

The American Mission of Citizen Pierre-Auguste Adet: Revolutionary Chemistry and Diplomacy in the Early Republic

THE LAST TWO DECADES of the eighteenth century were a period of revolutionary change when new ideas crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean, overturning orthodoxies in politics and in science. As Joseph Priestley, an English radical and chemist residing in America, remarked, it was an "age of revolutions, philosophical as well as civil."¹ One person at the center of this maelstrom of ideas was Citizen Pierre-Auguste Adet, a diplomat and chemist who was sent by the French Republic to the United States in 1795 as minister plenipotentiary. As a revolutionary diplomat, Adet attempted to restore the Franco-American alliance with the help of American Republicans, by leaking the contents of the Jay Treaty, by recruiting foreign revolutionaries for the French army, and by intriguing in the presidential election of 1796. As a revolutionary chemist, Adet communicated American advances in chemistry to his compatriots in France, supported the researches of French scientists in the United States, and defended the Chemical Revolution of Antoine Laurent Lavoisier from the

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¹ Joseph Priestley, *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water* (Philadelphia, 1796) reprinted in William Foster, ed., *Lectures on Combustion by Joseph Priestley and John Maclean* (Princeton, 1927), 20. For more on the close ties between political and scientific revolutions, especially the French Revolution and the Chemical Revolution, see I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 229–31 and E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London, 1962), 281–93.

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attacks of Joseph Priestley.²

Adet viewed his political and scientific activities as part of a coherent whole—what he called the study of the moral and physical sciences of the United States. To achieve his political and scientific ends, Adet utilized connections among American Republicans, the Irish and French émigré communities in Philadelphia, and the American scientific community. A synthesis of Adet's American diplomatic mission, his contributions to antiphlogistic chemistry, and his support of French science provide greater insight and fuller context to the history of politics, diplomacy, and science in the early American republic than if each were studied alone. Adet's American mission provides an opportunity—heretofore ignored³—to examine the relationship between revolutionary diplomacy and revolutionary chemistry as well as to gauge the importance of republican networks for the success of Adet's diplomacy and chemistry.

Adet was a revolutionary in both politics and chemistry. At the same time that Adet served the French Revolution in the diplomatic corps, he continued to march in the vanguard of the Chemical Revolution. Although trained in chemistry, he turned to politics during the French Revolution. After receiving a medical degree like his father, Adet pursued studies in chemistry with Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, the leading French physical scientist of his generation. From 1785 to 1792, he enthusiastically participated in the campaign waged by the antiphlogistians against phlogiston theory. Although showing promise as a chemist and enjoying Lavoisier's endorsement, Adet was unable to secure a scientific post in the government. Like many young scientists on the eve of the French Revolution, he could not support himself through a scientific vocation. In

² Phlogistians asserted that phlogiston, the principle of inflammability, played the key role in the processes of combustion, calcination, and respiration. Antiphlogistians, dismissing phlogiston as a superfluous abstraction, countered that oxygen played the key role in combustion, respiration, and in the composition of water. In the 1780s and 1790s, the antiphlogistians slowly converted most phlogistians to the new chemistry—which concluded a scientific dispute commonly called the Chemical Revolution.

³ Adet's diplomatic mission and scientific activities have been incompletely treated and improperly separated by historians. Laura F. Ullrich, "Adet and Diplomatic Relations Between France and America," (master's thesis, Northwestern University, 1904) and Alexander DeConde, "Adet's War with Washington's Government," in *Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington* (Durham, N.C., 1958), 423–455, provide the only extended account of Adet's American diplomatic mission. Lyman C. Newell, "Pierre Auguste Adet," *Journal of Chemical Education* 8 (1931), 43–48, and E. McDonald, "Pierre-Auguste Adet," in Charles Coulston Gillispie, ed., *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York, 16 vols., 1970), 1: 64–65, briefly describe Adet's scientific activities.

the course of his medical and chemical studies, Adet ran up considerable debts and was forced to accept personal loans from Lavoisier, who tried to secure a government position for his straited protégé. With Lavoisier's help, Adet founded the antiphlogistic journal, *Annales de Chimie*, in 1789. As secretary of the journal, Adet earned a meager salary by revising proofs of articles accepted for publication and by translating German, English, and Italian articles into French. Even before the *Annales de Chimie* ceased publication in 1793—the result of the press of government business on the editors and Jacobin pressure on Lavoisier for his role as tax-farmer for the ancien régime—Adet joined his fellow antiphlogistians in a “congress of scientists” which conducted research for the defense of the French Republic at the Committee of Public Safety's request. Unfortunately, the committee did not pay its savants much. Adet sought a post as a doctor in Saint Domingue to relieve his financial duress, but he was instead appointed secretary of the commission sent to that colony in 1791. Lavoisier and Condorcet appealed to the minister of the navy on Adet's behalf. Impressed by Adet's fluency in German and in English, and his republican principles, the minister of the navy sent the young chemist to Geneva in early 1794. At the age of thirty-one, Adet began a political career which allowed him to return to chemistry only in his leisure.⁴

In October 1794, the Thermidorean Committee of Public Safety, which included Antoine François de Fourcroy and Louis Bernard Guyton, two of Adet's fellow antiphlogistians, sent the wayward chemist to Philadelphia to replace the Robespierrest Joseph Fauchet, charging him to win American support for the French Republic in the Revolutionary Wars. Hoping to keep the British from receiving supplies from neutral countries, the committee instructed Fauchet's replacement to affirm France's right, under an article of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1778, to seize contraband discovered on neutral ships, to begin negotiations on a new commercial treaty with the

⁴ Roger Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666–1803* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971), 257–62; Jean-Pierre Poirer, *Lavoisier: Chemist, Biologist, Economist* (Philadelphia, 1996), 187–92; Lavoisier to [Baron de Breteuil], July 1, 1787, [Baron de Breteuil] to Lavoisier, Sept. 16, 1787, Reçu de Adet, Feb. 12, 1788, Lavoisier to Condorcet, n.d., August 1788, Reçu de Adet, Aug. 9, 1788, Lavoisier to Malesherbes, Aug. 10, 1788 in Henri Kagan and Michelle Goupil, eds., *Oeuvres de Lavoisier* (Paris, 7 vols., 1993), 5: 66–67, 71–72, 129, 195, 198; Lavoisier to Adet, October 22, 1789 in Henri Kagan and Patrice Bret, eds., *Oeuvres de Lavoisier* (Paris, 7 vols., 1997) 6: 81; Maurice Crosland, *In the Shadow of Lavoisier: The Annales de Chimie and the Establishment of a New Science* (Oxford, 1994), 71–72, 92–95.

United States, and to gain the confidence of the American government. Before appointing Adet, the committee revised these moderate instructions. Aware of John Jay's negotiations with the British on a commercial treaty, the Thermidoreans directed Adet to work with the Republicans in Congress to prevent the United States from accepting this treaty. The Committee of Public Safety viewed American politics through the distorting lens of international war, believing that a dichotomy existed in American foreign policy: the Republicans were "partisans of France" and the Federalists were partisans of Britain. By guiding the Republicans, Adet was to insure American aid for the French war effort by securing a loan or enlisting military support.⁵

Within two days of his arrival in Philadelphia on June 13, 1795, Adet met with American Republicans, and began to form the extensive network upon which he relied throughout his mission. Adet's new friends confirmed his fears that President George Washington had returned the French alliance with the "blackest ingratitude." Despite his partisan activities and his resentment of the Federalist administration, Adet made a good first impression on the president and the cabinet when he presented his credentials. Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott reported that Adet appeared "to be a mild tempered and well educated man and no Jacobin," who "will not be violent or troublesome." Vice President John Adams concurred. They were mistaken. Despite his hesitant English and disarming shyness, Adet quickly won the friendship of local Republicans, including Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin, Benjamin Franklin Bache, editor of the *Aurora*, Thomas McKean, chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, John Beckley, clerk of the House of Representatives and leader of the Pennsylvania Republicans, and prominent members of the Irish and French émigré communities in Philadelphia, as well as the leaders of the national Republican party, such as Samuel Adams, Aaron Burr, Albert Gallatin, and Thomas Jefferson. By attending the meetings of the American Philosophical Society (APS) and fraternizing with its members, Adet reinforced these

