers to form volunteer regiments until the ballots for the supplementary militia were completed. This was followed in August by a new schedule of allowances, despite Pitt's objections that they were insufficient, for all offers of service from volunteer regiments accepted after 22 July, as a means of decreasing the cost.⁴ The effect of cutting the time of paid exercise from eighty-five to twenty-one days was expected to save the government £138,727.⁵ The original allowances had been based on the expectation that a much smaller force would volunteer.⁶ When the offers kept pouring in, Addington decided that the government should

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 21 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 35393, fo. 137.

²Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809 (Cambridge, 1963), p. 57.

³Polden, p. 346.

⁴Pitt to Hobart, 8 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 40862, fo. 21.

⁵Memorandum on the Volunteers, Add. MSS 38357, fo. 254.

⁶Sullivan to the Bishop of Durham, 21 Sept. 1803, WO 6/120.

place a limit on those that would be accepted. On 31 August, Yorke, who had just replaced Pelham as Home Secretary and to the great relief of Hobart had assumed responsibility for the volunteers,¹ issued a circular to the Lords Lieutenant which stated that the government would not accept further offers of volunteer service in any district where the number of volunteers already exceeded six times the number of the old militia. In these circumstances, men could still volunteer but they would not receive the allowances or an exemption from the ballots for the other services.

While these amendments repaired some of the administrative problems, they caused a whole series of new political difficulties. In general, the attempts to curb the volunteers dampened some of the patriotic spirit in the country.² Consequently, public morale was not as high as it had been at the beginning of the war. Addington deeply regretted the disappointment caused by the changes to the volunteers but insisted that 'no other Course could have been taken'.³ In addition, the amendments caused great confusion among volunteer commanders and the Lords Lieutenant, and many volunteers were unsure of the terms under which they had accepted service. Misunderstandings were largely the result of the poor system of communication within the country which caused the delays in correspondence between the government and local officials. As recruiting for the volunteers was continual, many recruits were unaware of the changes in the terms at the time they volunteered. Addington rather carelessly remarked that if they were dissatisfied they could resign, but under the terms of the volunteer legislation resignation was not that simple.⁴ In fact,

¹Hobart to Buckingham, 25 Aug. 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/G.

²Sheridan to Addington, 29 Aug. 1803, Letters of Sheridan, ii. 201-2.

³Addington to Hiley Addington, 26 Aug. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/F114.

⁴Westmorland to Yorke, 15 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS 38239, fo. 278.

the issue was so complex that the government had to refer it to Perceval, the Attorney-General.

The most serious problem was, however, the lack of weapons. Men who had volunteered their time to prepare for the defence of their country were discouraged by being asked to drill without proper weapons. The Ordnance had plenty of pikes, but they would be rather useless in event of invasion, and the men wanted guns. Yorke complained in October 1803:

I am excessively harassed & worried by this Volunteer business which I fear is incurable owing to the impossibility of supplying the great number with Arms. In truth I think this, with other circumstances, has contributed to place Government in a very awkward situation; and knowing, as I do now what the actual state of Ordnance supplies, for Volunteer Service, are, I cannot help being very uneasy.¹

This mass of relatively untrained men lacking proper weapons was an easy target for criticism by the Lords Lieutenant, MPs, and the public at large. The government was completely overwhelmed by the extent of the correspondence and Yorke's duties at the Home Office were severely curtailed by the need to answer requests for arms and clarification of the laws:

But in fact for the present this unlucky Volunteering System absorbs all our Faculties & engrosses all our Time. In truth, it has really run away with the Government & with the Nation, & will I fear lead us into inextricable difficulties of all kinds. If the office cannot soon bring it into some regularity & order we shall not be able to go on, in the mean time the Impatience, the Ill humour, the Petulance, the wrongheadedness & the obstinacy which are afloat, add most materially to the excessive difficulties & embarrassments of Government, & I may really say to the Dangers of the Country.²

Towards the end of 1803 the subject of the volunteers also took up a great deal of the time in Parliament. This was not owing so much to the seriousness of the crisis as to the fact that most MP's were members or commanding officers of volunteer regiments and believed

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 5 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 35393, fo. 143.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 10 Sept. 1803, Add. MSS 35703, fo. 106-9.

themselves experts on the subject. Many blew minor grievances out of proportion as an excuse to try to censure the government for its defence policies. By keeping the debate on the minor questions of administration and supply, the opposition was able to place the government, which lacked debating talent, in an extremely awkward position. Hobart acknowledged to Auckland:

We are however to hear much of the Volunteer system after Christmas, & if we do not take care it will be wholly lost in the attempt to bring it to a state of perfection of which it is not capable--Tho' I would at the same time acknowledge that some gentle touches of improvement may not be inadvisable.¹

Addington was rather more optimistic, as he told Hiley, 'I am fully convinced that all the present Difficulties respecting the volunteers will be speedily, & satisfactorily surmounted.'² Unfortunately, he could not have been further from the truth.

While Addington's volunteer measures put the ministry into political danger, they did not place the country in military danger. With over 380,000 volunteers (not including 70,000 in Ireland) and a combined military force of over 615,000 by December 1803, the government had raised the largest army in British history.³ While most of these men individually were no match for Bonaparte's seasoned veterans, the Duke of York had ensured that many were well trained, and as time passed the quality of these troops improved greatly. Thus Addington's military measures had achieved their most important goal: raising a large force in a short period. Owing to haste and lack of experience, the ministry made many mistakes but none which seriously endangered the security of the country or were not eventually resolved. Eldon also pointed out that much of the confusion over the

¹Hobart to Auckland, 19 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS 34456, fo. 41.

²Addington to Hiley Addington, 24 Jan. 1804, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/OZ62.

³John Fortescue, The County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803-1814 (London, 1909), p. 69; Pellew, ii. 235; C. D. Hall, 'Factors Influencing British Strategic Planning and Execution during the Napoleonic Wars' (Ph. D., Exeter, 1985), pp. 21-2.

volunteer legislation was caused by the process of Parliament:

The fact, he said, was that a bill, originally prepared with the greatest care, underwent so many modifications in its progress through both Houses, and received so many amendments from what was called (how properly he would not take upon himself to say) the conjunctive wisdom of parliament, that it became at last in a great degree inexplicable.¹

Addington's military measures have also received severe criticism from historians. Fortescue made the first detailed study of the government's military policies, and many subsequent historians have accepted his criticisms without question. He concentrated his attack on the failure of the government to raise the number of men projected in the legislation. By 28 May 1803, almost three months after the government had called out the old militia, only 40,000 out of the projected 51,000 had been raised. He claimed that the army of reserve was an 'Utter Failure' because it had only raised 30,000 effective troops out of a projected total of 50,000.² He also blamed the government for allowing substitutions and exempting the volunteers from the ballot of the army of reserve. Thus, the criticisms made by the opposition, having been largely corroborated by Britain's premier military historian at the beginning of the twentieth century, have remained almost unquestioned ever since.

However, Addington has had an able defender in Glover, who quite rightly claims that the government could not be held responsible for the deaths and desertion which cut into the ranks, and the enlistment of unfit troops such as boys and weaklings was the fault of local officials not the government. Moreover, even gaining a further 30,000 troops for national service--including 7,500 that had volunteered for the regular army by December 1803,³--was a valuable achievement. Glover also argues that Fortescue had unrealistic expectations about the skill and discipline which could be achieved in the volunteer

¹Twiss, i. 428.

²Fortescue, Country Lieutenants and the Army, pp. 54, 73.

³Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OM10.

force, for the volunteers could not have been made into skilled light infantry in a short period of time. Nevertheless, under the supervision of the Duke of York, they were formed into a decent army.¹ In the words of Cornwallis, who was the most experienced military commander in the country:

Government have [sic] acted properly in endeavouring only to make as much soldiers as it was possible to render a force so composed, and no man, whether civil or military, will persuade me that 300,000 men, trained as the volunteers at present are, do not add very materially to the confidence and to the actual security of this country.²

Glover also points out that subsequent governments were unable to devise more successful measures. Pitt abolished the army of reserve and replaced it with a Permanent Additional Forces Act which raised only 13,000 in two years. This drew the remark from Abbot that it was hard to justify Pitt's hostility to Addington's policies when his own measures did not bear out that he was superior.³ After Windham took the War Office during the ministry of All the Talents, he dismantled the volunteers and revised the Levy en Masse with measures which were so confusing that he was unable to explain them in Parliament. On the whole the generals hated Windham's reforms, his defence of which was more pitiful and incoherent than anything uttered by members of the Addington ministry. Windham clearly demonstrated that although he could find fault with Addington's measures, he could only do a worse job than those whom he had criticized.⁴

According to the Duke of York, the actual size of the defence forces was not as important as how and when they were deployed. His preparations for the invasion were based on two assumptions. The

¹Glover, Peninsular Preparation, pp. 230-7.

²Cornwallis to Ross, Dec. 1803, Cornwallis Correspondence, iii. 509.

³Colchester Diary, ii. 29.

⁴Glover, Peninsular Preparation, pp. 238-44.

first was that the French would take advantage of Britain's unpreparedness to strike before British defence forces were assembled and trained. The second was that the French would attack only points of strategic importance and would probably follow the shortest route to London. This meant either invading the Kentish coast and marching northwest, or invading the Sussex coast and marching north. The first was the shortest route by sea, the second the shortest by land. Therefore, the best means of preparing to repel this attack was to concentrate all available defence forces in the southeast of England as quickly as possible. He informed Hobart:

with the exception of Plymouth the greater Portions of the Troops in the distant parts of England should be immediately collected in the Eastern and Southern Districts to Frustrate any attempt which may be made upon the Capital, before the full measure of intended Preparation is Effective.¹

While this would weaken the defence forces in the other parts of the country, York suggested that the volunteers and yeomanry take over police duties, and he would send a 'Regiment of Heavy Cavalry from the Eastern district to be stationed in the manufacturing and populous Towns in the Center and North of England'.² Local officials in these regions would have complained but, because it was unlikely that the French would land in these regions, moving troops to the southeast was in the best interests of the defence of the country. It was also necessary that these forces receive top priority for the limited number of weapons available from the Ordnance.³ In many ways, the overall shortage of manpower and weapons was unimportant as long as the forces in the southeast were properly supplied.

As time passed, York's strategy for deploying the forces at his disposal changed. At first, he knew he would only have relatively untrained volunteer and other irregular forces at his disposal. Such forces would have difficulty overcoming the French in open battle,

¹York to Hobart, 30 June 1803, WO 1/625.

²Idem.

³Memorandum on Arming, 25 July 1803, WO 1/625.

but they could wear down the enemy in a strategy of guerrilla warfare:

From the first moment of a landing being made, the great object of the irregular Troops must be to Harass, alarm and Fatigue an enemy--nothing can more effectually contribute to this object than the operations of small bodies of men well acquainted with the country who will approach and fire upon the advanced Post of His army without ever engaging in serious action or hazarding themselves.¹

When the enemy advanced from the coast, these forces were to attack his flank and rear and cut off small detachments in search of plunder.

By the end of August, when more troops had been assembled and better trained, York became more confident in the country's ability to resist the invasion and decided that the best strategy would be to meet the French right on the beaches:

Short of a total Defeat perhaps the period of the Enemy's greatest weakness, would be the moment of His landing, and the time He is preparing His artillery and Stores to commence his March.

There will be no opportunity for manoeuvre, it must be a contest of valour in which every Briton will find his value, and I should therefore look upon 2,000 additional Men which could be brought to the Beach in the first 24 Hours as of greater importance than treble the number which might join the Army at a later period of the Contest.²

While the government was more confident in its ability to defeat an invasion, it still continued to expect that the French would cross at any time. At several times during the autumn and winter, the government received intelligence that the invasion was imminent or had been launched. For example, at the end of December, Admiral Sir William Cornwallis's squadron blockading Brest was blown off station by a storm and had to take refuge at Torbay, leaving the French forty-eight hours during which their fleet could have sailed to join

¹York to General Officers Commanding Districts, 1 July 1803, WO 1/625.

²York to Hobart, 25 Aug. 1803, WO 30/76.

an invasion force.¹ Upon hearing the news, the government sent orders to the coast to prepare for an invasion.² Consequently, York and the Cabinet continued to take measures to further the defence of southern England.

As early as July 1803, York had advocated constructing an selective system of field fortifications as quickly as possible, as 'the Erection of such Works must be immediate with a view to their probable utility'.³ He wished them placed at, 'Points where a Landing threatens the most important interests of the Country', as they would provide important advantages over an enemy short of artillery.⁴ In August, he began pressing the Cabinet for further funds for fortifications. At first, Addington was concerned about the costs involved but gradually consented to all of the Duke's requests.⁵ York's priorities were first to construct substantial fortifications on the Western Heights overlooking the Port of Dover, and to build ten Martello Towers along the coasts of Kent and Sussex. These towers were not built until after the Addington ministry fell, but the decision to proceed was made by Addington and Hobart.⁶ The delays were caused by the Ordnance and the Royal Engineers which were overburdened by other work. Hobart had first referred the idea of the fortifications to Chatham on 12 September 1803, but by 9 February 1804, the Royal Engineers still had not been able to study the

¹Addington to the King, 1 Jan. 1804, Aspinall, iv. 148; Steele to Pitt, 3 Jan. 1804, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/180/2, fos. 241-2.

²Starhemberg to Colloredo, 27 Dec. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

³York to Chatham, 4 July 1803, WO 30/76.

⁴York to Hobart 4 July and 25 Aug. 1803, WO 1/625.

⁵York to Hobart, 14 Sept. 1803, WO 1/626; Hobart to York, 26 Mar. 1804, WO 1/627.

⁶Hobart to York, 6 & 7 Apr. 1804 and York to Hobart, 31 Mar. and 10 Apr. 1804, WO 1/625.

question of the Western Heights or the Martello Towers.¹

The government also considered several other methods of slowing down a French advance, in the event that a landing proved successful. In 1801, the Colonel Twiss of the Royal Engineers first discussed plans for inundating Romney Marsh and the Penvensey Level, and by July 1803 York fully supported the plan.² Twiss stated that he could fix gates in the sluices to retain water in case of invasion for a cost of £200.³ The government also planned to flood the Royal Military Canal. If the French were able to cross these flooded territories, however, the British wished to ensure that they could not eat off the land. The War Office had plans for the removal of horses, carts, and stock (both live and dead), and the destructions of everything that could not be carried away. By October 1803, however, York was more confident of the forces at his disposal and believed that, as the British troops were unlikely to be retreating, they would need such stock as remained.⁴

The government was making administrative as well as military preparations in event of invasion. If the French landed in Essex, Addington and the King planned to move to Chelmsford and if in Kent to Dartford. The Queen and the royal treasure were to be transported to Worcester. The press was to be censored and the books of the Bank of England were to be stored in the Tower.⁵ Moreover, Addington had already asked Perceval to devise legislation for the enforcing of martial law,⁶ and expecting that an invasion would deflate the paper

¹Hobart to Chatham, 12 Sept. 1803, and Chatham to Hobart, 9 Feb. 1804, WO 1/625.

²York to Hobart, 8 July 1803, WO 30/76.

³Twiss to Dundas, 3 Aug. 1803, WO 30/62.

⁴York to Yorke, 24 Oct. 1803, WO 30/76.

⁵Pellew, ii. 238; Ziegler, p. 206.