⁵ Frederick J. Turner, ed., *Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797* in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1903* (Washington, 2 vols., 1904), 2: 722-30; Albert Hall Bowman, *The Struggle for Neutrality: Franco-American Diplomacy During the Federalist Era* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1974), 194-96.

links. Although trying not to let political disputes intrude upon the pursuit of science, the APS was largely a Republican body, counting such leading Republicans as Jefferson and McKean among its officers and Beckley and many French émigrés among its members.⁶

By means not entirely clear, Adet earned what he called the "friendship and confidence" of the leaders of the Republican Party, taking an active role in devising and implementing Republican strategy to oppose the Jay Treaty and the Washington administration. On March 24, 1796, Adet assured Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles Delacroix that he had "perfect knowledge" of Republican activities to date because of his direct contributions to their discussions, projects, and plans. Unfortunately, since only a few letters of Adet's private correspondence to Americans have been found, it is impossible to determine the full extent of his political activities.⁷

Adet's first extant communication to a prominent Republican on political matters was a letter to Jefferson. On September 6, 1795, he wrote to Jefferson, transmitting a letter from Marc-Auguste Pictet, a Geneva antiphlogistian. Adet delighted in corresponding with the "premier philosopher of the new world" because of his "irresistible penchant for the study of the moral and physical sciences" of the United States. Adet hoped that Jefferson would answer any questions raised by his studies. In the late eighteenth century, of course, one of the moral sciences was politics. Linking science and politics, Adet asked Jefferson for help in his activities on behalf of the French Republic. If this request was "indiscreet," Adet hoped that Jefferson would forget it and remember only his "Esteem and Respect."⁸

⁶ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 735; Philadelphia Minerva, June 20, 1795; Adet to S. Adams, June 26, 1795, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University; George Gibbs, ed., *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams, edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott* (New York, 2 vols., 1846), 1: 209; Page Smith, *John Adams* (Garden City, N.Y., 2 vols., 1962), 2: 873; Gilbert Chinard, "The American Philosophical Society and the World of Science (1768-1800)," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 87 (1943), 3, 9-10; John C. Greene, *American Science in the Age of Jefferson* (Ames, Iowa, 1984), 43.

⁷ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 881-82. A survey of American and French archives produced no politically significant letters, excepting those in the Thomas Jefferson Presidential Papers, Library of Congress Manuscripts, and in the Pierre S. du Pont de Nemours and Victor du Pont Papers in the Winterthur Manuscripts, Hagley Museum and Library.

⁸ I. Bernard Cohen, *Benjamin Franklin's Science* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 8-9, 38; Adet to Jefferson, September 6, 1795, Thomas Jefferson Presidential Papers, Library of Congress Manuscripts; Robert Fox, "Marc-Auguste Pictet," in Charles Coulston Gillispie, ed., *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York, 16 vols, 1970), 10: 602-03. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800* (Chicago, 1996), 225-30, properly notes the

Just as Benjamin Franklin parlayed his public stature as a scientist to bolster his diplomatic standing in the French court, Adet used his scientific connections to present himself as a member of the international community of *philosophes*. To be sure, Adet's scientific accomplishments (and his diplomatic successes) did not rival those of Franklin, but they were sufficient to garner an encouraging reply from Jefferson, who had recently resigned his post as secretary of state. Jefferson responded in a tone sure to encourage Adet's scientific and political activities. Freed from the bonds of public office, Jefferson expressed his love of science and the French Revolution without reserve. Jefferson was disappointed at not having had the opportunity to meet Adet in person while in Philadelphia, when he might have learned firsthand the "new advances of science on the other side of the Atlantic." Jefferson asserted that "the interests of our two republics also could not but have been promoted by the harmony of their servants, two people whose interests, whose principles, whose habits of attachment, founded on fellowship in war and mutual kindness, have so many points of union cannot but be easily kept together." He reminded Adet "of the general interest my countrymen take in all the successes of your republic," and assured him that "in this no one joins with more enthusiasm than myself, an enthusiasm kindled by my love of liberty, by my gratitude to your nation who helped us to acquire it, [and] by my wishes to see it extended to all men." Jefferson entrusted his reply to Pictet to Adet. In this letter, Jefferson reported that he was pleased to have met Adet and hoped "that his mission will be fruitful in good to both countries," the French Republic and the United States.⁹

Adet's Republican friends served him well in opposing ratification of the treaty negotiated by Jay in November 1794. To defuse opposition, the terms of the document were guarded by Washington until review by the Senate. This policy of secrecy backfired, arousing popular suspicions of a deal with Britain. As neither Fauchet nor Adet had instructions from the Committee of Public Safety concerning the Jay Treaty, the new French minister found himself in an "extremely difficult position" when Senator Henry Tazewell, a Republican from Virginia, complained that Republicans lacked the votes

importance of Adet's correspondence with Jefferson, but misses the importance of science in the relationship between Jefferson and Adet.

⁹ Jefferson to Adet, October 14, 1795, Jefferson to Pictet, October 14, 1795, Jefferson Presidential Papers.

to prevent ratification because several senators would not vote against the treaty without the assurance of French aid for the United States in the event of war with Britain. Unable to provide these assurances, Adet opted to continue Fauchet's policy of supporting Republican opposition in Congress by means of "pecuniary advances." These advances were necessarily modest because of the nearly empty coffers of the French legation.¹⁰

After the Senate ratified the Jay Treaty, Adet decided to employ his own revolutionary diplomacy to prevent Washington's approval of the treaty by leaking its contents and provoking public demonstrations. Believing that two senators were bribed to secure ratification, Adet thought that the treaty was forced on the American people. To receive a fair hearing, he reasoned, the provisions of the treaty should be made public. After obtaining a copy of the Jay Treaty from Secretary of State Edmund Randolph to allay fears about concessions given to Britain, Adet revealed the contents of the treaty to Bache. Almost simultaneously, Washington decided to terminate the policy of secrecy and authorized Randolph to provide a Federalist newspaper with an official copy. Adet had Randolph's only copy of the treaty and did not return it until Bache printed the treaty in the *Aurora* and in pamphlet form, denying the Washington administration credit for disclosure.¹¹

As Adet intended, publication of the Jay Treaty sparked popular demonstrations which raged from Charleston, South Carolina, to Boston, Massachusetts. Led by prominent republicans including McKean and Blair McClenachan, the Irish-born leader of the Philadelphia Democratic Society, an anti-treaty meeting in Philadelphia attracted over seven hundred people. After mounting a copy of the Jay Treaty on a pole, McClenachan led the crowd to Adet's house and then to the British minister's house, where they burned the treaty. Prudently, Adet did not address the mob and remained in Federalists' eyes an "honest man" who "conducted himself with strict propriety." Adet's hope that popular protest would counterbalance the

¹⁰ Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* (New York, 1993), 415–17; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 735; Carl Ludwig Lokke, ed., Joseph Fauchet, "Mémoire sur les États Unis D'Amérique," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1936* (Washington, 2 vols., 1938), 1: 110–12.

¹¹ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 738, 742; Edmund Randolph, "Memorandum" of July 16, 1795, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, 39 vols., 1940), 34: 245n; James Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia Aurora* (Philadelphia, 1991), 246–47; Charles R. King, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King* (New York, 6 vols., 1895), 2: 15–16; *Aurora Daily Advertiser*, June 29, 1795.

influence of the Anglophile cabinet on the president was disappointed when Washington endorsed the treaty.¹²

Adet employed conventional as well as revolutionary diplomacy to oppose the Jay Treaty. He protested to Randolph that it defined "whatever may serve directly to the equipment of vessels" as contraband that could be legally seized during war. Per contra, the French treaty of 1778 explicitly specified that all "things proper for either building or repairing ships" were not contraband. Because the French allowed the United States to transport these articles to Britain, but the British did not permit the United States to transport them to France, Adet reasoned that the United States "granted to England a right which we have not," unfairly favoring England in a time of war. Furthermore, Adet contended that by guaranteeing British ships and privateers access to American ports and prohibiting foreign privateers from arming or selling their prizes in American ports, the Jay Treaty "destroyed" the right of French privateers to "freely carry" into American ports any non-American articles seized, giving only the British "the privilege of conducting their prizes" to American ports.¹³

Randolph averred that these objections were groundless. Although the United States "opposed the extension of contraband" by Britain, he maintained that "under the law of nations" material for building and repairing ships was contraband. Rather than granting anything to the British, the Jay Treaty merely recognized a right that Britain already possessed. While acknowledging the practical disadvantage France suffered, Randolph held that this disparity was due to French relaxation of the "strict rights" of contraband. He reported that Adet misconstrued several articles of the Jay Treaty: Britain would not possess the right to conduct prizes taken from French ships to American ports. Although unpersuaded, Adet was powerless. He could only request instructions from the Committee of Public Safety.¹⁴

Randolph correctly guessed that Adet could not commit France to an

¹² Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 742; Elkins and McKittrick, *Age of Federalism*, 415, 432; Jerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley, 1970), 160-62; Gibbs, ed., *Memoirs*, 1: 217-18; Fitzpatrick, ed., *Washington*, 34: 226-27.