⁶Perceval and Manners-Sutton to Yorke, 23 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS 38240, fo. 117; Spencer Walpole, The Life of the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval, including correspondence with Numerous Distinguished Persons, (2 vols, London, 1874), i. 115.

currency, York tried to arrange to pay the army with gold.¹

The navy also played an important role in home defence. If the French were able to evade the British fleet in the Channel it was necessary to have some squadrons for coastal defence. In response to York's request for a permanent squadron to defend the Eastern District at the mouth of the Thames at Hollesley Bay, St Vincent sent Admiral Lord Keith assisted by Sir James Craig.² York believed that the squadron was insufficient, but St Vincent was adamantly opposed to weakening the already stretched blockading squadrons.³ The government had also ordered the reestablishment of the sea fencibles, a branch of the volunteer force stationed in port towns. St Vincent deferred implementing this request, as he explained,

in order to give an opportunity to the officers employed on the Impress Service, of Securing as many of the Seamen or Seafaring Men employed on the Coast as possible, for the equipment of which, your Lordship is aware has been considerable retarded from the want of those Classes of men of which description most of the people who Served as Sea fencibles during the last War were composed.⁴

This was completed soon after, and by February 1804 over 25,000 sea fencibles had been raised.⁵

Despite the incessant criticism of these defence measures by the opposition in Parliament, Addington and the rest of the government were confident that British forces would defeat a French invasion. Man for man, the British were no match for the French soldiers, but an overwhelming superiority of numbers and the advantages of fighting on their own soil should have enabled them to resist. As York pointed out, 'The extent of army which an Enemy may land, depends not upon

¹York to Addington, 19 Oct. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ124.

²York to Hobart 21 June 1803, WO 30/76; St Vincent to Hobart, 9 July 1803, WO 1/100.

³Polden, p. 362.

⁴St Vincent to Hobart, 23 June 1803, Adm. 2/1360.

⁵Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/ON7.

His numbers at Home but upon His means of transporting them to this Country.'¹ The French could embark only a limited force, some of which were bound to be lost while in transit, and the defence plans of the Addington ministry appeared sufficient to handle the remainder. The government was so confident, in fact, that it almost wished the French would attempt the invasion. Hawkesbury claimed that, 'If they should come we are prepared to meet them & I trust the Question of Invasion will be settled for ever.'² Liverpool went even further, 'The Majority certainly wish that the French may attempt to invade us, in order to prove by Example to future Times, that the Conquest of this Country, by a Foreign Enemy, is impracticable.'³ Perceval added that, 'In this Country we begin to think the suspense of Expectation worse than the attempt, and there are more wishes expressed for their making it than their delaying it.'⁴ An invasion might have provided other benefits, as the Russian had suggested that, if the French invaded and were defeated, they and Austrians would join the war.⁵

Even though the invasion was never attempted, this in itself indirectly vindicated the defence policies of the Addington ministry. The ultimate goal of the government was to prevent the French from conquering Britain. This could have been achieved in two ways: first, by providing sufficient defensive measures to enable the British forces to defeat an invading force, and second, by adopting naval and military policies which would dissuade the enemy from even attempting the invasion. Bonaparte had two years during which nothing on the Continent diverted his attention from the Channel, yet he never took

¹York to Hobart, 30 June 1803, WO 1/625.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 1 Nov. 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 34.

³Liverpool to Mrs Johnson, 28 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 38311, fo. 167.

⁴Perceval to Redesdale, 27 Dec. 1803, Holland (Perceval) Papers, Bundle XI.

⁵See above, chapter 7, p. 218.

the risk. Therefore, Addington's defence policies did help to achieve their most important objective, and the extraordinary fervour of the parliamentary criticism was largely unjustified.

Grand Strategy

A few months before Addington declared war, Pitt advised Chatham that the government should prepare for immediate hostilities and 'strike in the first instance some sudden blow on any vulnerable point'.¹ The man, whom many considered as the only one capable of leading the country in war, did not suggest what these vulnerable points might be. The answer was of course that he did not know. After managing the war for almost a decade he still had not found a truly vulnerable point which the British could attack with some hope of success. Therefore, it was unrealistic of him to expect that Addington should find one. The only two successful campaigns for the British during the French Wars were the Egyptian expedition and the Peninsular campaign. In 1803, French troops were not stationed in either Egypt or Spain.

Addington was accused of having lacked imagination. A truly great war leader, on the other hand, would have developed a new strategy to deal with the French: he would have found some place to send British troops to some effect. Nevertheless, it is hardly fair to measure Addington against such a standard. For no other leader during the course of the war discovered another place where British troops could be sent with some hope of success. The only other major offensives besides Egypt and the Peninsula were the invasions of the Dutch coast in 1799 and 1809, and both were dramatic failures. But while Addington would have been looked upon less favourably if he had sent a disastrous expedition to the Continent, no one gave him credit for having resisted the temptation to risk one.

Addington's approach to the war was both cautious and traditional. During the previous war, Grenville and Dundas had

¹Pitt to Chatham, 2 Mar. 1803, Stanhope, iii. 106.

disagreed fundamentally about how to fight the war. Grenville argued that France would only be beaten by a grand coalition fighting on the Continent, and that money and troops spent on colonial adventures wasted the resources required to win the battles where they really mattered. Dundas, on the contrary, believed that Continental allies could not be trusted to fight for British objectives, and, therefore, that the British had to concentrate their resources in the theatres of war where they had a chance to win and to pursue policies that strengthened the Royal Navy and the British economy in order to enable the country to survive a war of attrition.

Addington, like Pitt before him, tried to implement both policies simultaneously. As mentioned, the British could never defeat France on their own and they were unlikely to win a war of attrition because French control of the Continental ports would place a greater strain on the British economy than a British blockade would on the French.¹ So to be able to survive the war for a lengthy period, the British required a Continental ally to engage the French. Addington thought he had found that ally in Russia, who appeared to agree that the French posed a threat in central Europe and the Near East and consented to close cooperation though short of a formal alliance. As mentioned the course of Anglo-Russian diplomacy convinced Addington and Hawkesbury that the Russians were on the verge of signing a formal alliance and joining the war. The decisions to retain Malta and later to renew the war were based on the false assumption that the British had Russian support. Addington and Hawkesbury were startled by the Russian decision to propose mediation, but the dispatches of the Foreign Secretary clearly indicate that he continued to believe that if the British could merely survive the early stages of the war, the Russians would eventually join, bringing

¹Charles John Fedorak, 'Maritime Versus Continental Strategy: Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon', Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850, (1989), forthcoming.

in the Austrians and possibly the Prussians with them.¹

Pursuing policies dependent on the actions of another power was somewhat reckless. For what if the Russians did not enter the war as expected? The formation of the Third Coalition in 1805 proved Addington and Hawkesbury right, but by then it was too late to save the ministry. The central point is, however, that Addington had little choice, for there were no alternatives to pursuing a Continental alliance because the British did not have sufficient troops to land on the Continent and defeat the French singlehandedly, nor could other options such as colonial or naval warfare cause the overthrow of the French government or force that government to negotiate peace on terms favourable to Britain. There were only two real options for the British: accept peace on whatever terms the French would grant, or go to war hoping that they could survive until joined by a Continental ally. Thus the British were literally at the mercy of the Continental powers.

While waiting for his Russian alliance to materialize, Addington decided to take the offensive in the naval and colonial spheres where the British possessed the advantage. In March 1803, when relations with France appeared to be deteriorating rapidly, Hobart began to prepare the navy for action. The three most important theatres of war for the Royal Navy were the Channel, the Mediterranean, and the Caribbean. After Hobart had ordered impressment to increase the supply of seamen in March 1803, the Admiralty directed a squadron to gather intelligence off Cherbourg. By the end of March, Yorke claimed that, 'This week we shall have at least 10 sail of the Line off the Lizard, or in Cauford [? Cawrand] Bay, & as all the Frigates are armed, a Night[']s time will suffice to block up all the Ports from the Texel to Brest.'² In April, the Admiralty increased the home squadron and the defence of the Medway and Thames, and the Channel

¹See above, chapter 7, pp. 212-25.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 28 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 155-6.

squadron was further reinforced in early May.¹

Immediately after Addington declared war, Admiral Cornwallis sailed to blockade Brest, which he accomplished within thirty-six hours. This was important because, as Brest was the only French harbour on the Channel coast capable of servicing a large fleet and the commercial port of the French West Indian trade, it was the most important French port outside of the Mediterranean, and in order to maintain command of the Channel, the Royal Navy had to contain the French fleet in port. The Royal Navy also established blockades at Rochefort and Lorient.²

St Vincent's blockade policy included two lines of defence. The first sealed the ports as closely as possible with warships and strategically placed frigates which would cruise the harbour. The inshore squadron of battleships remained close behind and the rest of the fleet not far away. The second line consisted of various squadrons falling back on the strategic centre close to the Lizard, able to follow the French to Ireland or up the Channel.³ Thus the close blockade not only prevented French war ships from joining the invasion forces, but also cut France's overseas commercial lifeline.

Next in strategic importance was the Mediterranean. During the peace Bonaparte had made alarming acquisition in the region, as he had annexed Leghorn and Elba, signed treaties with the Barbary States, and obtained access to the Black Sea. By dominating the Mediterranean, he could exclude Britain from the Levant trade, capture the Russian trade, and ultimately threaten British India. Sebastiani's report had reinforced British fears that Bonaparte would reoccupy Egypt once Malta had been surrendered, and so on 5 March Hobart directed the Admiralty to instruct the Mediterranean squadron to be on alert in case the French tried an amphibious attack on the

¹Admiralty to Bickerton, 20 Mar. 1803, Nepean to Rainier, 7 Apr. 1803, and Admiralty to Saumarez, 11 Apr. 1803, Adm. 2/1360; Admiralty to Williams, 7 May 1803, Adm. 2/145.

²Reilly, p. 417.

³Sherrard, p. 206.

Turkish Empire.¹

On 17 May, Nelson sailed to take command of the Mediterranean fleet, and his major objective was to prevent the French fleet from leaving the other important French port at Toulon, a mission that he had failed to accomplish in 1798. While Cornwallis was directed to resume St Vincent's policy of a close blockade of Brest, Nelson's mission was more complicated, for he was to blockade Toulon from a distance. Besides causing more wear and tear on the ships, this strategy left the blockading force short of supplies and easily scouted by the French.² Moreover, Nelson had several other responsibilities. He had to watch Leghorn and Genoa in case the French tried to avoid the blockade by launching an invasion of Egypt from Italy. In effect, he was to blockade three ports simultaneously. The other important strategic interest in the Mediterranean was Malta. Having placed such importance on the island in the negotiations with the French government, the Addington ministry was determined that Malta should remain in British hands. Finally, Nelson was to try to protect the King of Naples and to monitor the activities of the Spanish fleet.³

Hobart had also been watching closely the situation in the West Indies. By the end of March, he decided that, even if the French ships and troops in Holland were intended for Louisiana, the Royal Navy should intercept the fleet if it ever sailed from Helveotsluys.⁴ Even though Britain and France were still at peace, he reinforced the squadron in the Leeward Islands and ordered it to intercept any French reinforcements sent to the region.⁵ On 16 May, two days before the actual declaration of war, Hobart sent instructions to both the

¹Hobart to Admiralty, 5 Mar. 1803, WO 6/183.

²Piers Mackesy, War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810 (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 29.

³Hobart to Admiralty, 17 May 1803, WO 6/183.

⁴Hobart to Admiralty, 31 Mar. 1803, WO 6/183.

⁵Hobart to Admiralty, 1 Apr. and 7 May 1803, Adm. 6/183.

East and West Indies. He ordered Wellesley to capture Cochin and the Dutch islands but not to attack Mauritius or Batavia without further instructions. In the West Indies, he ordered Grinfield to capture St Lucia and Tobago in the first instance and to attack Martinique if the chances of success appeared reasonable, while in North America he directed British troops to attack St Pierre and Miquelon. By 10 June, having received intelligence that the proprietors of Surinam, Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo wanted British protection, Hobart ordered that these colonies also be captured, and he did not expect that there would be much resistance except at Martinique and St Lucia.¹

These colonial initiatives were remarkably successful, as St Lucia and Tobago, along with St Pierre and Miquelon were recaptured by the end of June. British West Indian forces then recaptured Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice by the end of September, and by May 1804 had recaptured Surinam. All of these operations were accomplished without substantial reinforcements, as the government sent only 159 troops to the West Indies in 1803, and two new regiments were sufficient to aid the force invading Surinam in 1804.² Thus, of the colonies returned by the Treaty of Amiens, the British recaptured all but the Cape and Martinique during the term of the Addington ministry. Martinique was the most difficult to subdue, owing to its size and the strength of the French garrison, but having recaptured Tobago the British were able to establish an effective blockade of Martinique which prevented the French from deriving any military or commercial advantage from the island. The only other French island left in the West Indies was St Domingue. The British were not in possession of the island at the time of the peace, and

¹Hobart to Wellesley, 16 May, 1803, and Hobart to Grinfield, 16 May, and 10 June 1803, WO 6/183; Hobart to Grinfield, 16 May and 11 June 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/C86 and C87; Hobart to Admiralty, 4 June 1803, WO 6/49.

²C. D. Hall, 'Addington at War: Unspectacular but not Unsuccessful', Historical Research, lxi (1988), 311.

were in no position to capture it after the renewal of war. The command of the sea enjoyed by the Royal Navy, however, prevented the French from sending reinforcements that were necessary to subdue the negro rebellion on the island.

This re-implementation of the colonial warfare policy of Dundas went no further towards defeating the French, however, than the original attempts had during the previous war. Ever since the beginning of the Revolution, the French considered their colonies of relatively little importance compared with the situation in Europe. Thus, contrary to British expectations, they would not exchange territory in Europe for a return of their conquered colonies. Nevertheless, this policy of colonial warfare was still important to Addington, for having declared war catching Bonaparte off guard, Addington wanted to make use of all of the advantages presented to him. The element of surprise left the French with inadequate garrisons and only a small fleet in the West Indies, while Addington's high peace-time military and naval establishments gave the British an opportunity for some easy success in the Caribbean. Even victories of such limited importance were necessary to sustain morale and confidence in the government. These expeditions also permitted Addington to answer Grenville's assertion that these colonies were so necessary for strategic reasons to Britain to have been worth continuing the war in 1801, with the response that once the war was renewed the colonies were easily reconquered and in this way the British had lost nothing by the Treaty of Amiens.

Beyond capturing French colonies, however, there was little the British could do to harm the French war effort. The French advance through northern Germany to attack Hanover shortly after the war began led to their gaining control of the Elbe and Weser rivers. In June and July, the British responded with a blockade of these rivers because the French excluded British shipping through these outlets.¹ In an attempt to increase the economic pressure on France, in September, Hobart directed that a squadron in the Channel blockade

¹Hobart to Admiralty, 25 June and 26 July 1803, WO 6/183.

Havre de Grace to sever the life-line to Paris.¹ These blockades, particularly at Brest, were on the whole quite effective, according to François Crouzet, Paul Kennedy and Charles Arthur, as the British were able to interrupt French and foreign trade to French ports and to bottle up the French navy, depriving it the ability to attack the Royal Navy through a guerre de course or even to practice manoeuvres.² Nevertheless, they did not do serious harm to the French economy because the French were able to tap the resources of the Continent. The British were able to deprive the French of some luxury items such as sugar, coffee, and spices, but this had only a marginal effect on the ability of the French to continue the war, as demonstrated by Crouzet.³ The blockades also ran the risk of seriously alienating the neutral powers, particularly Prussia, who were hurt by them. Thus the blockade was hardly the key to the defeat of the French as claimed by Arthur.⁴

The one policy option that Addington considered but did not try was a major amphibious operation. By the autumn of 1803, Addington believed that as a sufficient defence force had been raised, he would soon have 20,000 men available for some type of offensive operation either in Europe or South America.⁵ On 4 September, Addington claimed that, 'The Time is not, I trust, very remote, when we shall find ourselves in such a State, as to admit of the Application of a large

¹Hobart to Admiralty, 6 Sept. 1803, WO 6/183.

²François Crouzet, 'La Guerre Maritime' and 'Le Système Continental et ses Conséquences', in Jean Mistler ed., Napoléon et L'Empire: L'apogée et la chute (Paris, 1979), pp. 50, 152; Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery (London, 1976), p. 122; Charles B. Arthur, The Remaking of the English Navy by Admiral St. Vincent--Key to Victory over Napoleon: The Great Unclaimed Naval Revolution, 1795-1805 (London, 1986), pp. 182, 188-9, 196-9, 223.

³François Crouzet, 'La Guerre Maritime', p. 50.

⁴Arthur, p. iv.

⁵Starhemberg to Colloredo, 20 Oct. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144; York to Hobart, 13 Jan. 1804, WO 1/627.

Force to other Purposes than those of mere Defence, & of domestic Security.¹ Moreover, by April 1804 Yorke had decided to suspend the army of reserve legislation because the army for home defence was already sufficient and the government wanted to decrease competition to enable the regular army to recruit greater numbers.² As to deploying this force, Vansittart and Hobart favoured an expedition to capture the Portuguese and Spanish colonies in South America.³ Hobart had suggested such a plan as early as July 1801,⁴ but Addington and Hawkesbury ruled this out, because they were trying to preserve the neutrality of Spain and did not wish to harm their relations with Portugal.⁵ The other important point was that these proposals were very risky and even if successful would have done little to harm the French war effort. The Cabinet also considered plans which foreshadowed the Walcheren invasion of 1809 and the Peninsular campaign.⁶ The problems with these schemes, however, were that, on one hand, the chances of success in Holland appeared slight considering that such a large French force was already present on the Channel coast, and, on the other, the French army was not yet even in Portugal. The government finally decided not to risk the small number of troops it could raise for such an operation until the chances of success appeared much greater.

Fortescue's criticism of Addington for not sending a force of

¹Addington to Simcoe, 4 Sept. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ354.

²Parliamentary Debates, ii. 279-82.

³Vansittart to Addington, 22 Sept. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ275; Hawkesbury to Hobart, 29 Sept. 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B74.

⁴Hobart to Addington, 16 July 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OM4.

⁵Rufus King Correspondence, iv. 321.

⁶Starhemberg to Colloredo, 15 Dec. 1803, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/144.

30-40,000 to southern Italy has already been answered by C. D. Hall.¹ Besides the logistical problems that he outlines, it is also questionable whether the British could have succeeded in that theatre. For they discovered in North Holland in 1799 that they were not necessarily welcome in a country simply because it had been occupied by the French. Moreover, the King of Naples did not want British troops on his soil, because they would undermine his authority and act as a magnet for a large French counter-invasion. Even when the French did invade, he was very reluctant to allow British troops to secure possession of Sicily.² In Italian territory already controlled by France, it is unclear whether the natives would have preferred the British troops to the French, and the Dutch had already demonstrated that they seemed to prefer French control to a restoration of the old regime.

Nevertheless, Addington's war policies have had some defenders. Ziegler argues that Addington deliberately avoided an offensive war policy to entice Bonaparte into a showdown on the Channel. Either the French would send a large force across to be defeated, or Bonaparte would suffer a national humiliation for assembling the invasion force and then not demonstrating the courage to embark.³ Addington did not adopt a strategy of masterly inactivity out of choice, however, as Ziegler seems to claim. For as mentioned he had a force of 20,000 ready to attack the French at some vulnerable point as soon as he found one. Hall presents a more accurate and detailed analysis of Addington's general strategy, but his description of them as being 'unspectacular but not unsuccessful' begs the question as to whether or not spectacular results were achievable.⁴ On the contrary, a more effective war strategy was beyond the means of the British

¹Fortescue, A History of the British Army, v. 196-202; Hall, 'Addington at War', pp. 310-11.

²See above, chapter 7, p. 232.

³Ziegler, pp. 197-8.

⁴Hall, 'Addington at War', pp. 306-15.

government. The Royal Navy achieved the goals outlined by Addington and Hobart. These goals were very limited, reflected traditional British policy, and probably would have been achieved regardless of who was Prime Minister. Addington only deserves credit for not risking his limited manpower on schemes which, even if they had succeeded, would not have had a decisive effect on the war. Years later, when conditions on the Continent had changed substantially, such risks were worth taking and did contribute to the defeat of the French. The Peninsular campaign played an important auxiliary role to the allied offensive in central Europe. In 1803 and 1804, however, there was no opportunity for the British to play that role. As at most points during the war, there was, in the words of Piers Mackesy a 'dearth of strategic options'.¹

A fair point of contention is whether Addington should have declared war when he did, knowing full well that Britain could not win the war on its own and that unless the Russians and Austrians entered the war in the near future the British would have found themselves in a similar situation as in 1801. It is difficult, however, to speculate what would have happened if he had not declared war. While he took a considerable risk, it is clear that he felt that he had no choice. For France was threatening to make even further requisitions if the British surrendered Malta, and Bonaparte had declared that there would be war if the British kept the island. Thus, Addington believed that war was inevitable anyway, and Britain was in a better position to preserve its interests than if the French had been given more time to prepare. Moreover, although Addington and Hawkesbury were wrong in the short term, it was reasonable to assume from the course of Anglo-Russian diplomacy, that the Russians would probably join the war in the near future. Declaring war in May 1803 was a gamble, but allowing Anglo-French relations to have continued as they were would also have involved serious risks.

¹Piers Mackesy, 'Strategic Problems of the British War Effort', Dickinson ed., Britain and the French Revolution, p. 157.

This analysis puts St Vincent's naval reforms into better context. In March 1804, the focus of opposition criticism shifted from the army to the navy, because when Pitt finally went into open opposition, he justified his action on the grounds that the naval policies of the government did not provide the country with adequate security.¹ In proposing an alternative naval strategy, however, Pitt made errors that were pointed out by Admiral Edward Pellew.² Moreover, Addington later stated:

Lord St Vincent's System of naval Defence is highly approved of by all the Seafaring People whom I have met with, who are acquainted with the navigation of the Channel, & with the opposite Coasts of England & France; & I have good Reason for believing, that it is by no means discountenanced by the present Board of Admiralty.³

The real controversy arose over St Vincent's naval reforms and the consequences of the commission of inquiry.

St Vincent's desire to reform abuses in the naval administration was entirely justified, and most of his policies were eventually adopted to the benefit of the navy. Nevertheless, at the time, these policies caused serious problems. For men who made a fortune cheating the government had no qualms about resorting to blackmail, when the government tried to deprive them of their easy pickings. As the new Timber Masters were more particular about the supplies which they purchased and often rejected rotten stock, the timber merchants responded by raising their prices by thirty-two percent or refusing to sell to the government.⁴ As St Vincent was stubborn and refused to concede to this blackmail, navy stocks fell below the three years supply which was the customary minimum. Moreover, having dismissed a large number of dockyard workers in peace-time, St Vincent had

¹See below, chapter 9, pp. 293-4.

²Idem.

³Addington to Bragge, 4 Sept. 1804, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/OZ130.

⁴Memorandum on Timber and building Ships by contract, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/ON21.

difficulty rehiring them when the war resumed. As a consequence, the navy fell behind in both repair and construction of new ships.

Initially, none of this really mattered because upon the renewal of war the number of ships of all classes still in commission in the British navy was far greater than that of the French. Even by the time the ministry resigned in May 1804, the British still held superiority. At Brest the British outnumbered the French in ships of all classes by fifty-six to forty-three and at Toulon by forty-six to sixteen.¹ In addition, as mentioned the navy accomplished all of its goals in terms of blockade and colonial warfare. Thus, there was little else for the navy to do, and several hundred more ships would not markedly have improved the British position in the war.

Nevertheless, while in the short term the Royal Navy was able to accomplish these goals despite the detrimental effects of St Vincent's naval reforms, in the long term the Royal Navy might have faced real trouble. For although the number of ships available at the beginning of the war was adequate, the dockyards were not able to keep up with repairs to sustain the navy at that strength. Wear and tear took a considerable toll, as Keith explained to Pitt:

The Violence of this Winter has Crippled or nearly Destroyed all the King's ships which were in service at the beginning of the War for they had not undergone such repair if any at the Close of the former War and [as] they had none to supply their places at my Instance they were induced to purchase Merchant Ships and equip them in July and August last but unfortunately this has been so ill Managed that they are of so bad a Class the pilots refuse to take charge of them and the Commanders represent them in an unfit state.²

Under such conditions the navy could not sustain its superiority over a long period, but St Vincent's policies were overturned before any lasting damage was done.

Therefore, St Vincent's naval reforms were deserving of some

¹Abstract of British and Enemy Ships and Vessels 13 May 1804, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/ON18.

²Keith to Pitt, 10 Mar. 1804, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/149/1, fos. 37-8.

criticism. Regardless of how noble or just were his intentions, the practical results of his policies could have placed the Royal Navy in serious danger if they had been left in place for an extended period. In this way, his naval policies were out of character with the rest of the policies of the ministry. For although Addington was a firm advocate of reform in many fields, he was very cautious when implementing it. For example, he initially supported Abbot's Irish reforms but backed down in the face of considerable public pressure. Even though he truly desired peace for reasons of economy, he was prudent enough to maintain high peace-time establishments in case the war was renewed suddenly. St Vincent, instead, had counted on the peace to last in order to facilitate his naval reforms. While Addington planned a long, defensive war, St. Vincent continued to pursue policies that could have proved disastrous in the long term. Finally, Addington and the rest of the ministry were far more flexible in formulating and implementing policy than was St Vincent. The First Lord of the Admiralty was truly the odd man out. Addington also demonstrated a lack of leadership in his inability to consolidate naval policy with the rest of the measures of his ministry. From a political standpoint, St Vincent's naval reforms and his unconciliatory manner gave the opposition considerable ammunition against the government, and the parliamentary fuss created by the reforms enabled the opposition to obscure the successful measures of the naval administration. Thus the reforms caused an enormous political problem that led Addington in later years to attribute the actions of the Admiralty Board as one of the prominent causes of the downfall of his ministry.¹

War Finance

The ability to wage a long and expensive war during this period was limited by the health of the government finances. As mentioned Addington's decision to negotiate peace in 1801 was largely

¹Pellew, ii. 260-61.

influenced by his belief that the poor state of the government finances would not permit him to continue the war much longer. Financial reform and the respite granted by the peace improved the financial position of the government to the point at which Addington was given the option of renewing the war, but the cumulative government debt remained large, and the government required greater sources of revenue to continue the war for a long period. Thus Addington realized that he had to introduce important new measures, if Britain were to survive the war.

In February 1803, a few months before the war resumed, Pitt was considering the question of war finance. He stated:

The greatest object of my anxiety is our Finance, on which every thing must so much depend. I do not however (after full Reflection) doubt the sufficiency of the Country to provide for the Expenses of Seven or even Ten years of War without imposing Burdens, that would materially entrench on the Comfort of the great Body of the People, or ultimately affect our Prosperity and Credit. But I am convinced this can only be done by meeting at once the whole extent of our difficulties; and by raising within the year a still larger Proportion of the Supplies than was done even in the last four years of the late War.¹

Pitt stressed that it was important to raise sufficient war taxes so as to avoid large loans that would burden the country with interest payments. Although he believed that Addington was incapable of implementing these measures, the Prime Minister, following the advice of Vansittart, was in fact thinking precisely along the same lines. A memorandum on the financial measures of the ministry which appears to be in Vansittart's handwriting declares that 'It was proposed by a System of War Taxes to raise a Sum for the service of the year so considerable as to supercede the necessity of borrowing any sum materially exceeding that which would be applicable to the reduction of the public debt.'²

Addington and Vansittart, as well as Pitt, were concerned that,

¹Pitt to Chatham, 28 Feb. 1803, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/101, fos. 170-71.

²Private Memoir on Finance, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/OT29.

if the government met the demands of war by borrowing, the national debt would become unmanageable. They believed that by raising as much money as possible at the beginning of the war through war taxes, rather than borrowing the necessary funds each year, they would decrease the long term burden to the nation. Moreover, large loans drove up interests rates which hurt British trade as well as the government's finances. In devising the first war budget, Addington and Vansittart calculated that the nation could afford £10-12 million in war taxes, and as they felt that they could not raise the Customs and Excise beyond £8 million, to make up the difference Addington decided to reintroduce the income tax.¹

Pitt's income tax first introduced in 1799 had presented both political and administrative problems. First, in requiring the taxpayer to declare his aggregate income it violated the privacy of the individual. Most people, especially in the commercial interests, strongly objected to making their total worth public knowledge.² Second, relying on the individual to submit an honest assessment of his income, without adequate means of ensuring that these declarations were accurate, defrauded the government of a substantial amount. Basing his projections on a total national income of £100 million, Pitt estimated that a tax of ten percent would yield £10 million, but in three years it failed to reach an annual yield of £6.25 million.³

At the time of abolishing Pitt's tax in 1802, Addington knew that if it were to be reintroduced in future it would require substantial modifications. Consequently, when he re-introduced the tax as part of his budget for 1803, he addressed the two most important flaws of Pitt's original tax. To eliminate the concern about the invasion of privacy, he abolished the requirement of declaring aggregate income, and instead he divided all income into

¹Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1594-1602; Private Memoir on Finance, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OT29.

²Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OT24.

³Seligman, pp. 78, 115; Sabine, p. 33.

a series of five schedules based on income from property, trade or profession, government stock, government offices, and all other income. The second and most fundamental reform was to require that the tax be collected at the source, rather than from the taxpayer. Renters deducted the tax from the rent paid to the landlord, employers deducted the tax from wages paid to employees, and the bank deducted the tax from interest paid to bond and shareholders. In this way, individuals made no declarations of their total income and the opportunities for evading the tax were severely curtailed.

Although many of the reforms implemented by Addington were contained in a letter received by Vansittart in 1801,¹ it is wrong to assume that Addington and his Treasury Secretary were merely adopting someone else's suggestions. For as early as 1798, Addington had displayed a sound understanding in Parliament of the history of taxation, and he received the inspiration for his reforms from legislation that had been implemented during the reign of William and Mary when England was also at war with France.²

Realizing that his tax would be far more efficient than Pitt's, Addington tried to make it politically palatable by cutting the rate in half to five percent. In his original proposal, he set the rate at five percent on all schedules of income, but to make it fairer to the poor, who did not own land or stock, he exempted all incomes below £60 per year, and arranged a sliding scale for those between £60 and £150. Based on his original proposals Addington projected that his tax would raise £4.5 million, and, even after some modifications that cut the yield of the tax, it actually produced £4.7 million, only twenty percent below the yield of Pitt's tax set at twice the rate.³

The modifications that Addington chose to make were owing to some political problems centering around Pitt. For the man who had

¹Mackenzie to Vansittart, 8 Oct. 1801, Add. MSS 31229, fo. 21.

²Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1600; Farnsworth, pp. 42-5.