¹³ Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke, eds., *American State Papers, Foreign Relations* (Washington, 38 vols., 1832), 1: 594-95; David Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and other International Acts of the United States of America, 1776-1863* (Washington, 1931), 16-17, 23, 259, 261-63.

¹⁴ Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 595-96; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 747.

official course without orders. Although unable to comment on the Jay Treaty, Adet could begin negotiations on a new commercial treaty with the United States. Washington placed Randolph on the same footing. Unfortunately for both diplomats, these negotiations coincided with Randolph's resignation from office amidst rumors of intrigue. Randolph, whose reservations concerning the Jay Treaty were widely known, argued that he was the victim of a British plot to secure Washington's approval of the treaty. On the basis of a dispatch sent from Fauchet to Paris which was intercepted by the British Foreign Office and sent to Philadelphia, Wolcott and Secretary of War Timothy Pickering accused Randolph of treason, hoping to remove the only Francophile member of the cabinet. Relying on mistranslated passages of Fauchet's dispatch and gratuitous speculation, they contended that Randolph had leaked secret information to Fauchet which promoted the Whiskey Rebellion to the benefit of France. On August 19, 1795, Washington presented the dispatch to Randolph, demanding an explanation. At the same time, Washington announced his approval of the Jay Treaty. Unable to provide a satisfactory account of the events from memory, Randolph resigned. He sought exoneration from Fauchet, who was about to depart for France. Fauchet transmitted his explanation of the dispatch to Adet, who delivered it to Randolph. With the assurance that if Randolph was vindicated the House of Representatives would not fund the execution of the Jay Treaty, Adet defended Randolph, whom he considered to be the only friend of France in the administration, by appending a certificate of authenticity to Fauchet's explanation, which stated that the events in question were "entirely foreign" to him. Neither Adet's recommendations nor Randolph's lengthy *Vindication* redeemed the former secretary. Indeed, Adet's efforts on Randolph's behalf spurred rumors that the two were collaborating against the United States. In Randolph's place, Washington appointed Pickering, an ardent Federalist and no friend of France.¹⁵

Pickering frustrated Adet's attempts to overturn the improper seizure of the French privateer *Le Cassius* and the corvette *La Vengeance* on the

¹⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Washington*, 34: 250n; Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 640–41; Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 27 vols., 1973), 19: 308; [Edmund Randolph], *A Vindication of Mr. Randolph's Resignation* (Philadelphia, 1795), 49–61; Adet's Certificate, Sept. 26, 1795, in Randolph, *Vindication*, 19; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 774–76; *Mercury* (Boston), Oct. 30, 1795.

grounds that they had been previously armed in the United States—thus realizing Adet's fears concerning treatment of French ships in American ports. In early August 1795, Adet complained to Randolph that these seizures were made upon the basis of "mere suspicions" of a violation and in spite of papers which proved that the ships were armed in Saint Domingue. He protested that these seizures would "paralyze" the protection of French warships in American ports, but received no answer from Pickering for six weeks. Apparently irritated by this silence, Adet authorized J. A. B. Rozier, consul of the French Republic in New York, to send extracts of Committee of Public Safety correspondence that were critical of American policy to the *New York Argus* for publication. The *Argus* observed that these extracts demonstrated that "whilst the French nation orders that British property found on board neutral vessels shall be respected, the British government commands the plundering of French property of the same vessels." Perhaps this public rebuke stirred Pickering to action. Several days after the *Argus's* article, Pickering explained to Adet that the seizure of *Le Cassius* was proper and that, in any event, he was powerless to act until the judiciary made its decision. Both cases reached the United States Supreme Court which found in France's favor. By this time the French Republic had been denied the services of the two ships for almost a year.¹⁶

Discouraged by Pickering's evasive diplomacy, Adet continued his revolutionary diplomacy. With the help of Bache, Beckley, and Hamilton Rowan, an Irish émigré, Adet enlisted two Irish revolutionaries in American exile, Wolfe Tone and Napper Tandy, into service as generals in the French army. As leaders of the United Irishmen, a nonsectarian republican movement, Tone and Tandy came separately to the United States hoping to gain French support for a rebellion against British rule and the establishment of an Irish republic. Although initially lukewarm to the proposal, Adet endorsed the plan in November 1795. Frustrated by the Committee of Public Safety's failure to send instructions concerning the Jay Treaty and persuaded by Beckley and Rowan of the importance of the plan, Adet sent Tone to France to make a personal appeal to the committee. Shortly after Tone departed on January 1, 1796, Tandy arrived in Philadelphia. Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin introduced Tandy to Adet.

¹⁶ DeConde, *Entangling Alliance*, 431–32; *New York Argus* reprinted in *Newport Mercury*, Aug. 25, 1795; Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 564–65, 585–88, 621–38.

Unaware that Tandy had been trailed by a British secret agent, Adet happily recommended him to the committee as well. Arriving in Paris in May 1796, Tandy resided in Adet's home during negotiations between the United Irishmen and the French Republic which resulted in three unsuccessful invasions of Ireland.¹⁷

At the same time Adet began discussing revolution with Tone, he determined that Washington was no longer a friend of France. Washington's acceptance of Pickering's evasions, his duplicity in the "machinations" against Randolph, and his approval of the Jay Treaty, convinced Adet that the president's republican virtue, like that of Caesar, had been corrupted by ambition. Adet reported to the Committee that Washington had given "the definite pledge of blind submission . . . to the supreme will of [King] George." Henceforth, Adet believed that his mission was to employ revolutionary diplomacy to rekindle the republican spirit of the American people to free France's erstwhile ally from the British "yoke."¹⁸

Adet initiated a campaign to restore the Franco-American alliance by symbolically appealing to American Republicans to force Washington out of office. Adet used the National Convention's decree that the French Republic's colors be presented to the United States to reciprocate a similar presentation made by James Monroe with the American flag in 1794. On the same day as Tone's departure, Adet publicly presented to Washington a flag which celebrated the triumphs of the French Republic and "the American people as her most faithful allies." So that the friendship between the two republics would not be forgotten, the National Convention requested that the French banner be placed in the hall of the people's representatives. With cheers from the crowd ringing in his ears, Washington accepted the tricolor. Having no desire to display a standard depicting France's military victories, Washington sent the flag and Adet's message to Congress for review and then deposited it in the "archives of the United

¹⁷ R. Barry O'Brien, ed., *The Autobiography of Wolfe Tone, 1763-1798* (London, 1828), 212, 219-23; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 780, 786-87, 798; Marianne Elliott, *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Irish Independence* (New Haven, Conn., 1989), 277-78; Rupert J. Coughlan, *Napper Tandy* (Dublin, 1976), 111-13, 115; David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998), 153-54.

¹⁸ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 774-80 *passim*.