³Sabine, p. 38.

framed the original tax did not like being upstaged by one of his former political followers. Although Pitt had approved of the copy of the budget which Steele had delivered to him, and had remained silent when Addington introduced the tax in the Commons in June 1803,¹ he soon tried to lead a parliamentary assault upon the measure. At first, he tried to persuade the government to reintroduce his old tax, but after that failed he attacked two specific provisions. First, he declared that the government ought not to distinguish between earned and unearned income, and that deductions for one should be granted to another. Second, he claimed that the taxing of the interest from the government stock was a violation of the public trust because the government was taxing money that it paid to its creditors. Addington responded well to these criticisms and even won the debates in the Commons by large margins but in the end consented to Pitt's amendments. This was not owing to Pitt's 'inborn ascendancy of genius' or to pressure from the Bank of England, which had previously given Addington its consent, but rather to Addington's desire to facilitate a speedy passage of the bill. For he required the legislation to be implemented quickly and wished to avoid fueling Pitt's animosity or inciting further opposition.²

Despite these political problems, Addington's income tax reforms were tremendously successful. Revenue from the tax allowed him to avoid further increases in the customs and excise and other war taxes. Future ministries recognized the value of these reforms. For even Pitt, who had made such strong criticism, did not substantially alter the tax when he returned to power in 1804. In addition, in 1806 the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Henry Petty, reintroduced Addington's original measure to tax the government stock. Moreover, the income tax proved vital to the ability of the British to survive the war in later years, and without it they would not have been able

¹Colchester Diary, i. 427; Fox to Lauderdale, 21 June 1803, Add. MSS 47564, fo. 111; Pitt to Rose, 12 June 1803, Add. MSS 42772, fo. 184.

²Colchester Diary, i. 432; Farnsworth, p. 64.

to afford the large financial subsidies that they granted to the Continental allies in 1813 and 1814.

The point of this analysis of the war policies of the Addington ministry has been to put into context the parliamentary criticism of those policies during the months that preceded Addington's resignation. The general impression among the leading politicians at the time, and one which has pervaded the historiography of the period ever since, was that Addington proved incapable of carrying on the war and Britain turned once again to the 'Pilot that Weathered the Storm'. Addington, however, ridiculed the nature of parliamentary criticism of his military measures as

...one man objecting to too great an extension of one part of our force, another lamenting any attempt at its diminution; some recommending a greater and some a lesser addition to the regular army, and others who differ as to that particular species of naval force we should employ; some preferring a large number of small vessels, and some a small number of large vessels...¹

On the contrary, Addington and his colleagues presented a reasonable response to the military situation which they faced. Years later, Grey declared that, 'Lord Sidmouth's Military measures were the only ones which had hitherto produced any speedy or large augmentation of our army.'² In addition, Starhemberg praised the government for 'l'energie qu'il a sù inspirer à la Nation dans la crise actuelle, la plus essentielle peut-être dans laquelle la Grande Bretagne ne soit jamais trouvé encore'.³ Many of the measures were based on the advice of the King, the Duke of York, St Vincent, and even Pitt. Although, several serious mistakes were made, usually owing to the haste with which the ministers believed it was necessary to introduce the legislation, the ministry cannot be blamed for the overwhelming response to join the volunteers which was not foreseen by anyone

¹Parliamentary Debates, ii, 201-2.

²Pellew, ii. 307.

³Starhemberg to Colloredo, 6 Mar. 1804, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/145.

else. Finally, it is important to note that, although Addington's immediate predecessors were unable to devise more effective policies, they did not suffer the same barrage of criticism. This dichotomy was epitomized by Holland Rose, who ruthlessly attacked Addington's failure to settle the problems with Britain's defence forces but then excused Pitt's failure for the same on the basis that no one else had been able to solve them.¹ Why should anyone expect more from Addington than from Pitt?

Expectations were indeed high because the British were proud and patriotic. They felt extremely insulted when Bonaparte declared that Britain alone could not harm France, and wished to teach him a lesson. Bolstered by a series of naval victories in the 1790s, parliamentary and popular opinion seemed to expect that the Royal Navy would compensate for the lack of a large army and defeat the French. Nevertheless, Bonaparte was largely correct. For there was little the British could do to harm the French beyond capturing colonies, which the Addington ministry did with considerable success. Having proceeded with the war without allied support, the British were faced with either a French invasion or a war of attrition. The ministry was about as well prepared as it could have been for the former, although St Vincent's reform policies meant that the navy was not so well prepared for the latter. Thus, as much of the parliamentary criticism was misplaced, the claim that the ministry collapsed simply because it followed incompetent policies is untenable. Consequently, a better explanation for its collapse is required.

¹cf. Rose, 'The Struggle with Napoleon', p. 330 with Pitt and the Great War, p. 510.

Chapter Nine

The Collapse of the Ministry, January to April 1804

'A declared and regular opposition to the present Government was now more than ever an indispensable public Duty.'

Lord Grenville¹

'Let us first get rid of the Doctor is my principle of action.'

Charles Fox²

The Revival of Opposition

Addington was in effect deposed by a coalition of the supporters of Pitt, Grenville, and Fox. The foundations of this unlikely alliance were laid by Grenville. He had not really wished to resign in 1801, but did so because he had long been a confirmed supporter of Catholic Emancipation. The decision of the new ministry to sign peace with France without achieving his unrealistic aims, convinced him that the ministers were incompetent, however, and he set himself in virtually unwavering opposition to the government after October 1801. Granted, he believed it to be his patriotic duty to point out the errors of the government, and he did consider the peace a terrible mistake. Nevertheless, despite his protestations that he was not setting himself up in factious opposition, he along with his brothers, Thomas and Buckingham, and their colleagues, Windham and Spencer, did oppose the government on almost every important measure for the duration of the ministry. By the autumn of 1802, Grenville had declared that his only political objective was to restore Pitt to power and that he had no view to obtaining political office for himself. Nevertheless, his brothers were

¹Grenville to Pitt, 31 Jan. 1804, Dropmore Papers, vii. 211.

²Fox to Grey, 13 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 46575, fo. 121.

already planning a new ministry and discussing the distribution of offices among themselves and their friends. Grenville was in fact moving further away from Pitt both politically and personally, to the extent at which some of Pitt's friends even accused him of attempting to displace his cousin. According to Mulgrave, 'from the period of the peace of Amiens he began to set up for himself, and to endeavour to collect as many as he could detach from Pitt on that question into a body of which he should be the leader and oracle, and I have no doubt that he considered himself from that period as the leader of a distinct party'.¹

The Grenvillites and their allies for all their sounds and fury, however, really signified little. Between October 1801 and December 1803 they were able to win few votes in either House of Parliament beyond the immediate patronage of Buckingham and Fitzwilliam. The Grenvilles in fact were extremely unpopular in Parliament.² For they epitomized the corrupt professional politicians whom the independent country gentlemen so despised.³ Liverpool claimed that they were, 'so self important & troublesome, that it is better to have them as Enemies than Friends ...'.⁴ Indeed, initially having Grenville as an opponent worked to Addington's advantage. For example, Tierney told Lady Holland in December 1802 that, 'Mr Addington is daily acquiring additional strength & popularity. Seriously, the violence of the new opposition (the Grenvilles, Canning ect [sic]) has wrought wonders in his favor ...'.⁵ In August 1803, Canning lamented, 'I see no reason now why

¹Mulgrave to Lowther, 30 Nov. 1806, Historical Manuscripts Commission: Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Lonsdale (London, 1893), pp. 224-5.

²Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century, pp. 142-3.

³Ingram, Commitment to Empire, pp. 24, 94.

⁴Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 259.

⁵Tierney to Lady Holland, 26 Dec. 1802, Add. MSS 51585, fo. 23.

A's administration should not hobble on, & outlast the Country.'¹ In the long term, however, the Grenvillites' debating talent, their determination, and their political intrigue played an important role in undermining Addington's parliamentary majority.

Addington's position did not suffer in the short term from the opposition of the Grenvilles because the issue which provoked that opposition at the same time won over the support of the Foxite Whigs. As Fox possessed a greater following than Grenville, government majorities were actually increased by these changes of alignment. Nevertheless, Fox's support for Addington was unreliable, and by resuming the war, Addington completely alienated him.² Fox was unable, however, to take all of the Whigs with him back into opposition. For many of the friends of the Prince of Wales had become estranged from Fox during the peace, and several were moving closer to Addington. Tierney, who had tried to negotiate a coalition with the new ministry in 1801, continued to support Addington and eventually accepted office in May 1803. Sheridan was also on extremely good personal terms with Addington and continued to support the ministry with both his votes and debating skill. Erskine seemed undecided but at one point seriously considered an offer of office. Even Grey felt unable to oppose the resumption of the war, and had to content himself with criticizing the manner in which the ministry had conducted the negotiations.³

Consequently, the Addington ministry remained in a strong position until the end of 1803. From the division lists it is clear that the Prime Minister retained the support most of the members who had supported Pitt's ministry and even some of the Whigs.⁴ Only the small followings of Grenville, Windham, and Fitzwilliam on one hand and that of Fox on the other provided any sustained opposition, and

¹Canning to Frere, 25 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 38833, fo. 155.

²Fox to Lauderdale, [1803], Add. MSS 47564, fo. 184.

³Parliamentary History, xxxvi. 1408.

⁴See the lists in Parliamentary History, xxxvi and Parliamentary Debates, i.

the two groups voted for different reasons and often on different issues. Thus Addington's strong parliamentary majorities remained intact, and there was no reason to suspect that this position was about to crumble.

One of the reasons that Addington and Hawkesbury were so confident about the ministry's prospects for 1804 was that they believed that Grenville and Fox would never join forces against the government.¹ For Grenville had always been a greater adversary of Fox than even Pitt had been. Since 1791, Grenville had been the strongest spokesman for Pitt's ministry in the Lords, and Fox its strongest critic in the Commons. They had been poles apart on issues such as the repression of social unrest and the prosecution of the war. Moreover, Grenville was always far more committed to continuing the war than Pitt. After Pitt resigned Grenville supported Addington, while Fox opposed, until the preliminaries of peace were announced, when they switched sides, and they did not find themselves in agreement until Addington resumed the war. Even then they criticized Addington for completely opposite reasons: Fox for resuming the war; Grenville for not fighting it vigorously enough. Thus there were no two political leaders who had found themselves on the opposite sides of political questions as often as Grenville and Fox. How could these two ever form a political alliance?

Grenville had been trying desperately without success to convince Pitt to join him in outright opposition. For he had realized that the small numbers his allies could muster in both Houses of Parliament were having little effect. He did notice, however, that Fox had been speaking out strongly against the government especially on the volunteer legislation. After two unsuccessful attempts to bring Pitt into opposition on 9 and 10 January 1804, Grenville decided to look for assistance elsewhere.²

¹Liverpool to Hervey, [1802], Hervey Papers 941/56/8.

²Tomline to Mrs Tomline, 10 Jan. 1804, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/562/1; Grenville to Thomas Grenville, 14 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS 41852, fos. 188-9.

Thomas Grenville proposed to meet Fox and discuss some form of cooperation against the government to give their opposition more effect. Fox proved willing, and by the end of the month Grenville and Fox had agreed on two fundamental points. The first was that it was necessary to have Addington dismissed, and the second was that a new ministry should include all the greatest political weight and talents in the country.¹ This really meant little more than that when Pitt formed the new ministry he should include the friends of both Grenville and Fox. When Grenville stated that the new ministry should not be based on a principle of exclusion, he meant that it should not exclude Fox but that it should exclude all of the Addingtonians. For he refused to acknowledge that any of Addington's colleagues had any redeeming attributes.

This strange marriage received a generally negative reaction. Cornwallis stated that, 'The present coalition appears to me to be full as profligate as that of Fox and Lord North, without holding out a prospect of the same benefit to the country.'² The government on the other hand was more surprised than alarmed. For Fox and Grenville were both unpopular and unlikely to gather a large following. Nevertheless, as Hobart acknowledged, 'although the arrangement does not appear a good one for forming an administration, it seems admirably calculated for annoying his Majesty's present ministers'.³ However, few were as distressed by the coalition as Pitt. On a personal level he was shocked that his cousin and colleague would form a junction with his greatest adversary. On a practical level, the coalition threatened his political plans, because he feared that Grenville's action would appear as though he were trying to force a new ministry upon the King, who would certainly respond with determined resistance. This

¹Fox to Grey 29 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS 47565, fo. 114.

²Cornwallis to Ross, 13 Feb. 1804, Cornwallis Correspondence, iii. 510-11.

³Hobart to Auckland, 30 Jan. 1804, Auckland Correspondence, iv. 189.

would render more difficult the formation of a new ministry, if Addington resigned, as the King would insist on excluding both Grenville and Fox. As they were unlikely to achieve very large divisions anyway, Pitt felt this action to be foolish and dangerous.¹

It was Pitt, however, who held the key to the future of British parliamentary politics, as he possessed a loyal following and the potential to sway many of the independent members in the Commons. If he entered Addington's ministry, it would easily withstand the combined assault of Grenville and Fox. On the other hand, if he had joined the opposition, Addington's majority would have been in serious danger. During the first year of Addington's ministry, Pitt had given the government solid support, but by the end of 1802 illness, which had kept Pitt away from London, had caused an estrangement between him and the Prime Minister. It was then that he admitted he was willing to resume office, but only under certain conditions, and thereafter he withdrew his support for the government and left his options open.

Pitt did not enter into systematic opposition but his withdrawal of support from the government persuaded Addington to try to bring him directly into the ministry. As mentioned a protracted series of negotiations lasting from January to April 1803 failed. For Pitt, who claimed that his only ambition was honour and public duty, wanted it to appear to the public that the King had called upon him as the only man who could save the country, and while Addington was prepared to resign his position, he was unwilling to admit publicly that his ministry was a failure. If Pitt had truly been concerned solely for the best interests of his country he would have accepted Addington's compromise, but instead he decided to hold out until he got his own way. In the meantime, he planned a parliamentary attack on the government which, owing to the poor impression it made in the Commons, has led Richard Pares to conclude

¹Pitt to Grenville, 4 Feb. 1804, Dropmore Papers, vii. 212-4.

that it was designed so as to attract the attention of the King and convince him of the incapacity of his ministers.¹

He made a small step towards outright opposition in June 1803 with an orchestrated attempt to demonstrate his own power. After assuring the government of his support,² he arranged for Colonel Patten to move a motion of censure upon the ministers, but before the vote was taken, Pitt moved the orders of the day, to 'save' the ministers without giving them a chance to defend themselves. He told Malmesbury that his intention was to 'evince to the public that ... he was at liberty to remove them if he pleased ...'.³ The scheme backfired, however, as the ministers opposed Pitt's motion with a vociferous debate and won the vote by a large majority. Subsequently, Pitt left the House and the ministry defeated Patten's motion by an even larger majority. Hawkesbury and Liverpool were completely baffled by Pitt's action. Hawkesbury thought the only reasonable explanation was that:

He has been worked upon by such of his personal Friends as are Enemies to the present Govt until his mind is compleatly [sic] unhinged--his Health has certainly suffered most seriously--he looks dreadfully & his Physician says that his nerves have been compleatly shook by a state of agitation & uncertainly in wh[ich] he has been kept.⁴

Liverpool believed that the whole affair had severely hurt Pitt's reputation.⁵ Nevertheless, it was clear that Pitt was separated from Addington. Years later Addington wrote, 'Mr Pitt's amendment on Patten's motion was an act of explicit hostility: it was universally

¹Richard Pares, King George III and the Politicians (London, 1957), pp. 136-7.

²Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 31 May 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 22.

³Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 264.

⁴Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 5 June 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 23.

⁵Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 7 June 1803, MS Loan 72/49, fo. 64.

so considered & from that time his opposition never relaxed whenever it could be shown.¹ At the time, Addington spoke truthfully when he said, 'I have not had a happy hour since the coolness arose between Mr P[itt] & me, & I would take sixty steps towards a reconciliation if I thought he would take one',² but Pitt refused to make that step.

In July Pitt's opposition to some clauses regarding the new income tax caused further friction between him and Addington, but the government majority remained unshaken until 1804.³ But over the next six months a newspaper and pamphlet war, led on one side by Canning, Rose, Long, and Tomline,⁴ and on the other by Hiley Addington virtually ruined any chance that Pitt and Addington would be reconciled. In September, Pitt refused to speak with Castlereagh, because he was a member of a government that had taken an injurious and offensive line towards him, and he rejected Castlereagh's assurances that Addington was not responsible for the pamphlets.⁵ Nevertheless, Pitt continued to hold back from outright opposition, probably over concern about his relationship with the King.

By January 1804, Pitt realized how ambiguous his position appeared and knew that he had to make his line clear. Yet, the whole crux of his problem was that he was completely undecided.⁶ He wanted Addington to resign but he did not want to be seen as actively having forced the resignation. His policy of supporting the

¹Lord Sidmouth's Notes, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/Z10.

²Quoted in Tomline to Mrs Tomline, 10 Jan. 1804, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/562/1.

³Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 16 July 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fos. 29-30; Eldon to Redesdale, 10 Oct. 1803, Redesdale Papers, D2002/C11.

⁴Tomline to Rose, 7 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 42773, fo. 27.

⁵Pitt to Castlereagh, 21 Sept. 1803 and Castlereagh to Pitt, 6 Oct. 1803, Dacres Adams Papers PRO 30/58/3/107 and 109.

⁶Pitt to Tomline, 7 Jan. 1804, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/42.

government in general, while hoping to weaken its majority by pointing out its mistakes was not working well. His attack on the government's volunteer system in late January did not have the effect that he had hoped, as the ministerial majority remained firm.¹ Nevertheless, he still refused to join Grenville and Fox in outright opposition, leaving Hobart to declare confidently, 'Neither Mr Fox's principles nor Lord Grenville's manners are popular; and Mr Pitt, standing aloof with a Catholic millstone about his neck will not be an object to attract a large body of political speculators.'²

The formation of the Grenville-Fox coalition was overshadowed in February by the King suffering another attack of porphyria. As had happened on the two previous occasions in 1788 and 1801, the government hoped that the King would recover soon, while the Prince of Wales planned for a Regency. Although the doctor's reports were promising, the Prince demanded to speak with both Addington and Pitt about new arrangements, and this caused a great deal of political uncertainty. The King did recover but there was concern about his ability to handle the normal load of government business, and everyone's political future remained uncertain. Soon after the King's recovery, on 5 March Eldon met with Pitt without informing Addington. Three weeks later they met again and Eldon informed Pitt that most of the Cabinet wished that he would resume office.³

It was at this point that Pitt finally decided to make a concerted attempt to force Addington's resignation so that he could assume office, for as late as 23 February he had told Chatham and Steele that he had no grounds for complaint against the ministers.⁴ This decision was largely influenced by the news that many of the

¹Morpeth to Holland, 22 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS 51577, fo. 35.

²Hobart to Auckland, 30 Jan. 1804, Auckland Correspondence, iv. 190-91.

³Diary of Alexander Hope, Hope of Luffness Muniments, GD 364/1/1154.

⁴Colchester Diary, i. 482.

ministers desired his return, but there were several other reasons. The uncertainty concerning the King's health and the relentless pressure from Canning, Rose, Grenville, and others also played important roles. Moreover, Pitt realized that his personal following had decreased during his period out of office, as some supporters had become committed to Addington and others to Grenville. If he stayed out of office much longer he might have lost all but his most devoted supporters.¹

By the beginning of January, the opposition had become more active, if not more effective. According to Malmesbury, party spirit ran high: 'The debates in the House of Commons grew more long, and more contested, and none of the measures of Government, for the volunteers, or indeed for any other purpose, were allowed to pass unnoticed or unopposed.'² The ministerial majority remained intact, but the government was persistently harassed by the opposition.

In February, Pitt told Malmesbury that 'he would never make the turning out of this Administration the object of his endeavours,' but from the middle of March he was conspiring with Melville to overthrow Addington.³ Pitt's plan consisted of two stages. The first was to organize a sustained parliamentary assault on all aspects of government policy. The second was to write directly to the King to explain his sentiments once he was fully recovered.⁴ Pitt began his assault on 15 March, with an comprehensive attack on St Vincent's naval policies and a call for government papers on the navy to be laid before the House, because he questioned 'whether the preparations which have been made by his Majesty's ministers, in the direction of naval affairs, have been commensurate to the magnitude

¹Ziegler, p. 210; Leveson Gower to his mother, 14 June 1803, Leveson Gower Correspondence, i. 423.

²Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 285.

³Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 288; Matheson, pp. 332-3.

⁴Pitt to Melville, 29 Mar. 1804, Secret Correspondence Connected with Mr. Pitt's Return to Office in 1804, ed. Earl Stanhope printed privately (London, 1852), pp. 13-4; Hope Diary, Hope of Luffness Muniments, GD 364/1/1154.

of the crisis in which we are placed'.¹ Liverpool later stated that Pitt did not disagree fundamentally with these or other policies of the government, but 'in order to destroy the ... Government pretended to do so'.² Consequently, he did not make a strong case against St Vincent.³ His assertions that the best mode of defence against invasion was by deploying small gun-boats in shallow waters were answered by Admiral Pellew, who ridiculed the 'mosquito fleet' and claimed that the close blockades of the French ports were in fact the best means of defence.⁴ Pitt was out-debated and out-voted, but the ministerial majority of seventy-one was forty to fifty votes lower than was expected by the government.⁵

Pitt then moved his attack onto Yorke's measures for home defence and the government's majority continued to decrease. This was not so much a result of the force of the arguments as from Pitt's parliamentary management. For Pitt and Melville worked hard gathering their supporters for votes in both Houses.⁶ On 29 March, Pitt ordered Melville to bring out the Scottish vote and by 4 April he wanted a statement of its strength.⁷ Pitt was also already planning the new ministry that he would form. At this point it was to exclude Addington and Fox, but Melville was negotiating a

¹Parliamentary Debates, i. 878.

²Liverpool to Hervey, 26 Dec. 1804, Hervey Papers, 941/56/8.

³Hardwicke to Yorke, 23 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 190-91.

⁴Parliamentary Debates, i. 891-3.

⁵Yorke to Hardwicke, 16 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 172-3; Glenbervie Diaries, i. 372-3.

⁶Melville was reluctant to get involved in hostile actions against the government but gave in to Pitt's wishes. Melville to Hope, 5 Apr. 1804, Dacres Adams Papers, PRO 30/58/5/9.

⁷Pitt to Melville, 29 Mar. 1804, Secret Correspondence, p. 16; Same to same, 4 Apr. 1804, Pitt Papers, John Rylands Library, Eng. MSS 907.

junction with Moira and the party of the Prince of Wales.¹ By the middle of April, Pitt realized that the government was taking serious alarm, and he organized his attacks to have the greatest effects in Parliament. On 18 April, he decided to delay his motion on the Army of Reserve Suspension Bill until more of his supporters had arrived in Westminster so his division would be larger.² Privately he predicted that the issue would be settled within two weeks.³

At this time Addington sent an overture to Pitt through Castlereagh to discuss the best means of carrying on the government. Addington offered to resign if Pitt would give him assurance that he was not committed to bringing Fox and Grenville into office. Pitt refused, however, to discuss the matter with anyone but the King.⁴ This overture convinced Pitt that the ministry was on the verge of resigning, so he took the opportunity to write a letter to the King. On 22 April, he presented the letter to Eldon, who promised to show it to no one but the King. Eldon did not deliver the letter until 27 April as he wished to wait until after the debates in the Commons of 23 and 25 April and the King had held his first council meeting since the onset of his latest illness.⁵

In the intervening period, the decrease in the government's majorities had convinced Addington to resign. Thus Pitt, Grenville, and Fox had finally succeeded in overthrowing the government. Although Grenville and Fox were the first to enter systematic opposition, the responsibility for building the opposition to the

¹Melville to Pitt, 3 and 6 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 40102, fos. 128-34.

²Pitt to Melville, 18 Apr. 1804, Secret Correspondence, p. 34.

³Pitt to Tomline, 13 Apr. 1804, Pretyman Papers, HA 119/T108/42.

⁴Bathurst's memorandum, May 1804, HMC Bathurst, pp. 34-5.

⁵Eldon to Pitt, 22 Apr. 1804, Chatham Papers, PRO 30/8/132/1.

point at which it could defeat the government belonged to Pitt. As Starhemberg pointed out, the resignation of the government was not 'en conséquence du vœu général de la Nation, mais uniquement d'un enthousiasme exagéré de quelques personnes marquantes en faveur de Mr Pitt, et du desir commun des individus de tous les partis, de se faire une chance d'obtenir une place quelconque'.¹ Once Pitt had finally decided to oppose Addington, he was able to arrange his own accession to office in a very short space of time. The key to his success lay in political management, a skill which he and Melville possessed, while Addington did not.

Addington and Political Management

The Addington ministry ought to have survived the parliamentary onslaught of Pitt, Grenville, and Fox. For Addington's parliamentary majorities had held up well throughout 1803, even when Pitt divided against the government on Patten's motion and the clauses of the income tax. Moreover, Addington possessed the complete confidence of the King. In fact, if the question had been left to George III alone, he would have kept Addington in office. Addington also remained popular in the country at large.² Nevertheless, between January and April 1804 the opposition was able to whittle away at Addington's majorities in both Houses of Parliament to the point at which he was not sure that the government would win the next vote.

Pitt's role in forcing Addington's resignation is not as straight forward as it seemed. If Addington's majority was based on supporters of Pitt who only continued to vote for the government as long as he suffered the ministers to remain in office, then why were

¹Starhemberg to Colloredo, 1 May 1804, HHSA, Staatskanzlei England Korrespondenz/145.

²Holland later claimed that Addington's resignation was premature, as he still retained a majority in Parliament and strong support in the country. Mary Anne Addington's Notes, Sidmouth Papers, Box 51, Public Office 2.

the latter's divisions so small until April 1804? Pitt's own personal following was much smaller than anyone expected and it was decreasing as time passed. Thus his merely deciding to oppose the government did not mean necessarily that a majority in Parliament would follow him. The reason that it was on the verge of doing just that was because Pitt was able to get out the vote better than Addington.

It is curious that the man with the confidence of the King, support in the country, and the powers of government patronage was unable to sustain his support in the face of the combination of two very unpopular leaders and a third whose political assets were declining. The problem, however, was political management. Addington was unable to use all of the advantages that he possessed to bind to his ministry enough of the right kinds of men. This only became apparent in March and April 1804, but the strange alignment of parties in Parliament obscured problems whose roots dated back to the formation of the ministry. At the beginning of 1801, Addington was not a competitor for office with a following of his own, but rather a close friend of Pitt. Finding himself in the unexpected position of forming a ministry he did not try to gather around him men who would be loyal solely to him, but instead he relied on the help of Pitt and the King to persuade the best men available to take office.¹ This was sensible at the time because without the help of Pitt and the King Addington probably would have been unable to find men to fill the offices. Nevertheless, those who were persuaded to accept had mixed loyalties, and the ministry lacked sufficient cohesion. This was not unusual for eighteenth century ministries on the whole, but combined with a series of other problems it helped to undermine Addington's government.

The lack of landed magnates was the most glaring omission in the original formation of Addington's ministry. Magnates were required for the parliamentary seats that they controlled but also for the aura of nobility that they gave to the ministry, the

¹See above, chapter 2, pp. 38-53.

importance of which is difficult to measure in terms of votes. Landed aristocrats expected to be represented in the government and were often suspicious of governments dominated by professional politicians. Many looked down upon Addington for his middle-class origins but would have been satisfied if his colleagues had enough breeding and acres to compensate, which unfortunately for Addington they did not. While Pitt had included several magnates in his first ministry, Portland and Westmorland were the only magnates in Addington's ministry, and the former controlled only a small number of seats considering his lineage and political experience. Moreover, many of the great Whig magnates were poorly disposed towards Portland for having joined Pitt in 1794, and Fitzwilliam in particular felt betrayed by him over the Irish issue of 1795. Therefore, on the whole the landed aristocracy did not look favourable on the ministry.

Addington did win over the support of a few minor magnates such as Viscount Falmouth and Lord De Dunstanville from Cornwall. In addition, Pelham was related to the Duke of Newcastle and controlled the votes of four or five in the Lords.¹ Nevertheless, these men could not match the patronage of Buckingham, Bedford, Fitzwilliam, Devonshire, Norfolk, Rutland, or Stafford. According to James Sack's calculations, Lonsdale controlled as many seats as Portland, Westmorland, and Newcastle combined.² Addington needed the security that control over pocket-boroughs would bring to the ministry. Moreover, he could not afford to have such parliamentary strength harnessed by the opposition. Initially, the strong parliamentary position of the ministry meant that the lack of magnates did not seem to matter, but in the long run it proved a serious handicap.

¹Hobart to Hawkesbury, 1 Oct 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B75.

²Lonsdale had nine, Newcastle seven, Portland and Westmorland one each. Of the others Rutland had eight and Stafford seven. James J. Sack, 'The House of Lords and Parliamentary Patronage in Great Britain, 1802-1832', Historical Journal, (1980), 931-7.

The peculiar conditions under which the ministry was formed meant that it lacked both magnates and men with strong administrative and parliamentary skills. Glenbervie had predicted that, if the ministry could weather the initial storm, then magnates and men of talent would seek shelter under it, but unfortunately for Addington this did not happen. A great weight of talents lay beyond government control and many were restless for office, but Addington was unable to recruit them. During the course of the ministry many opportunities arose, but Addington only took advantage of a few of them. The most successful one was to shuffle Dartmouth out of the Board of Control to bring in Castlereagh. Ryder's resignation as Treasurer of the Navy in September 1801 gave Addington an opportunity to bring in greater strength, but after Canning refused the office and Yorke preferred to remain at the War Office, Addington gave the post to Bragge who, although capable, did not help to fill the ministry's void of acres or talents. Addington did consider adding Tierney, Grey, or Moira to the ministry, but he would not consent to the concessions that Grey and Moira demanded. For Addington desired only to strengthen the ministry not to reconstruct it. These Whigs certainly possessed some of the talents he required, but the political problems which they would have caused outweighed their advantages.

The signing of the definitive treaty of peace and the repeal of the income tax gave Addington a great opportunity to bring in added strength to the ministry. According to Ziegler, his popularity in the country was extremely high, and there appeared little prospect that his ministry would fall in the near future.¹ Nevertheless, Addington probably derived a false sense of security during his short lived halcyon days that could have persuaded him that the ministry required no alterations, as he did not look for added strength again until relations with France reached a crisis.

That Addington went straight to Pitt for help seems to indicate that he realized that the renewal of war would place a greater

¹Ziegler, p. 161.

strain on his ministry.¹ The nature of their negotiations suggests that he hoped to reconstruct the ministry by bringing in Pitt and Melville rather than merely handing power back to Pitt and Grenville. Pitt, however, appeared to sense Addington's weakness and he demanded complete control over the formation of a new ministry. While Pitt's unreasonable response eliminated that option, Addington still possessed several others. For he had the plum offices of Home Secretary and First Lord of the Admiralty at his disposal. In March 1803, St Vincent offered to resign on the grounds of ill health.² There was also speculation that he was on poor terms with Addington and that he had grown weary of the struggle caused by his naval reforms. Addington had also decided to get rid of Pelham. The Home Secretary had always been a troublesome colleague,³ as demonstrated by the difficulty of getting him into the ministry in the first place. In the Cabinet, he often opposed the ministry's foreign policy and tried to resist Addington's attempts to redistribute some of the responsibilities of the Home Office. He was also constantly fighting with Hardwicke over Irish affairs to the point at which the latter was ready to resign. He had been appointed in the first place based on his administrative and parliamentary experience, as well as for his friendship with the Royal family, but he proved a bitter disappointment in debate and managing government supporters in the Lords. In the end, Addington realized that Hardwicke was more valuable than Pelham and decided to demote the latter.⁴

It is probable that the reason Addington did not make these changes earlier is because he wished to use the offices as

¹See above, chapter 6, pp. 196-204.