States."¹⁹

Hoping to pressure the House of Representatives into blocking appropriations for the execution of the Jay Treaty, Adet planned to rally the American people around the French flag. Cognizant that shutting the tricolor up in the archives diverted any symbolic impetus for popular demonstrations, Adet complained to Pickering that Washington's action slighted the French Republic's hard-fought victories and "must make all [of] France discontented." Since the National Assembly proudly displayed the American flag in its legislative hall, Adet demanded reciprocity. Pleading that the president meant no injury to France, Pickering cleverly maintained that the United States accorded the tricolor respect commensurate to that shown to the stars and stripes by France. Unlike France, Pickering explained, the United States did not have a single hall where the representatives of the people congregated. Since there was no single building that was equivalent to the hall of the National Assembly, Washington had deposited the French flag with the "evidences and memorials of our own freedom and independence." What greater honor, Pickering wondered, could the United States show the banner?²⁰

Despite coverage by Bache's *Aurora*, the French émigré paper the *American Star*, and approbation by the Democratic Society of New York, no Republican crowds rallied behind Adet's flag. Adet's friends in the House of Representatives and in the Senate ensured that the tricolor was well received and ordered a thousand copies of Adet's message printed. Washington, however, undercut Adet's plan by delaying the request for the appropriation of funds for the execution of the Jay Treaty until notice of British ratification of the treaty was received to cool popular passion and partisan protest. Outmaneuvered by Washington, Adet complained to the Committee of Public Safety that the president relegated the banner to "a miserable garret" where it will be food for "rodents and insects." Sincerely believing that Washington had insulted the French Republic, Adet recommended that the American flag be retired from the hall of the

¹⁹ *Newport Mercury*, January 19, 1796; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 811-12; Fitzpatrick, *Washington*, 34: 413-14, 418; Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 527-28.

²⁰ Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 656-57. William Cobbett, *Porcupine's Political Censor* 1 (1797), 9, recommended that Adet cut his "sans-culotte rag" in two so that it could be displayed in each house of Congress.

National Convention. The Paris newspaper *L'Ami de Lois* agreed with Adet, taking Washington's disgraceful treatment of the tricolor as evidence that the "President and the Senate are entirely devoted to England."²¹

Two weeks after Adet had presented the tricolor and dispatched Tone, the French minister formally entered the American scientific community. On January 15, 1796, the APS elected Adet as a foreign member. Fourteen other new members were inducted with Adet, including James Woodhouse, an antiphlogistian and president of the Chemical Society of Philadelphia, and four Frenchmen. Adet was elated to return to science. He had enjoyed discussing scientific matters with Pictet and other savants while at his previous post and had only reluctantly left the elegant salons of Geneva for the muddy roads of Philadelphia. Discouraged by the Washington administration's endorsement of the Jay Treaty and longing to take up science again, Adet had informed Pierre du Pont de Nemours, a prominent French nobleman and friend of Lavoisier, that he wanted to be transferred. After Adet joined the APS, he found reason to stay in Philadelphia. Two weeks after his election, Adet boasted to Victor du Pont, French consul for the Carolinas and Georgia (and son of du Pont de Nemours), that he was now a member of the APS. Encouraged by his election, Adet began to support French science in the United States. Adet reminded du Pont, a friend and a fellow scientific enthusiast, of his "great interest" in the geography of the southern United States and requested an "exact description" of the Charleston area to remedy the lamentable state of French knowledge of North America.²²

In his recruitment of the Irish émigrés and his presentation of the tricolor, Adet had anticipated the instructions of the new government of the

²¹ *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), Jan. 25, 1796; *Mercury*, Jan. 19, 1796; *Aurora Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1796; Frances Sergeant Childs, *French Refugee Life in the United States, 1790-1800* (Baltimore, 1940), 152-53; *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, 4th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1849), 5: 195, 199, 200; Combs, *Jay Treaty*, 171-73; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 813-14; *L'Ami de Lois* reprinted in *Connecticut Courant*, June 20, 1796.

²² J. G. Rosengarten, "The Early French Members of the American Philosophical Society," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 46 (1907), 89; *Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, Compiled by One of the Secretaries from the Manuscript Minutes of Its Meetings from 1744 to 1838* (Philadelphia, 1884), 236; *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 4 (1799), xvi; Adet to P. du Pont de Nemours, Dec. 29, 1795, Adet to V. du Pont, Jan. 28, 1796, Winterthur Manuscripts.

French Republic, the Directory, which replaced the Thermidoreans in early November 1795. Reacting to fait accompli by its agents, generals, and revolutionaries beyond its control, the Directory's foreign policy fluctuated from the defense of France's natural borders to the creation of small nominally independent sister republics. Under the Directory, Franco-American relations deteriorated steadily, partly by design and largely by neglect. Charles Delacroix, the minister of foreign affairs, believed that ratification of the Jay Treaty put the American government in a state of war with France. Delacroix thought that the Washington administration had allied itself with Britain against the wishes of the American people, who remained true republicans. Instructing Adet to "negotiate" the restoration of the French alliance directly with the American people, Delacroix authorized the use of every available means to affect this "happy revolution."²³

Accordingly, in March 1796, Adet commissioned Georges Henri Victor Collot, a French general who had been paroled in Philadelphia after surrendering the French colony of Guadeloupe to the British in 1794, to report on the geography of the American frontier and of Spanish Louisiana and to determine the feasibility of forming a Francophile republic from the area. Adet consulted several American Republicans, including Albert Gallatin, for advice on Collot's mission. Presenting Collot's mission as a geographical expedition, Adet received American permission for the trip. After alerting the Americans to the main purpose of his mission by verbal indiscretions, Collot was a twice-marked man because the Americans notified the Spanish. On March 21, Collot left Philadelphia and returned almost exactly six months later, completing a mission rife with international intrigue. Collot mapped the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys, noted the adequacy of American and Spanish fortifications, reported the strategic importance of Pittsburgh and St. Louis, determined that Kentuckians were potential French allies, and recorded the military strength of the local Indian nations. Collot was arrested by the Spanish and detained by the Americans, but managed to report that if the western states joined Louisiana, a Francophile republic could maintain political independence and would

²³ Martyn Lyons, *France Under the Directory* (Cambridge, Eng., 1975), 191-92; *L'Ami de Lois* reprinted in *Mercury*, June 24, 1796; Delacroix quoted in Bowman, *Struggle*, 236-38.

control the balance of power in North America.²⁴

While practicing revolutionary diplomacy, Adet supported French scientists in the United States and imported the best of American science to France. Adet enjoyed the good fortune of residing in Philadelphia, the scientific capital of the early American republic. In addition to the APS, Philadelphia boasted several botanical gardens, a natural history museum, and one of the first chemical societies in the world. Adet used his position as the ranking member of the legation of the French Republic to charge French officials and émigrés with procuring geographical information on the United States, to appropriate the legation's limited monies for scientific pursuits, and to encourage the Republican community to support French scientific projects. Just as Adet solicited information concerning the geography of Charleston from Victor du Pont, the French minister charged Collot with providing scientific information relating to the American frontier. Collot planned to "seek in nature new physical proofs which will confirm the fact that this new hemisphere was once covered by the ocean" and to "try to explain the causes which have created the small inland seas, the swamps of unknown depths, the prevailing humidity, and the marshy lands which exist in all the uninhabited parts of the continent." Having some training in natural history, geology, and chemistry, Collot described the river valleys with an erudition that belied his flamboyant manner. Classifying the Alleghenies as one of the primitive rather than secondary mountain ranges of North America, Collot employed Neptunian nomenclature and cited leading geologists. Demonstrating knowledge of antiphlogistic chemistry, Collot determined that the efflorescent salt along the banks of the Arkansas River was a carbonate of potash and adduced the research of Louis Bernard Guyton as evidence for his claim. Collot also excavated fossils at the Big Bone Lick site in Kentucky, sending all except the largest specimens to

²⁴ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 840–43, 928–30; Ullrick, "Adet and Diplomatic Relations Between France and America," 38; George W. Kyte, "A Spy on the Western Waters: The Military Intelligence Mission of General Collot in 1796," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 34 (1947), 429–31; Durand Echeverria, trans., "General Collot's Plan for a Reconnaissance of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, 1796," *William and Mary Quarterly* 9 (1952), 516–20; Gibbs, *Memoirs*, 1: 350–52; J. Christian Bay, trans. [Georges Henri] Victor Collot, *A Journey in North America* (Florence, It., 1924), 1: 40–42, 112–14, 232–33, 303–10, 2: 76–81, 263–72.