²St Vincent to Addington, 30 Mar. 1803, Add. MSS 31169, fo. 134.

³Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 1 Nov. 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 33; Redesdale to Perceval, 23 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 49188, fo. 110.

⁴Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 31 May 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 21; Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 May 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 195-6.

bargaining counters in his negotiations with Pitt. It would have been foolish to appoint new ministers only to sack them shortly thereafter as part of an arrangement to bring in Pitt and Melville. There were several rumours spread that Melville was to take the Admiralty whether Pitt came in or not, and indeed it appears that Addington may have made him such an offer.¹ Regardless, it was clear that Addington intended to shuffled out Pelham and St Vincent.²

Once Addington had given up hope that Pitt would join the ministry he turned towards his other options. On 31 May, he appointed Tierney as Treasurer of the Navy.³ For he hoped that Tierney could take over the debating responsibilities of Hawkesbury, whom he had decided to promote to the Lords to take over the leadership from Pelham. Liverpool thought this was a bad move because he believed that Hawkesbury was much more valuable in the Commons.⁴ The truth was that Hawkesbury was not as great a debater as Liverpool and Addington thought he was, but regardless, Addington had to face the prospect of Hawkesbury moving to the Lords anyway upon the death of Liverpool which was expected very soon, and Addington preferred to make the transfer of responsibilities in the Lords and Commons on his own timetable. Moreover, Eldon and Hobart were having trouble handling Grenville in the Lords, and the Chancellor had requested Hawkesbury's assistance.⁵

¹Pelham to Addington, 14 Apr. 1803, Add. MSS 33111, fos. 162-3.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 30 May 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 195-6.

³Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 31 May 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 21.

⁴Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38236, fos. 258-61.

⁵Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38571, fo. 38; Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 31 May 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 21; A. S. Turberville, The House of Lords in the Age of Reform, 1784-1837 (London, 1958), p. 132.

Addington was able to shuffle Pelham out of the Home Office by granting him the Duchy of Lancaster, which had belonged to Liverpool. It was important to keep Pelham happy, according to Hobart:

As a minor point for consideration you must expect, if nothing should be done, to see him driven into opposition--with four or five noble Lords in his suite--which in addition to the Grenville & Pitt Party in the House of Lords, & those who may be induced to speculate upon their strength may be productive of inconvenience.¹

The whole episode worked out poorly as Liverpool was disappointed and Pelham was piqued because Addington refused to give him the Duchy for life.

Addington promoted Yorke to the Home Office and Bragge to the latter's place as Secretary at War. Yorke accepted very reluctantly after Addington insisted that he was the best man for the job.² Yorke told Hardwicke that 'Addington has got rid of a tolerable Secretary at War, to make a very indifferent Secretary of State.'³ Addington chose him because his experience in the War Office made it easier for him to handle the difficult responsibilities of home defence and his relationship with Hardwicke would better facilitate the running of Irish affairs. He soon regretted the move, however, and pointed out that Addington should have used the office to bring in greater strength to the ministry, rather than mere shuffling the existing ministers around.⁴ He told Addington 'you ought to endeavour to strengthen your Government on some more efficacious

¹Hobart to Hawkesbury, 1 Oct. 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B75.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 5 May 1803, Add. MSS 38702, fos. 185-8; Addington to Yorke, 17 Aug. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ335.

³Yorke to Hardwicke, 12 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 326-7.

⁴Yorke to Hardwicke, 5 May and 18 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 185-8, 339-40.

[sic] & comprehensive Plan'.¹ Yorke was right. Addington placed unreasonable expectations on the advantages to be gained by Tierney's accession and should have used the Home Office to attract greater talent. Especially as, in the words of Tierney, there was a 'vast weight of Talents over which Ministers have no control'.² Upon hearing that Pelham was to leave the Home Office, Liverpool expected that his replacement would be Melville or Moira.³ While, it is doubtful whether there were any men of talent who would have been willing to take the office,⁴ Addington should still have made a greater effort to obtain some added strength.

Addington and Tierney tried to persuade Sheridan and Erskine to join the ministry. Both had continued to support Addington after the renewal of the war, and consequently Addington did offer the post of Attorney-General to Erskine and that of Secretary at War to Sheridan.⁵ Fox got wind of these negotiations, however, and convinced the Prince of Wales to prevent this junction with Addington.⁶ While the Prince initially had been well disposed towards Addington, after July 1803, he resented the Prime Minister for failing to persuade the King to grant him a military commission.⁷ The Prince thus held a grudge against Addington, and

¹Yorke to Addington, 17 Aug. 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1803/OZ334.

²Tierney to Lady Holland, 26 Dec. 1802, Add. MSS 51585, fo. 24.

³Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38236, fo. 261.

⁴Ziegler, pp. 203-4.

⁵Petty to Holland, 6 June 1803, Add. MSS 51686, fo. 16-7; Diary of Joseph Farington, ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (16 vols, London, 1979), vi. 2048; Thomas Moore, Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, (London, 1825), pp. 606-7.

⁶Bathurst's memorandum, May 1804, HMC Bathurst, pp. 40-41.

⁷The correspondence between the prince and Addington on this issue is in Add. MSS 46750, fos. 55-63.

his decision to withdraw support from the ministry in April 1804 was an important contribution to Addington's resignation.

It is also quite puzzling why Addington never promoted Castlereagh further. Hawkesbury and others claimed that Castlereagh was to replace St Vincent at the Admiralty, but in the end it never came about.¹ Addington certainly thought highly of Castlereagh and planned to make him his right-hand man in the Commons, so it is curious that he never granted him higher office.² He would have been an excellent candidate for the Home Office, but his sentiments on Catholic Emancipation would have made him disagreeable to the King. Had Castlereagh been appointed to the Admiralty he might have resolved many of the problems created by St Vincent and rendered the subject of the navy more difficult for the opposition to use to bait the government. The only explanation for his remaining at the Board of Control was that Wellesley and Melville were so pleased with him. Nevertheless, the office of President of the Board of Control was less important than the Admiralty or the Home Office, and the ministry would have benefitted from placing a man of the calibre of Castlereagh at either.

While Addington squandered opportunities to obtain added strength for the ministry, he also had trouble managing the existing ministers. The most important reason for this was the problem of conflicting loyalties. The inability of St Vincent and Pelham to get along with the rest of the ministry has already been mentioned.³ This stemmed largely from their political independence. St Vincent was independent but had close personal ties with some of the Foxite Whigs, while Pelham's attachment was to the Royal Family. Consequently, their opinions on policy often conflicted with the rest of the Cabinet to the point at which they both considered

¹Hawkesbury to Liverpool, 31 May 1803, MS Loan 72/55, fo. 21; Yorke to Hardwicke, 14 June 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 203-6; Colchester Diary, i. 424.

²Mary Anne Addington's Notes, Sidmouth Papers, Box 51, Public Office 2.

³See above, chapter 2, pp. 43-5, 48-9.

resigning. This lack of cohesion in the ministry hampered its ability to withstand the parliamentary onslaught of 1804.

That the rest of the ministers were followers of Pitt also caused Addington trouble.¹ This meant that the first loyalty of most of them was toward Pitt not Addington. Many had only taken office at the insistence of Pitt and on the condition that he would continue to support the ministry. When political distance opened between Pitt and Addington, several lost faith in the ability of the ministry to continue. As early as November 1802, Eldon desired changes to the administration, the most important of which was that Pitt should return to its head.² Portland and the Duke of York also admitted that they preferred the old ministry.³ By the spring of 1803, there was a consensus among the ministers, including Addington, that they wished Pitt would return to his old office. The failure of the series of negotiations between Pitt and Addington, even led Hobart and Yorke to consider resigning although Eldon persuaded them not to.⁴

Yorke painted an extremely bleak picture of the ministry in his correspondence with Hardwicke between 1803 and 1804. It is wrong to assume, however, that all the ministers were as despondent. For Addington, Hawkesbury, and Hobart spoke more positively of the ministry's prospects until close to the end. Nevertheless, Yorke's opinions were illustrative of some of the important problems the ministry faced. His main concerns stemmed from a strong belief in his own inadequacy for the offices which he held. Claiming to be `a

¹Portland was not a follower of Pitt but after 1794 had become closely allied with Pitt and his political descendants.

²Hardwicke to Yorke, 15 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 48-9.

³Portland to Crewe, 4 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS 37845, fos. 102; Malmesbury Diaries, iv. 255.

⁴Eldon to Hobart, 12 May 1803, Hobart Papers, D/MH/H/War/B65.

Tenant by sufferance',¹ he had joined the ministry very reluctantly in the first place and knew that he had neither the talent nor inclination to run the affairs of the Home Office. He could hardly have a good impression of a ministry in which he was convinced that one of the most important members was insufficiently qualified for his office. Nor did he have much confidence in many of his colleagues. For he claimed that only Castlereagh, Hobart, and Hawkesbury were suited for office.² Yorke also persistently complained of the unbearable burden caused by the volunteer controversy and of the inability of the ministry to face up to the hostile opposition. He considered resigning on several occasions, but relented because that would only have weakened the ministry further. He also conspired with other members of the administration about pressing Addington to give way to Pitt, but in the end he realized that the Prime Minister had already gone as far as he could to accommodate Pitt.³ Yorke summed up the dilemma by describing his distress at

the present extremely embarrassing & awkward situations in which the Government and the Publick affairs are placed, which in my conscience, I believe, neither can or ought to go on as they are; it is utterly impossible--at the same time, where is the Remedy, & what sort of a prospect have we before us? It makes me sick to think of it ...⁴

In many ways, the ministry had lost faith in its own ability to govern.⁵

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 14 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 35393, fo. 141.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 2 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 281-4.

³Yorke to Hardwicke, 17 Apr. 1803, Add. MSS 35702, fos. 169-74; Same to same, 21 Oct. and 2 Nov. 1803, Add. MSS 35393, fos. 144-8; Colchester Diary, i. 417.

⁴Yorke to Hardwicke, 11 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 35393, fos. 156-9.

⁵Ziegler, p. 205.

Hawkesbury and Liverpool were two of Addington's most loyal supporters, and both were more optimistic than Yorke about the prospects of the ministry and harshly criticized Pitt for his opposition. Nevertheless, they did not possess a high opinion of Addington's leadership qualities. In fact, Liverpool claimed that Hawkesbury was the de facto leader of the ministry. In June 1803, he told his son, 'you are therefore in fact the principal Ornament and Support of the present Government; and Mr Addington is in Truth little more than an Instrument supported by you; If you withdraw Your support & Countenance, He would fall at once'.¹ Liverpool therefore felt that his son should be treated as at least Addington's equal, 'In short you should be on the same Footing with respect to Mr Addington, that the late L[or]d Chatham was to the Duke of Newcastle.'² Consequently, Liverpool opposed Hawkesbury's elevation to the Lords, as it would hamper his chances of becoming Prime Minister, which, considering Pitt's illness and Addington's deficiencies, he believed to be a likely prospect.

Therefore, one of Addington most serious deficiencies as Prime Minister was his inability to win the complete loyalty, confidence, and respect of his colleagues. For a ministry to survive periods of crisis, it required a belief in itself and its leader. Addington's ministry was plagued by self-doubt and a general belief that the best man to lead the government was Pitt and not Addington. Only strong leadership could have overcome these problems, and Addington failed to demonstrate that leadership. In many ways the fall of the ministry was as much a result of internal collapse as the decline of its support in Parliament.

Addington's failure to develop a strong and cohesive ministry was mirrored by his difficulty in managing the lesser forms of patronage at his disposal. Previous Prime Ministers had won the

¹Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 1 June 1803, Add. MSS 38336, fo. 258.

²Liverpool to Hawkesbury, 7 June 1803, MS Loan 72/49, fo. 66.

support of influential men by granting them government offices to give them a stake in the ministry's political survival, and purged offices of all the leader's political enemies. But Addington, who was on the whole a good student of parliamentary history, neglected these considerations. When filling government offices, the effects on the parliamentary strength of the ministry were not his first considerations. His reasons for making appointments varied. Sometimes he appointed the man he believed most suitable for the job, while on other occasions, he selected the candidate most agreeable to the King or someone else in the ministry. He also appointed his own personal friends and members of his family, for which he was severely criticized. All these reasons were sensible in themselves, but the bottom line was that Addington often squandered opportunities to strengthen his ministry further.

Addington also failed to maintain control of government patronage in his own hands. Achieving a proper balance of power between ministers was difficult in any circumstances, as Prime Ministers ran the risk of alienating their colleagues, who had often accepted office for the patronage it entailed. Nevertheless, Addington let too much control slip out of his hands. He granted virtually unlimited control of naval patronage to St Vincent, as one of the conditions under which the latter agreed to take office. Addington's only apparent interference was in refusing St Vincent's request to appoint Benjamin Tucker as the senior Secretary of the Admiralty to replace Evan Nepean, whom Addington had appointed to fill Wickham's office as Chief Secretary in Ireland.¹ He also left control of the Foreign Office in Hawkesbury's hands. This proved to have been a mistake on at least one occasion, as Hawkesbury appointed Charles Arbuthnot to replace Hervey as under-secretary, not knowing that Arbuthnot held the ministry in utter contempt. In

¹St Vincent to Addington, 10 and 18 Jan. 1804, and Addington to Yorke, 5 Jan. 1804, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/ON26, ON28, and OI2 .

addition, the distribution of minor offices Addington appears to have left to his brother Hiley and Charles Bragge.¹

Addington did retain control of several areas of government patronage, but even then he did not always exercise that control judiciously. He managed appointments to the Church jointly with the King. George III usually deferred to Addington's suggestions, but the Prime Minister took the King's proclivities into consideration beforehand. Addington also played a large role in Irish patronage. He made all the appointments which were directly under the control of the British government, such as Lord Lieutenant, Chief Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Chancellor, but also had a say in those under the control of the Irish government. While Hardwicke and Pelham fought for control of the Irish appointments, Addington usually supported the former. Moreover, his first principle was to honour all promises made to ensure the passage of the Act of Union.² Again, this decreased the scope for building support loyal to the new ministry, but he was fortunate that the Irish MPs decided to support the ministry anyway.³

Addington's management of the other offices at his disposal often showed a lack of judgement. Granting the Clerkship of the Pells to his son was a mistake but not so much because it smacked of corruption. For he had offered the sinecure first to Pitt and Steele who had both refused, and Pitt had approved of giving it to Harry.⁴ It was common for ministers to arrange for sinecures for members of their immediate family, as their salaries were

¹Bragge's existing correspondence for this period is predominantly concerned with applications for office. Bragge-Bathurst Papers, D421/C19.

²Hardwicke to Addington, 7 Sept. 1801, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1801/OI10.

³Rose claimed that two-thirds of the Irish MPs would support Addington. Rose to Pitt, 7 May 1804, Add. MSS 42772, fo. 196.