Philadelphia, presumably in the care of Adet.²⁵

In addition to Collot, several members of the thriving French émigré community in Philadelphia practiced science, including Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry. Having fled from France to Philadelphia in 1793 because of the Terror, Moreau established a book shop and printing press which formed the center of this French community and was elected a member of the APS. During his exile, Moreau wrote an exhaustive two-volume *Description Topographique et Politique de la Partie Espagnole de l'Isle Saint-Domingue* (1796) and an equally lengthy *Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de la Partie Française de l'Isle Saint-Domingue* (1797–1798), providing technical details of the topography, demography, and politics of the two colonies. Appreciating the scientific and political value of these works, Adet spent some of the scarce monies of the French legation to ensure their publication. Several prominent American Republicans, including Bache and John Vaughan, a perennial officer of the APS, supported Moreau's first work. Similarly, Adet sent thirty copies of *Mémoires sur la situation commerciale de la France avec les États-Unis de l'Amérique*, the work of Claude-Corentin Tanguy de la Boissière, another émigré, to the Committee of Public Safety. To continue his researches, Tanguy wanted to be employed by the French legation, but Adet, uncertain of Tanguy's republicanism, provided a small subsistence allowance instead.²⁶

Enlisting the help of Victor du Pont, Adet labored to maintain the collections of Ambroise Palisot de Beauvois and André Michaux, itinerant French botanists residing in the United States. After losing collections in Africa in 1791 to marauding British soldiers and in Haiti in 1793 to insurgent slaves, Beauvois went to the United States. Already a member of the APS, Beauvois worked in the museum of Charles Willson Peale, assisting in the preparation of the catalog and arranging the collections according to the Linnaean system. An enthusiast of natural history, Adet frequented the museum, which was housed in the APS's Philosophical Hall,

²⁵ Echeverria, "Collot's Plan," 516; Greene, *American Science*, 37–59; Collot, *Journey*, 1: 2–3n, 7n, 138–40, 210, 238, 298.

²⁶ Stewart L. Mims, ed., [Médéric Louis Elie] Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Voyage aux États-Unis de l'Amérique, 1793–1798* (New Haven, 1913), xix–xxi, xxviii–xxix; Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description Topographique et Politique de la Partie Espagnole de l'Isle Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 2 vols., 1796), 1: 5–8; Childs, *French Refugee Life*, 182–83; Adet to Jefferson, Sept. 6, 1795, Jefferson Presidential Papers.

and occasionally added to its collections himself. Convinced of Beauvois's ability, Adet sent the naturalist to Charleston in March 1796 to collect specimens in the southern United States for the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. Acting on his own authority, Adet sponsored Beauvois with legation monies and urged du Pont to afford the botanist every possible facility. Because of the great expense of collecting in the South, Beauvois needed additional funds. Hoping that the Committee of Public Safety would reimburse the legation for the expense, Adet authorized the payment of three hundred dollars to Beauvois for horses and a carriage. Six months later, Beauvois returned to Charleston, having made extensive collections in Georgia and Florida. Beauvois ignored Adet's order to send his first batch of specimens to France via Philadelphia so that duplicate specimens could be left with the French minister. In du Pont's estimation, Beauvois risked compromising the success of the mission by sending all of his collections directly to France. Du Pont's fears were realized when an alligator and several birds spoiled during the transatlantic trip because of improper packing. Moreover, the recalcitrant naturalist refused to send the proceeds of the sale of the horses and carriage to Adet to reimburse the legation's treasury and imprudently gossiped about his unauthorized mission into American and Spanish territory, thereby embarrassing du Pont and Adet. When Adet returned to France in May 1797, he took the second batch of Beauvois's collections to Paris himself.²⁷

In addition to collecting specimens, Adet had charged Beauvois with maintaining Michaux's botanical garden in Charleston, while the senior naturalist was exploring the Illinois country. Originally sent by the French government in 1785 to evaluate the quality of North American timber for ship construction, Michaux had been collecting the flora and the fauna of the continent for over a decade. A member of the APS, he was well known by American naturalists. Michaux had been charged by the APS with exploring the Missouri River Valley and the Pacific coast, but the expedition was abandoned after the botanist participated in the political intrigues of Charles Gênet, Fauchet's predecessor. Unable to continue collecting because

²⁷ *Philadelphia Minerva*, Dec. 31, 1796; E. D. Merrill, "Palisot de Beauvois as an Overlooked American Botanist," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 76 (1936), 899–906; Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Science and Art* (New York, 1980), 82–83, 90–94; Adet to V. du Pont, March 23, 1796, May 15, 1796, August 25, 1796 and V. du Pont to Adet, April 21, 1796, Aug. 1, 1796, Winterthur Manuscripts.

of insufficient funds, Michaux returned to Charleston in April 1796. Hoping to secure additional monies for further exploration, Michaux planned to return to France. To maintain Michaux's botanical garden during his absence, Adet arranged for its title to be transferred to the French Republic with its care under the supervision of Victor du Pont. Undoubtedly with Beauvois's collections in mind, Adet and du Pont convinced Michaux to deposit his duplicate specimens in Philadelphia for safekeeping before the trip, but the mercurial botanist abruptly decided to go directly to France. Unfortunately, Michaux's ship wrecked off the Dutch coast damaging his collections and manuscripts. The surviving collections were placed in the Muséum National and the extant manuscripts formed the basis of Michaux's *Flora Boreali-Americana* (1803)—the first general account of North American botany. Adet agreed with du Pont's condemnation of both Beauvois and Michaux as temperamental scientists who pursued personal glory at the expense of the French Republic and of science.²⁸

Not only was Adet a conduit of money to French scientists in the United States, he also imported the best of American science to France. Because official duties limited him to infrequent attendance of the meetings of the APS and the Chemical Society, Adet followed their activities through his network of friends. Although not present at Benjamin Smith Barton's presentation of a paper on the stimulating effects of camphor on drooping plants during the APS meeting of September 16, 1796, Adet appreciated the importance of the work and published a French translation of it in the *Annales de Chimie* when the journal revived in 1797. Barton was an officer of the APS, a professor of natural history at the University of Pennsylvania, and an ardent Republican. He determined that "camphor acted as a powerful and wholesome stimulant upon the plants." Barton likened the effect of camphor on plants to that of opium on humans. Even after Adet had been in France for several years, his Republican contacts kept him involved in American scientific activity. In 1800, Vaughan wrote Adet asking for help in procuring several volumes of the *Encyclopédie* missing from the APS library. Vaughan was certain that Adet would provide such aid as he was a "wellwisher" of the APS. After learning of Robert Hare's invention in 1802 of the oxyhydrogen blow-pipe, a technical innovation that allowed chemists

²⁸ Joseph Ewan, "André Michaux," in Gillispie, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 9: 366; Greene, *American Science*, 195–96, 263; V. du Pont to Adet, July 30, 1796, Winterthur Manuscripts; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 959–61.

to achieve high temperatures capable of melting many substances heretofore thought to be infusible, Adet translated Hare's paper to the Chemical Society announcing the invention into French and published it in the *Annales de Chimie*.²⁹

At the same time that Adet utilized his Republican connections to cultivate science, he plotted with Beckley and other Republicans to effect the election of a Francophile president, thereby completing the "happy revolution" of restoring the Franco-American alliance. By inciting popular demonstrations, Adet planned to force Washington's resignation, or at least prevent him from serving a third term and to elect Jefferson in his place. Adet hoped that Jefferson, as a true friend of France, would issue an American declaration of war against Britain. As early as April 1796, Wolcott complained that Adet "liberally" sponsored Virginia Republicans, "promoting the views of the enemies of our peace, and prostrating the honour of America in the dust, with the view to bring Jefferson in as President." In September, Adet went to Boston, rallying New England Republicans to Jefferson's cause. He met with Massachusetts Governor Samuel Adams as well as the selectmen of Boston who gave him "every mark of civility and friendship." During this trip he also stopped in Albany where he met New York Republicans. In Pennsylvania, Adet worked with Beckley, Alexander J. Dallas, William Findley, Gallatin, McClenachan, McKean, Mifflin, John Smilie, John Swanwick, and those whom the *Farmer's Weekly Museum* called other "true French blooded Democrats in Philadelphia" on Jefferson's behalf.³⁰

A week before presidential electors were chosen in Pennsylvania, Adet's

²⁹ Benjamin Smith Barton, "Hints relative to the Stimulant Effects of Camphor upon Vegetables," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 4 (1799): 232-34; Greene, *American Science*, 21, 43, 47, 176, 256-57; P[ierre]-A[uguste] Adet, "Sur l'action stimulante du Camphre sur les végétaux, par le Docteur Benjamin Barton Smith," *Annales de Chimie* 23 (1797): 63-67; Vaughan to Adet, May 21, 1800, American Philosophical Society Archives; P[ierre]-A[uguste] Adet, "Mémoire sur l'usage du chalumeau et les moyens de l'alimenter d'air, etc.," *Annales de Chimie* 45 (1803), 113-38.

³⁰ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 947-49; *Mercury*, Sept. 2, 1796, Sept. 13, 1796; Gibbs, *Memoirs*, 1: 332, 384; King, *Life of Rufus King*, 2: 91; Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty* (Boston, 1962), 284; Stephen G. Kurtz, *The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism, 1795-1800* (Philadelphia, 1957), 178; *Boston Gazette and Republican Journal*, Sept. 19, 1796, Oct. 3, 1796; *Farmer's Weekly Museum* reprinted in *Mercury*, Jan. 20, 1797; *Connecticut Courant*, Jan. 9, 1797.

campaign for Jefferson culminated in the publication of several letters to Pickering printed in Bache's *Aurora*, which implied that if Jefferson were not elected, war with France would result. The Directors had decided to change Franco-American policy several months earlier, leaving the time and the manner of disclosure to Adet. This change was not a complete surprise to the Washington administration; rumors to that effect had been reported by American newspapers as early as July 1796. With the Directory's sanction, Adet announced the policy shift in a way calculated to influence the presidential election. In the first letter, Adet declared that the Directory believed that the United States had reneged on provisions of the treaty of 1778 by permitting Britain to repeatedly violate American trade with France. Henceforth, Adet stated, France "will treat the flag of neutrals in the same manner as they shall suffer it to be treated by the English." Adet's second letter proclaimed the Directory's order that all citizens and friends of France wear the tricolored cockade, the badge of the French Republic. Adet's third letter declared that the United States had "ceased to be neutral" and had made the "equivalent to a treaty of alliance with Great Britain." Adet implied that only Jefferson's election could prevent a dispute or a war with France. "Let your Government return to itself," Adet assured Americans, "and you will still find in Frenchmen faithful friends and generous allies." As a sign of the Directory's disfavor, Adet resigned.³¹

Adet's letters took the administration by surprise and provoked a hasty public reply from Pickering. Aware of the electoral implications of Adet's proclamations, Washington allowed Pickering to answer Adet in the newspapers. With the election only three days away, Pickering lacked the time to show a draft of his response to Washington. Aroused by Adet's inflammatory tone and unchecked by Washington, he fired off an intemperate reply. Ignoring Adet's complaints, Pickering reported that the United States would continue its current maritime policy and maintained that the British arrest of American vessels carrying French property was "warranted by the law of nations." Rather than sounding a conciliatory note, Pickering wondered if Adet's announcement meant that French privateers

³¹ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 966-72; *Mercury*, July 1, 1796; *Aurora Daily Advertiser*, Oct. 31, 1796, Nov. 5, 1796; Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 577.

were instructed to capture American ships?³²

Adet's intrigues may have been decisive in Pennsylvania but were not crucial, and may even have been counterproductive, in the national election. All but one of Pennsylvania's fifteen electoral votes were cast for Jefferson, but Adams eked out a national victory by a three-vote margin. Because of its large number of electors and even division between Republicans and Federalists, Pennsylvania was thought to be the pivotal state in the election. These factors, coupled with the razor-thin margin of victory for the Republican electors, meant that Adet had to influence only a few voters to determine the outcome in Pennsylvania. Many Federalists thought that Adet's "strokes of diplomatic Finesse" carried Pennsylvania by intimidating Quakers into voting for Jefferson to prevent war. Although he rallied some Republicans and frightened some Friends in Pennsylvania, Adet's electioneering probably cost Jefferson more national support than it gained. Adet's actions seemed to be exactly the "insidious wiles of foreign influence" that Washington in his Farewell Address warned were "one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government." The departing president had urged patriotic Americans to be "constantly awake" against these intrusions.³³

Awake they were. One New Englander claimed that after Adet's campaigning on behalf of Jefferson "there is not an elector on this side of the Delaware [River] that would not sooner be shot than vote for him." A Marylander held that Adet's intervention "irretrievably diminished that good will felt for his Government & the people of France by most people here." Learning of Adet's letters, Adams privately dismissed them as "some electioneering nuts [thrown] among the apes," presciently guessing that they would ultimately hurt Jefferson's campaign. Many Americans still loyal to France believed that Adet had "no special orders" for his actions and hoped that the Directory would recall him and disavow his letters. One Philadelphia gentleman charged that while Adet had acted "under a general discretion" which the Directory was "in the practice of giving to distant agents," the French minister took upon himself to collude with American

³² Fitzpatrick, *Washington*, 35: 252-53; Gerard H. Clarfield, *Timothy Pickering and the American Republic* (Pittsburgh, 1980), 174-76; Lowrie and Clarke, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, 1: 578.

³³ King, *Life of King*, 2: 113, 124; Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., "South Carolina Federalist Correspondence, 1789-1797," *American Historical Review* 14 (1909), 784-85; Gibbs, *Memoirs*, 1: 396-97; Fitzpatrick, *Washington*, 35: 233; Bernard C. Steiner, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of James McHenry* (Cleveland, 1907), 202.

Republicans against John Adams. Alluding to the rumors of Adet's imminent recall which had began as early as May 1796 and persisted throughout his mission, the gentleman asserted that Adet's impending removal was the "key" to his "conduct," i.e., Adet exceeded his authority only after receiving notice of his removal.³⁴

In contrast to the outrage expressed by Federalists, Republicans had little to say about Adet's intervention. In particular, what Jefferson thought remains a matter of speculation because he never made a recorded comment on it. Undoubtedly Jefferson's reply to Adet of October 14, 1795, encouraged the French minister to act. Jefferson's Federalist opponents and historian Conor Cruise O'Brien have taken his silence as consent for Adet's action. Certainly Adet's actions did not sour his relationship with Jefferson. Indeed, Jefferson maintained a political and scientific correspondence with Adet until 1806. In the course of this correspondence, Adet sent Jefferson a copy of his textbook *Leçons élémentaires de chimie* (1804). Jefferson reserved the book as one of the "treasures" to be enjoyed after retirement from public office and loaned it to a friend who was interested in preparing a chemistry textbook for use in the United States.³⁵

Despite maintaining cordial relations with Jefferson after the election, Adet warmed to the new president. In his inaugural address, Adams professed "a personal esteem" for France and a "sincere desire" to maintain the Franco-American alliance. His worst fears not realized, Adet began to think better of Adams and worse of Jefferson. Ironically, after his official mission to the United States ended, Adet finally began to understand American politics and politicians. Hoping to preserve what remained of the Franco-American alliance, Adet sought a meeting with Adams. Graciously receiving Adet with "all courtesy and possible regards," Adams convinced the former French minister that the United States sincerely desired peace. At the

³⁴ DeConde, *Entangling Alliance*, 476; Smith, *John Adams*, 2:899; *New York Advertiser* reprinted in the *Newport Mercury*, Nov. 29, 1796, Feb. 17, 1797; *Philadelphia Minerva*, May 21, 1796; *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), May 5, 1796.

³⁵ O'Brien, *The Long Affair*, 230-31, 240; Jefferson to Adet, Oct. 14, 1795, June 29, 1806, and Adet to Jefferson, May 4, 1797, March 3, 1806, Jefferson Presidential Papers; Malone, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty*, 312; E. Millicent Sowerby, comp., *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville, Va., 5 vols., 1983), 1: 381-82. Malone, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty*, 432, admits that Adet's letter to Jefferson of July 27, 1798 appeared to be improper, but explains it away by noting that Jefferson did not answer this letter. Malone misses that fact that Adet and Jefferson corresponded at least six times after July 27, 1798.

same time, Adet's ardor for Jefferson cooled. After meeting Jefferson at the inauguration, Adet concluded that despite being a champion of liberty and of science, the new vice president was an "American" and not a "sincere friend" of France because of his love of power, his high regard of his own opinion, and his impulsive nature. "Jefferson loves us," Adet realized, "because he hates England" and "dreads us less than Great Britain." Adet apprehended Jefferson's pragmatism and patriotism, discovering the existence of an Americanist faction stronger than either the Anglophiles or the Francophiles in the United States government.³⁶

After practicing diplomacy on behalf of the French Revolution, Adet practiced science on behalf of the Chemical Revolution.³⁷ He remained in the United States for six months after his resignation to defend the French revolution in chemistry from the attacks of Joseph Priestley, the last prominent and practicing phlogistian. Phlogiston theory was based on the role of phlogiston, the principle of inflammability, in the processes of combustion, calcination, and respiration. Phlogistians held that metals and other substances which burned were compounds of a base and phlogiston. During combustion, the metal released phlogiston into the air. After discovering that combustion ceased in a closed container, phlogistians linked the phlogistication of the air during combustion to the similar process during respiration.