⁴Pitt to Addington, 29 July 1802, and Addington to Hiley Addington, 27 July 1803, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/OZ180 and F6.

insufficient to sustain them in the style of life required by their office. Nevertheless, the Clerkship was a coveted prize that should have been used to attract further support for the ministry. Addington also seriously mismanaged the offices of Joint Paymaster of the Forces and Surveyor of the Royal Woods and Forests. In first forming his administration Addington sought to include Glenbervie, but he refused several times to take the Board of Control and only agreed in the end to accept the Joint Paymastership. A year later, Hiley, who was dissatisfied with the office of Secretary of the Treasury, pressed his brother to give him something better. He was looking for a Cabinet office but Addington was able to silence him with the Joint Paymastership because it came with a house.¹ To facilitate this move, however, he had to shuffle Glenbervie over to Surveyor of the Woods. But although this entailed an increase in salary, Glenbervie was very unhappy because the new office was merely a sinecure, while he preferred a more efficient office and regretted the loss of the house. Therefore, Addington lost considerable good will from Glenbervie without completely pleasing Hiley. While this affair did not cost him anything in terms of votes, it was symptomatic of his inability to manage the distribution of offices.

Addington also alienated some of the support of the East India Company interest. The ministry was caught in the middle of a struggle between the Court of Directors and Wellesley. For Wellesley's plans for opening the Indian trade to private shipping and establishing a college at Calcutta to train company bureaucrats provoked strong opposition at the Court. Addington and Castlereagh had difficulty playing the role of mediators. Although they were able to persuade Wellesley to withdraw his resignation, fear of offending the Court prevented them from giving him wholehearted support. In the end, however, they were able to satisfy Wellesley but not the Court. As a result, Addington was deserted in the

¹Addington to Hiley Addington, 24 Dec. 1802, Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1802/F3.

Commons by twenty-three East India members. This left the ministry with the support of only thirteen by April 1804, while the opposition had increased its total to at least fifty-six.¹

The election of 1802 has already been discussed,² but it is important to reiterate in this context how carelessly it was managed. Although Addington could not have known at the time, his failure to secure greater support for the government cost him dearly in the parliamentary crunch of March and April 1804. Instead of taking control of the management of elections in the interest of the government, Addington remained almost aloof, allowing Rose and Dundas to secure control of many seats,³ which were turned against the government in the end. At the time, of course, Addington mistook Dundas and Rose for allies and believed that Pitt's closest friends would continue to support the ministry. An astute politician would have seen the rift that was growing and would have prepared for the possibility that Pitt and his allies would change sides, no matter how unlikely this appeared. Addington, however, was not an astute politician. He was naive to believe that pledges and political friendships would always be honoured. Hardwicke stated that Addington's greatest fault was his fear of giving offence.⁴ In this way, he helped to sow the seeds of his own ministry's destruction.

Addington not only failed to get out the vote at election time but also during crucial divisions in Parliament, because the ministry did a poor job of whipping. The problem was not so much winning over the support of the undecided or members of the opposition as merely retaining the votes of traditional government supporters. In describing the division on Pitt's motion against St Vincent on 15 March, Yorke noted that about fifty `of our Friends

¹Philips, pp. 112-141.

²See above, chapter 3, pp. 157-61.

³Hardwicke to Yorke, 30 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 298-301.

⁴Hardwicke to Yorke, 11 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS 35703, fos. 253-60.

went away and would not vote.¹ Yorke also admitted that the government did not do a good job of whipping for the division on 17 April.² While Pitt and Melville had been organizing their support since the end of March, the government did not begin to canvass for votes until a few days before the important divisions. Hawkesbury's carelessness actually led to a defeat of the government in the Lords on a minor motion in April. The government finally made a concerted effort to rally its support for the vote on Stafford's motion on the defence of the country scheduled for 30 April, but by then it was too late. Addington realized that at best the government could hope for a majority of ten. Spencer's detailed lists of peers who would have voted for and against the motion projected for the government a majority of thirteen.³ To illustrate how bad things had become for the ministry, Spencer expected that even Hobart's father would vote for the motion.

Addington's failure to act earlier meant that the opposition to the government began to gather a momentum of its own. The strong division against Pitt on Patten's motion in June 1803 helped to keep the government's majority solid for several months. The government failed to ensure equally strong divisions, however, once Pitt decided to enter systematic opposition in March 1804. This probably led many to speculate that the political tide was turning away from Addington and toward Pitt. Those who were politically ambitious

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 16 Mar. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 172-3. There is no direct evidence to determine why such a large number of members who had previously supported the government stayed away on this occasion and then later joined Pitt in opposition. However, it is probable that the combination of the illness of the King and Pitt's finally moving into open opposition seemed to indicate to many members that a change in the government was imminent, and it would have been better for their political careers to be seen to have been supporting the side that was going in rather than the one that was going out.

²Yorke to Hardwicke, 17 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 244-5.

³Althorp Papers, G57.

wished to support the man who was likely to be in office in the near future. As more gambled that this would be Pitt, the trend shifted more strongly in his favour which in turn brought over even more supporters. Thus as Addington's ship appeared to be sinking many jumped overboard.

The strength of the opposition increased dramatically during the month after Pitt declared open hostility to the government. Superior organization and the general expectation that Pitt was about to replace Addington enabled the opposition to undermine the previously strong government majority. Just prior to the decisive divisions, the Prince of Wales pressed Sheridan and Erskine to withdraw their support from Addington. Thereafter, in a division in the Commons on 23 April, the government majority dropped to fifty-two and Yorke declared that the game was up.¹ Two days later the majority dropped to thirty-nine. On 26 April without consulting his colleagues Addington went to the King and informed him of the necessity of resigning.² Michael McCahill, citing the delay between the division on 25 April and the Cabinet meeting on 29 April, argues that Addington did not decide to resign until he had realized how close the vote in the Lords on Stafford's motion was likely to be.³ While McCahill is correct to emphasize that the divisions in the Lords were just as important as those in the Commons, it is unlikely that Addington would have remained in office, even if the government's prospects for Stafford's motion had been better. For the divisions in the Commons were conclusive. The King tried to persuade Addington not to resign, offering to dissolve Parliament and call new election, but Addington refused. Addington then asked the King to consult Eldon about approaching Pitt to form a new

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 24 Apr. 1804, Add. MSS 35705, fos. 268-9.

²Pellew, ii. 279; Memorandum on the Change of Government, Melville Castle Muniments, GD 51/1/76.

³Michael McCahill, 'The House of Lords and the Collapse of Henry Addington's Administration', Parliamentary History, vi (1987), 69-94.

ministry, unaware that Eldon had already been discussing this with Pitt for almost two months. Eldon showed the King Pitt's letter on 27 April, and two days later Addington met his Cabinet and declared his intention to resign. The delay between his telling the King and his colleagues was probably intended to give the King a chance to speak with Eldon and to give Addington time to regain his composure.¹ On 30 April, Hawkesbury asked that Stafford's motion be postponed owing to some important new developments, which everyone understood to mean that the ministry was to resign. A few hours later, in the Commons Fox asked Addington if this were so, which he affirmed. The House then broke up amidst somber silence.² There was no triumphal roar from the opposition. For it was if they realized that they should not have been proud of what they had done.

The collapse of the Addington ministry was the result of the combination of two factors. The first was the decision of Pitt, Grenville, and Fox to storm the closet. For various personal and political reasons, Pitt abandoned his support for the King's prerogative and forced himself upon George III. He had hoped that the King would have asked him to form a ministry earlier, as he did not wish to appear to be grasping at power. Nevertheless, by March 1804, he had become impatient and decided to force Addington's resignation, leaving himself as the only suitable successor. He chose to attack the government on its defence policies, probably not so much because he really believed them misguided, but because he believed that issues of national security were more likely to grab parliamentary attention.

The Addington ministry should have been able to parry these attacks and weather the political storm. For despite the problem of arming the volunteers and a deficiency in the army of reserve, the war policies of the ministry had been as successful as could have

¹Addington appeared emotionally unstable for a few days. Glenbervie Diaries, i. 390.

²Colchester Diary, i. 500-01.

been expected in the circumstances. The reason that the ministry was unable to withstand the political pressure was that it was collapsing from within because the ministers lacked sufficient self-confidence to continue. Yorke, Eldon, and Hobart had been expecting the ministry to collapse for more than a year, and most of the ministers openly declared that they preferred Pitt as Prime Minister. Eldon had even been conspiring with Pitt to overturn the ministry, causing St Vincent to describe the Pitt's return to office as 'the enemy having a friend in the citadel, who opened the gates to him'.¹ In addition, Liverpool was virtually pressing Hawkesbury to take the reins of power away from Addington. The Prime Minister was thus unable to manage the different personalities in the Cabinet and win their absolute loyalty. Nevertheless, his greatest failing was his unwillingness to implement the methods necessary to secure solid support in Parliament. For he refused to fight other politicians on their own terms with weapons traditionally implemented by government. If the only way he could remain in office was to provoke an election and engage Pitt in a bitter fight for control of seats, then he did not wish to remain in office. His failure was a failure of political will: he had no stomach for a political fight and lacked the ambition to remain Prime Minister. He could face tough policy decisions, but he could not face the personal acrimony and underhandedness involved in a prolonged parliamentary struggle.

Holland and others thought that Addington resigned to prevent the King from being forced to accept a ministry against his will and to prevent the political crisis from causing a relapse in the King's health.² Addington himself told Abbot that the King dreaded the prospect of a defeat in Parliament as a forerunner to a Regency, and thus he had resigned for the same reason that he had taken office, for the sake of the King's mind.³ The King was still forced to take

¹Campbell, ix, 245.

²Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, i. 191.

³Colchester Diary, i. 498 and 501.

Pitt against his will, but it is likely that, had Addington hung on longer, Pitt would have become more committed to including Fox in his ministry.

Yet there was more to Addington's decision than mere concern for the King. For it seems evident that Addington no longer wished to be Prime Minister. For his last few weeks in office were miserable.¹ Pitt had long been Addington's most valued friend, and the loss of that friendship was probably more devastating than the political attacks on his ministry. He had never wanted office in the first place, and he resented being used as a tool, being pushed in and pulled out of office according to Pitt's whim. Leaving office was actually a great relief to Addington, even though the process was humiliating and left considerable personal ill-will on both sides. Therefore, the most valid criticisms of Henry Addington as Prime Minister centre on his lack of political determination. Strong personal ambition was necessary for successful leadership of the government, and Addington did not possess that quality. He was not willing to pay the price to remain in office when the situation in Parliament became tough. If he had remained steadfast and utilized all the weapons at his disposal, his ministry might have survived. Pitt in 1784 and Perceval in 1810 remained firm in the face of repeated parliamentary defeats, eventually winning over sufficient support to sustain their ministries. Addington, however, lacked such mettle. Consequently, when many contemporaries complained that Addington was ill-suited for the office of Prime Minister, they were probably right, but for the wrong reason.

¹Looking back on the year, Addington described it as 'gloomy in almost all respects & to me the most painful of my life'. Sidmouth to Bond, 1 Jan. 1805, Bond Papers, D367/C24.

Conclusion

The Legacy of the Addington Ministry

'Very much that has passed in the course of the last two years has been sufficient to excite disgust and distaste for a political life, especially in the breasts of those, who love moral occupations & quiet, and are content with domestic Enjoyments. To such, the intrigues of faction, the perfidity of false Friends, the bare faced prostitution of public character, and (perhaps I may add) the caprice of Kings, cannot fail to produce an indisposition to be any longer exposed to or to redress them.'

Hiley Addington¹

The reason many of its contemporaries and historians later have called the Addington ministry weak and inefficient is because they have looked at it from a very narrow perspective. Their first step was to compare it with its immediate predecessor, and measured against Pitt's ministry, Addington's appeared inexperienced, less prestigious, and weaker in debating talent. Yet only Ziegler has bothered to ask why this was the case and to suggest that these problems were largely unavoidable. In evaluating the performance of the ministry on its own, most other historians have placed the greatest emphasis on the Treaty of Amiens, which was the most important development during Addington's term in office. Those who argued that the signing of the treaty was a mistake based their conclusions on the short duration of the peace and on the terms, which were much more favourable to the French. This appeared to prove that the ministry was incapable of managing foreign affairs and that, once the war resumed, the continuation of the ministry posed a threat to the security of the country.

Presented in this narrow perspective the argument was convincing. Nevertheless, this view ignored the much wider context in which parliamentary politics and government policy operated.

¹Hiley Addington to Bond, 15 Dec. 1805, Bond Papers, D367/C25.

Social and economic questions played an important role during this period. Pitt's resignation was caused by more than his disagreement with the King over Catholic emancipation, for his physical and mental health had suffered considerably under the strains of managing the government during a severe crisis. The consequences of the long and unsuccessful war culminated in economic distress and dangerous levels of social unrest owing to the high price of grain. Pitt resigned in part because he was physically and mentally too weak to guide his strongly divided Cabinet through the crisis. Even the question of Catholic emancipation was directly related to both the war and social unrest. Pitt supported emancipation as a means of pacifying Ireland, which was a strategic liability to Britain and a severe drain on British troops. In fact, he did not begin seriously to consider emancipation until after the Irish Rebellion of 1798 had demonstrated the dangers that disaffected Irish posed to the British government.

Therefore, in 1801 Pitt for all his talents was temporarily a broken reed, as were his closest adherents within his ministry who had decided to resign with him. When Addington was persuaded against his own inclination to take office, he had to form a new ministry without the most talented and experienced candidates. Thus comparisons were unavoidable and Addington's men could never measure up, but there was nothing he could have done, because he had had to form a ministry from second-rate candidates.

On the whole, however, these ministers did a remarkably good job. For rarely had a ministry come into office during such a serious crisis. Pitt, who had governed the country for seventeen years, had proved unable to manage it. Thus the new government faced a series of very difficult decisions. Although Addington did not wish to capitulate to the French and he would have preferred to continue the war rather than accept peace terms which were clearly favourable to France, he simply could not ignore the social and economic crises that the government faced. Despite the denials of the disciples of Adam Smith, the war had played an important role in causing the dramatic increase in the price of bread. In many ways the war was responsible for the alarming levels of social unrest, and it was

clear that the only way to end the unrest was to end the war. In addition, the war had almost ruined the government finances. While British commerce had expanded greatly during the first years of the war, by 1801 the French had virtually severed British trade with the Continent. Several industries were severely hurt by the loss of external markets, while the high price of grain caused the collapse of many internal markets. Moreover, the government was accumulating a massive debt by borrowing to pay for the war, while the economy was under a severe strain. This restricted money markets causing a rise in interest rates. Consequently, continuing the war would have forced the government to borrow more money on very disadvantageous terms. Peace was clearly the only means of alleviating these strains.

The course of the negotiations with the French, however, made the government's decisions more difficult. For it was evident from Hawkesbury's discussions with Otto and Cornwallis's with Joseph Bonaparte that the French were determined to maintain a firm line. Consequently, if the British desired peace, they had to make considerable sacrifices. Addington and Hawkesbury might have wished to remain firm but they could not afford to cause a rupture in the negotiations, and every time the negotiations stalled the social and economic pressures upon the government forced the British to make further concessions. The whole experience was extremely frustrating for Addington and Hawkesbury, and they shared many sentiments with the critics of the peace. Nevertheless, the government had other important responsibilities besides foreign affairs, and when there were conflicting interests the ministers had to choose the line of policy that was in the best interests of the country as a whole. Addington concluded that the benefits of peace at that time were more important than whether the Britain retained French and Dutch colonies. Pitt, the majority in Parliament, and what was perceivable of public opinion, seemed to agree.