Dismissing phlogiston as a nonentity, Antoine Laurent Lavoisier and his collaborators developed the antiphlogistic theory based on the role of oxygen in combustion, in respiration, in acidification, and in the composition of water. Instead of losing phlogiston during combustion, antiphlogistians held that inflammable objects absorbed oxygen, which accounted for the mass gained by substances after combustion. Although retaining the link between

³⁶ John Adams, "Inaugural Address," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., *History of American Presidential Elections, 1799-1968* (New York, 4 vols., 1971), 1: 96-97; Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2: 1001-02, 983.

³⁷ Despite questions raised by a few historians, especially J. B. Gough, "Lavoisier and the Fulfillment of the Stahlian Revolution," *Osiris* 4 (1988), 15-33, over what constituted the "Chemical Revolution," Lavoisier, most of his contemporaries (antiphlogistian and phlogistian alike), and many historians believed and continue to believe that the Chemical Revolution centered on the overthrow of phlogiston. Crosland, *In the Shadow of Lavoisier*, 11, notes that "no-one has faced the challenge of arguing cogently and systematically against the claims for a chemical revolution around the 1780s centered in France."

combustion and respiration, antiphlogistians stressed the importance of oxygen in these processes. Moreover, the antiphlogistians determined that water was composed of oxygen and hydrogen. The matters in dispute between phlogistians and antiphlogistians concerned the most fundamental issues in chemistry—the nature of elements and of chemical change. Antiphlogistic theory was propagated by Lavoisier and his leading converts—Adet, Claude-Louis Berthollet, Antoine François de Fourcroy, Louis Bernard Guyton, and Jean-Henri Hassenfratz. From 1785 to 1792, the antiphlogistians waged a relentless campaign against phlogiston theory. They attacked it with exacting quantitative experiments, articles in the *Annales de Chimie*, public conversions of phlogistians, and a re-formation of chemical nomenclature. Because of the role French chemists played in devising, supporting, and disseminating the new chemistry, it was also called the “French theory.” The Chemical Revolution climaxed during the French Revolution and all of the leading antiphlogistians served the French Republic in some fashion or another. In the minds of Lavoisier and Priestley, the two leading participants in both the French and Chemical revolutions, the two revolutions were obviously linked. As both men, one Adet’s mentor and the other his respected opponent, linked the two revolutions, it seems likely that Adet did as well.³⁸

While visiting Philadelphia in 1796, Priestley met Adet. The French minister appreciated the English émigré’s republicanism and his love of science. In England, Priestley’s outspoken support of the French Revolution goaded a “church and king” mob into razing his house and threatening his life on Bastille Day, 1791. In 1794, Priestley emigrated to the United States in search of tolerance, peace, and liberty, settling north of Harrisburg in remote Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. Like Adet, Priestley had stirred up partisan feeling in Philadelphia. He was aware of local sentiment against him and confided to Adet his fear of another political exile. Learning of Adet’s imminent resignation, Priestley contemplated accompanying the diplomat to France. He knew that he would be welcome in the French Republic because of an offer of citizenship from the National Convention in 1791. To encourage Priestley’s emigration, Adet secured from the Directory a promise of an annual stipend of twelve hundred livres for his newfound

³⁸ Adet to V. du Pont, May 4, 1797, Winterthur Manuscripts; Carleton E. Perrin, “The Triumph of the Antiphlogistians,” in Harry Woolf, ed., *The Analytic Spirit: Essays in the History of Science in Honor of Guerlac* (Ithaca, 1981), 40–63; Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, 231.

friend. To ease Priestley's transition into the French scientific community, Adet transmitted word of the English émigré's latest experiments to the National Institute. Perhaps because of the strained maritime relations between France and the United States after Adet's pronouncements, Priestley decided to remain in Northumberland County.³⁹

Although disappointed that Priestley did not emigrate to France, Adet remained on good terms with him. On February 6, 1797, Adet and Priestley joined other American Republicans and French émigrés in a celebration of the anniversary of the Franco-American alliance. The celebrants honored the two chemists with individual toasts. Recognizing the link between science and politics in Adet's mission, William Cobbett, an outspoken Federalist editor who used the nom de plume of Peter Porcupine, noted derisively that the group's toast to "The memory of Franklin and Rittenhouse—may their example instruct the philosopher and the statesman, that true glory consists of doing good to mankind" would be "particularly pleasing to Citizen Adet." Cobbett hoped that all Americans would reject Priestley's claim to have avoided political connections in the United States after "his present intimacy . . . with Citizen Adet." Two weeks later, perhaps at Adet's request, Priestley delivered a lecture for the benefit of the Philadelphia Society for the Relief of Distressed Emigrants, which aided French colonists who fled Saint Domingue.⁴⁰

In contrast to their political camaraderie, Adet and Priestley were scientific opponents. It was a friendly dispute, however. In 1803, Priestley remembered that he told Adet in 1796 that "I should have greater pride in acknowledging myself convinced [of the antiphlogistic theory], if I saw reason to be, than in victory, and should surrender my arms with pleasure." Priestley began the controversy with the publication of *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water* in 1796, renewing his defense of phlogiston theory and provoking a response from Adet. As the last phlogistian of note, Priestley realized that he was a member of "so small a minority" that it was almost disrespectful for him to

³⁹ Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Phlogiston Established and that of the Composition of Water Refuted* (Northumberland, Pa., 1800), xii-xiii; Jenny Graham, *Revolutionary in Exile: The Emigration of Joseph Priestley to America, 1794-1804* (Philadelphia, 1995), 97, 98, 105, 113; *Mercury*, November 25, 1796, December 2, 1796.

⁴⁰ *Mercury*, April 18, 1797; *Porcupine's Political Censor* 1 (1797), 30-38; *Connecticut Courant*, June 29, 1795; *Philadelphia Minerva*, Feb. 18, 1797.

challenge the antiphlogistians. Having adopted several significant antiphlogistic principles, Priestley expressed a willingness to accept the remaining tenets of the new chemistry if confirmed in his laboratory. Priestley disputed the principles of the Chemical Revolution which were based on experiments that he was unable to replicate—the antiphlogistic account of the calcination of metals and the decomposition of water—and objected to the new nomenclature's presumption of the antiphlogistic explanation of metals, combustion, and water on the grounds that facts should be known and principles determined before names were given to things.⁴¹

Priestley addressed *Considerations* to the "surviving Answerers" of Richard Kirwan, an Irish phlogistian who converted to the new chemistry in 1792, explicitly naming Berthollet, Fourcroy, Guyton, and Hassenfratz. Curiously, Priestley omitted naming Adet, who had refuted the *Irishman's Essay on Phlogiston and the Composition of Acids* in 1790. Perhaps Priestley believed that his discussions with the reserved Adet had settled the matter between him and the Frenchman. With Lavoisier's execution during the Terror in 1794, the chemists Priestley named and Adet were the most eminent antiphlogistians remaining. Adverting to the connection between the Chemical Revolution and French Revolution, Priestley hoped that the antiphlogistians did not want their "reign to resemble that of Robespierre," and would rather gain the disaffected few "by persuasion, than silence us by power." Priestley responded to the antiphlogistians, but too late. The Chemical Revolution was essentially complete. By 1796, the French antiphlogistians were not interested in fighting battles which they believed had already been won several years earlier.⁴²

Although none of the chemists Priestley addressed bothered to respond to his pamphlet, Adet complied. In his first visit to Philadelphia, Priestley discussed chemical matters with Adet. The former French minister was the most distinguished chemist to respond to Priestley, and he made the most authoritative rebuttal to Priestley's American defense of phlogiston

⁴¹ Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Phlogiston Established and that of the Composition of Water Refuted* (2d ed., Philadelphia, 1803), xv; Priestley, *Considerations*, 38–42; Robert E. Schofield, ed., *A Scientific Autobiography of Joseph Priestley (1733–1804): Selected Scientific Correspondence Edited with Commentary* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 325–28.