The peace appeared popular throughout the country, although many prominent politicians were dissatisfied with the terms. Most important for Addington, the peace enabled him to reform the government finances. Cuts in expenditure and a drop in interest

rates, as a result of the end of the war, allowed him to repeal the income tax which had become very unpopular. Tax cuts, a revival in British trade, and a fall in the price of grain led to a great decrease in social tension. Thus Addington had alleviated both the internal and external crises that plagued the government when he took office. Nevertheless, foreign policy interests interfered with Addington's domestic policies, because the long and complex negotiations of the peace preliminaries and the disappointment at the course of the peace congress demonstrated that the peace would remain precarious. Consequently, Addington decided to sustain unusually large military establishments in the event that war would be renewed, but this prevented him from cutting as much expenditure as he desired and required that he leave some of the war taxes in place. Therefore, Addington was unable to obtain the full benefits of the peace. At best he struck a balance between measures necessary to alleviate social tension and being prepared for a renewal of war.

Having removed the consequences of the war as a source of social tension and having allowed Pitt's repressive legislation to lapse, Addington had helped to heal the social wounds, as social unrest and radical agitation subsided considerably. His financial reforms also contributed to the revival of the economy. Consequently, by 1803 the two major factors which had hampered Britain's war effort in 1801 were removed. This gave the government the option of resorting to war, if the French refused to compromise on issues of future conflict. Addington hoped to preserve the peace but was unwilling to make any further substantial concessions to the French, and so when Bonaparte continued to pursue an aggressive policy during the peace and refused to accommodate the British on the issue of Malta, Addington resorted to war.

The war that began in 1803 was at first rather more popular than the one that ended in 1801, and this was largely a result of the threat that the French would invade England. The large numbers who enlisted in the volunteers seemed to indicate that many who opposed foreign wars were willing to defend their own country against attack. Other than Emmet's abortive rebellion in Dublin in 1803, Addington

does not seem to have faced any serious social unrest or opposition to the war during the remainder of his term. Nevertheless, this popular support for the war did have drawbacks. As the Duke of York wanted the government to raise a large force as quickly to repel an apparently imminent French invasion, the government hastily implemented military legislation embodying the militia, financing the volunteers, and creating a new army of reserve. Owing to popular support for the war and several imperfections within the legislation, the infrastructure could not cope with the vast number of applications and the ordnance was unable to meet all the requests for arms, and so the government had to limit the number of volunteers that it would accept for service. Unfortunately, these measures dampened public support for the war and opened the ministry to considerable criticism.

The problems with the military legislation were not serious in themselves, but several politicians used them for political purposes. By 1803, there were a few prominent politicians who for various reasons wished to have Addington dismissed. Canning, Rose, and other of Pitt's closest friends had resented Addington for displacing their mentor and had been striving ever since Pitt resigned to put him back into office. Grenville had supported Addington at the start but either honestly felt that he could not support peace terms that he would never have accepted had he remained in office or perceived them as placing his own administration of foreign affairs in a poor light, and from October 1801 he had become a determined opponent of the government. Fox had supported the ministry during the peace but, having opposed the previous war, went back into opposition upon the renewal of hostilities in 1803. In January 1804, Fox joined Grenville in an alliance against the government, but they could not make an impression on Parliament without the help of Pitt, who had wished to avoid entering systematic opposition. Nevertheless, under the relentless pressure of Canning and Rose, Pitt finally succumbed in March 1804.

Pitt then attacked the government on its military legislation and naval policies. This strategy was well calculated to win support

for Pitt away from the government because most of the country perceived Pitt to be the only one capable of successfully managing the war. In a dispute over war policies between Pitt and Addington many MPs were inclined to give the benefit of the doubt to the former. Thus the combined assault of the most talented speakers in Parliament against the government on issues of national security successfully whittled away the ministry's majority.

Addington was unable to overcome this parliamentary onslaught for two reasons. First, he lacked skill of political management. He failed to use the patronage at his disposal to increase the support for the government or to strengthen his ministry with men of talent, and instead he left much of the control over electoral patronage to Pitt's friends Dundas and Rose. Consequently, he was out-maneuvred politically. Second, he did not possess the stomach for a hard political fight. He had never desired office in the first place and refused to employ the hard-nosed tactics necessary to keep him in. He was deeply hurt by Pitt's opposition, and his last few weeks in office were completely miserable. For while he could face tough policy decisions, he could not cope with being betrayed by his friends.

Those who had helped to force Addington's resignation, under the assumption that a new ministry led by Pitt would provide greater political stability, were severely disappointed. The events of the previous three years had in fact completely altered the face of parliamentary politics. Pitt's position was severely undermined because his cousin and colleague, Grenville, refused to join the new ministry if Fox were excluded. As the King was adamantly opposed to Fox, Pitt lost the assistance and political support of one of his strongest allies. The unsavoury manner in which Pitt had forced Addington from office had also swung a great deal of popular support away from the former towards the latter. Addington received a deluge of letters consoling him for how unfairly he had been treated,¹ and

¹A large collection is in Sidmouth Papers, 152M/c1804/OZ.

many of Pitt's former supporters joined Addington out of sympathy. For example, Charles Yorke, who had previously desired that Pitt should take over from Addington, was so sickened by the manner in which it eventually happened that he refused to have anything to do with the new ministry and joined Addington in opposition. He explained:

I have no reason to think that I shall be asked, & I have determined to have nothing to do with it. 1. Because from the Part I have taken in arranging the measures of Defence, I cannot consent to eat my words; & 2ndly because I foresee nothing like the confidence or comfort [which he had enjoyed with Addington], now, in the society of Pitt & his associates.¹

When Addington had taken office in 1801 he possessed no political following, but by the summer of 1804 he could count on the support of about forty in the House of Commons, a party second in size only to that of Pitt.² Thus, when Addington voted with Fox and the Grenvillites in opposition, Pitt's majority was only slightly larger than that of Addington's when he resigned.

Pitt therefore had difficulty forming a strong administration. As Grenville, Windham, and their followers refused to join, he was left with constructing a ministry out of his closest friends and some of the members of Addington's ministry, whom he had just turned out of office. Liverpool, who can be considered unbiased as his son was a member of both ministries, claimed that 'If We compare the Individuals of which the late administration was composed, with those of the present, We shall find the present much weaker than the preceding one, except in the single Case of Mr Pitt.'³ The ministry proved unable to carry on, and in December 1804, Pitt chose to invite Addington to join. It is ironic that if in the spring of 1803, Pitt

¹Yorke to Hardwicke, 8 May, 1804, Add. MSS 35706, fos. 13-14.

²Liverpool to Hervey, 26 Dec. 1804, Hervey Papers, 941/56/8.

³Liverpool to the Bishop of Hereford, 16 July 1804, MS Loan 72/51, fo. 88.

had only agreed to form a ministry that included Hawkesbury, Castlereagh, Eldon, and Addington but excluded Grenville he would probably have avoided most of the trouble and animosity which ensued. Moreover, if that arrangement had been made in 1803 it probably would have lasted longer than the Pitt-Addington coalition of 1804-5.

Problems stemming from the manner in which Pitt had treated him during 1803 and 1804 led to Addington seceding from the ministry in 1805. This left Parliament divided into three groups: the Pittites, the Addingtonians, and the Grenville-Fox coalition. None of these groups was strong enough on its own to sustain a parliamentary majority, and it was clear that if Pitt had not died in January 1806, his ministry would probably have been forced out of office shortly thereafter. When Grenville was asked to form a ministry after Pitt's death, he realized that he required the security of the support of the solid block of Addingtonians. The Ministry of All the Talents survived in fact only as long as the Whigs and the Addingtonians could agree on policy, which was not very long. Thus the parliamentary stability developed under Pitt's first ministry had been shattered completely by developments during Addington's ministry. There followed a series of weak ministries that had as much trouble keeping themselves in office as fighting the war with France. This problem was not resolved until the remnants of Pitt's party were able to form a solid junction with the Addingtonians in 1812.

The formation and longevity of the Liverpool ministry cannot be explained without reference to the Addington ministry. The leading members of Liverpool's Cabinet--Castlereagh, Eldon, Sidmouth, and Liverpool himself--all received their first experience of Cabinet office under Addington. This experience helped them to achieve posts in subsequent ministries which left them as the best qualified candidates for office in 1812. The ill-will created by Addington's seceding from Pitt's ministry in 1805, however, prevented a junction between the Pittites and the Addingtonians until 1812, when Perceval, who had also obtained his first experience of office under Addington, asked him to take the office of Lord President of the Council. Perceval's assassination and the new crisis with the United States

rendered a strong and united government even more important, and thus when the task of forming a new ministry was to left Liverpool, the best he could devise was a version of the Addington ministry reshuffled.

Liverpool's ministry was more successful than Addington's because the ministers were placed in offices to which they were better suited. Liverpool was much better at managing men than was Addington and, therefore, was a more effective Prime Minister. Castlereagh had taken a strong interest in foreign affairs during Addington's ministry and his aristocratic manner and broader vision made him a better foreign secretary than Liverpool. Sidmouth's strengths were his calm and reasonable manner along with a willingness to make tough decisions. In addition, his social policies while Prime Minister had demonstrated that he was not a reactionary but was willing to take strong measures only when he believed that they were absolutely necessary. Consequently, Liverpool recognized that Sidmouth was best qualified for the Home Office. As it was necessary to appoint a Chancellor of the Exchequer from the House of Commons, Liverpool turned to Vansittart who, as Secretary of the Treasury under Addington, had played an important role in devising Addington's successful financial reforms including the income tax. Thus Liverpool's skill as Prime Minister was best demonstrated by his ability to place the right man in the right office.

The legacy of the Addington ministry can be measured in terms of policies as well as men. Several measures introduced by the ministry endured throughout the period of the Napoleonic Wars and beyond. The most significant were some of Addington's financial measures. The income tax, as reformed by Addington, was retained until 1816. It was revived again by Sir Robert Peel in 1842 and by the end of the nineteenth century it had become an important source of government revenue. Although subsequent governments made many changes to the tax they all retained the system of schedules and the principle of taxation at the source introduced by Addington. The practice of reviewing the state of the economy during the budget speech was also introduced by Addington in 1802. Subsequent

Chancellors of the Exchequer would provide a more detailed analysis of the economy, but it was Addington who in this way first placed the government finances in a larger context.

Despite the political crisis caused by the commission of naval inquiry, most of St Vincent's naval reforms were eventually adopted. St Vincent's immediate successors, Melville and Barham, completely reversed his policies, but after the reports of the commission of inquiry were placed before Parliament, the Ministry of All the Talents successfully re-implemented them. Thereafter, the navy was administered on more rational and efficient lines. In addition, although Addington's militia and volunteer legislation was largely dismantled by Pitt and Windham, from it Castlereagh borrowed some of the ideas for his successful military reforms. Finally, even some of the ministry's foreign policies were either continued or revived. Addington and Hawkesbury's concentration on building a Continental alliance around Russia was continued by Pitt in forming the Third Coalition in 1805. The strategy of the Peninsular War and the idea of escorting the King of Portugal to Brazil had also been foreshadowed in the discussion of Addington's Cabinet.

The Addington ministry was not, therefore, an aberration but a crucial link in a long chain of developments in diplomacy, military strategy, social policy, financial affairs, and parliamentary politics. Moreover, the example of the Addington ministry demonstrates the strong interconnection between each of these issues. As a case study, it does not validate either side in the theoretical debate over the primacy of foreign policy or domestic politics. On the contrary, during the Addington ministry the realms of foreign policy and domestic politics impinged upon each other to a considerable extent, and government policy followed the dictates of each at different times depending on the circumstances. Thus it was not the primacy of either but their interaction that was most important, and without which the rise and fall of the Addington ministry cannot properly be understood.

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Note on the Sources

In researching the formulation of government policy I found some sources more useful than others. I have listed all the archival sources indicating the class numbers where available although I consulted mostly only those files for the years 1800-1804. The most helpful of the government documents were the British Foreign Office files. The out-letters provided most of the information that I was looking for in terms of explanation of policy, but the in-letters also illuminated certain aspects of the policies of both the British and foreign governments. The French and Austrian archives provided additional insight and some factual information that was not available in the British archives. The Admiralty and War Office files required a great deal of sifting through often routine administrative correspondence to find letters that described the formulation of policy or gave orders for the mobilization of the fleet and where it should be sent. The Home Office out-letters were very helpful on aspects of domestic policy such as dealing with social unrest, but the in-letters were of limited value, as reports were sporadic and sometimes unreliable. The rest of the Home Office files were of very little use at all as was the routine administrative correspondence in the Treasury files, which rarely provided any insight on the formulation of policy.

Quite often the private correspondence provided more information about the formulation of policy than did the government documents. The papers of Addington and Hawkesbury were the most useful, particularly their correspondence with Cabinet ministers and relatives such as Liverpool and Hiley Addington. The papers of the other Cabinet ministers such as Hobart, St Vincent, Pelham, and Eldon were less extensive but included some important items. Yorke's correspondence with Hardwicke during the later stages of the ministry was extremely valuable. The papers of the diplomats and under secretaries varied in quality with that of Hervey, Merry,

Cornwallis, Whitworth and St Helens being of more use than that of Elgin, Warren, or Liston for the reason that the first group included more private correspondence especially with Hawkesbury and Addington. The papers and published diaries of other politicians outside of the ministry were helpful on certain issues and gave some indication of the state of parliamentary opinion at different stages during the ministry. The Tierney and Grey papers illuminate the negotiations between the government and some of the Foxite Whigs and the papers of Pitt and Dundas describe some aspects of their relationship with the ministry.

Few of the secondary sources were concerned largely with the ministry. The biographies of Pellew and Ziegler were of a greater scope than merely Addington's premiership, which combined with their not having consulted any government sources rendered their comments on the formulation of policy less than definitive. More recently, articles by Hall and McCahill and a number of doctoral theses have dealt with some aspects of the ministry in greater detail. Polden's examination of the domestic policies of the ministry was extensive and examined the areas of Irish and financial policy to a greater extent than I have done. Two studies of the early career of the second Earl of Liverpool by Brown and Alter covered the foreign policy of the ministry, but each of these, I think, failed to draw the necessary connections between domestic affairs, parliamentary politics, and diplomacy. This is the gap that I have attempted to fill.

Most of the items in the bibliography deal either comprehensively with some small aspect of the ministry or lightly with the ministry as an aspect of a larger question, and consequently they provided merely minor threads in the overall pattern of my thesis. While developing my main ideas, I was greatly influenced by a number of works on foreign policy and domestic politics. On the subject of Britain's role as a great power during this era, I was convinced by the arguments of Ingram, Mackesy, Glover, and Kennedy to the extent that they emphasize the limitations of Britain as a colonial and naval power in attempting

to defeat the military might of France. The rather poor performance of this and other ministries at some points during the course of the war was due largely to circumstances beyond their control. On the question of social unrest, I believe that Thompson and Wells were correct to emphasize the serious nature of the distress and the fuel that this provided to unrest and possibly rebellion. Nevertheless, I was convinced by Christie and Dinwiddy that the nature of the distress, the lack of organization and inclination for revolutions, and a number of factors which buttressed the establishment meant that a revolution on the French model was highly unlikely. Owing to the apparent seriousness of information available to the government, however, the ministry did not have complete confidence in its ability to weather the storm without taking some action.

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Yorke Papers	MS. Eng. lett. c. 60
Buckinghamshire Record Office, Aylesbury	
Buckinghamshire Papers	D/MH/H/War
Grenville Papers	D/54-6
Cambridge University Library	
Pitt Papers	6958
Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock	
St Helens Papers	239M
Devonshire Record Office, Exeter	
Sidmouth Papers	152M
Dorset Record Office, Dorchester	
Bond Papers	D367
Durham University	
Grey Papers	

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Bragge-Bathurst Papers	D421
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