⁴² Priestley, *Considerations*, 17–18; P[ierre]-A[uguste] Adet, "An Essai on phlogiston and the Constitution of Acids par M. Kirwan," *Annales de Chimie* 7 (1790), 194–236.

theory—a fact the phlogistian conceded when he identified Adet as “a very respectable advocate” of the new chemistry in 1803. In addition to founding the *Annales de Chimie* with Lavoisier, Adet collaborated with Hassenfratz in devising a system of chemical symbols to be used with the antiphlogistic nomenclature. As a member of what historian Carleton Perrin calls Lavoisier’s “hatchet squad” which responded to obstinate phlogistians, Adet had defended Lavoisier’s revolutionary chemistry from the attacks of several phlogistians. Despite Adet’s erudition as a chemist and the presence of Fourcroy and Guyton on the Committee of Public Safety that sent Adet to the United States, chemistry was never mentioned in his official correspondence probably because the French minister had not actively practiced the science since 1792.⁴³

Adet answered Priestley in *Réponse aux Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et sur la Décomposition de l’Eau*. His contribution to the antiphlogistic nomenclature notwithstanding, Adet served the new chemistry as more of a translator of chemical works than as a researcher of experimental fame. The *Annales de Chimie*, as first purposed by Adet, were intended to be translations of German and English chemical memoirs into French. Just as Madame Lavoisier served as a translator for her husband, noted as a poor linguist, it is likely that Adet aided Lavoisier in the same capacity on the editorial board of the *Annales de Chimie*. Of the twenty-two articles Adet published in the *Annales de Chimie* between 1789 and 1803, fifteen were translations of the works of British and of American chemists, including Henry Cavendish, William Austin, Humphry Davy, and John Dalton as well as Barton, Hare, and Woodhouse.⁴⁴ Only three of Adet’s publications in the *Annales de Chimie* were the result of his own experimental work in the laboratory—his analyses of the acids in pineapple

⁴³ Perrin, “Triumph,” 50–53; Priestley, *Doctrine of Phlogiston Established*, xiv. For Adet’s work on the nomenclature, see Pierre-Auguste Adet and Jean-Henri Hassenfratz, “A Memoir on the New Characters to be used in Chymistry,” and “Second Memoir on the New Characters to be Employed in Chymistry, and the Arrangement which they should have, to Express the Proportions of the Simple Substances Contained in Compound Bodies,” in James St. John, trans., Claude-Louis Berthollet, Antoine François de Fourcroy, Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, and Louis Bernard Guyton de Morveau, *Method of Chemical Nomenclature* (London, 1788), 191–214.

⁴⁴ Denis I. Duveen, “Madame Lavoisier, 1758–1836,” *Chymia* 4 (1953), 14–15; *Table des Annales de Chimie 1789–1799*, 371–72; *Table des Annales de Chimie 1799–1806*, 267–68.

juice, of the flaming liqueur of Libavius, and of acetic acid.⁴⁵

In May 1797, Adet published *Réponse* on the press of Moreau. In *Réponse*, Adet translated Priestley's *Considerations* into French and appended to it a systematic response answering his friend point by point. Being on a diplomatic mission, Adet did not bring any philosophical apparatus or scientific literature to Philadelphia. Accordingly, he performed no experiments to refute Priestley; his response was purely theoretical. In his defense of the Chemical Revolution, Adet relied on the memory of experiments made by himself and others in addition to his general knowledge of the principles of the antiphlogistic theory. Believing the new chemistry to be conclusively founded on experiment and not being much of an experimenter, he saw no difficulty in this approach.⁴⁶

In *Réponse*, Adet quoted excerpts from Priestley's *Considerations* before stating the antiphlogistian reply. Adducing the experiments of Berthollet, Fourcroy, Lavoisier, and several other antiphlogisticians, Adet answered Priestley's objections. Adet contended that the antiphlogisticians had shown that the increase in mass of metal when oxidated in a closed vessel corresponded exactly to the mass of metal and the oxygen taken from the air. If Adet had a copy of the paper detailing Fourcroy's experiments on the composition of water, he could "open it and find the solution to all of the difficulties" presented by Priestley. As one of the formulators of the antiphlogistic nomenclature, Adet was particularly well qualified to answer Priestley's objections concerning the new nomenclature. He maintained that these complaints were unfounded because the Englishman interpreted the nomenclature too literally. Adet concluded by contrasting the simplicity of the antiphlogistic system and the careful experiments it was founded upon with the contradictions and difficulties raised by Priestley's theory. Adet respectfully acknowledged that the antiphlogistic system owed a tremendous debt to Priestley's research and hoped to welcome the Englishman to the new chemistry. Leaving further defense of the new chemistry to John Maclean and other American chemists, Adet left for France two weeks after

⁴⁵ P[ierre]-A[uguste] Adet, "Extrait d'un Mémoire sur le Muriate fumant d'étain, ou Liquer Fumante de Libavius," *Annales de Chimie* 1 (1788), 5-18; idem, "Essai Sur l'Analyse du suc Acide de l'Ananas," *Annales de Chimie* 25 (1798), 32-36; idem, "Mémoire sur l'Acide Acétique," *Annales de Chimie* 27 (1798), 299-319.

⁴⁶ Adet to V. du Pont, May 4, 1797, Winterthur Manuscripts; P[ierre]-A[uguste], Adet, *Réponse aux Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et sur la Décomposition de l'Eau* (Philadelphia, 1797), 57, 68, 78, 90.

the publication of *Réponse*, returning to the editorial board of the *Annales de Chimie*. Despite the ardor of their chemical dispute, Priestley and Adet remained friends. Priestley attended Adet's farewell party, and Adet promised to write Priestley upon his arrival in France. Adet left so abruptly for France that he charged Moreau with presenting the APS with of a copy of *Réponse*.⁴⁷

In contrast to Adet's amiable *Réponse*, Maclean's answer angered Priestley. An able antiphlogistian in his own right, Maclean learned the new chemistry in Paris under the direction of the French antiphlogistians. Embracing the republicanism of his teachers, Maclean emigrated from Scotland to the United States in 1795 and assumed the chemistry chair at the College of New Jersey. Unlike Priestley, Maclean stayed out of American politics, deeming it improper for an émigré to participate in disputes in his adopted land. Unaware of Adet's *Réponse*, Maclean published *Two Lectures on Combustion* to disabuse his students of Priestley's phlogiston theory. Like Adet, Maclean performed no experiments to answer Priestley's *Considerations*, thinking that the new chemistry was incontrovertibly established by the experiments of the French antiphlogistians. The content of *Two Lectures* was quite similar to that of *Réponse*—the two chemists cited many of the same experiments—but the former's tone was shrill and unconciliatory. Not knowing Priestley personally and being somewhat caustic by nature, Maclean attacked Priestley in such a manner as to offend the normally thick-skinned English émigré. Rejecting Priestley's experiments, Maclean asserted that a few experiments conducted by the French antiphlogistians "are of more consequence than thousands made without a due regard to accuracy and precision." Maclean dismissed phlogiston as a "creature of the imagination." By not informing him of the publication of *Two Lectures*, Priestley believed that Maclean had violated philosophical etiquette. He protested to another chemist that Maclean had not treated him with "the civility" to which the English émigré felt "entitled as a veteran in the science. Had he been the victorious Buonaparte [*sic*], I . . . should have

⁴⁷ Adet, *Réponse*, 42–80, *passim*; *Newport Mercury*, May 16, 1797; Graham, *Revolutionary in Exile*, 105, 106n; *Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 259. The experiments in dispute are Antoine François de Fourcroy, Armand Séguin, and Nicholas Louis Vauquelin, "Mémoire sur la Combustion du Gaz Hydrogène dan des Vaisseaux Clos," *Annales de Chimie* 8 (1791), 220–308.

been treated with respect, although vanquished."⁴⁸

Samuel Mitchill, professor of chemistry at Columbia College and an active Republican, tried to mediate the dispute in his journal, the *Medical Repository*. Mitchill explained to his friend Priestley that Maclean's sharp tone in *Two Lectures* came not from a "desire to offend," but from "inadvertency" and "warmth of argument." Mitchill reviewed both responses to Priestley's *Considerations*, determining that Adet had demonstrated that none of Priestley's objections "overthrow the theory of the antiphlogistians, or . . . invalidate the inferences drawn from their experiments" and that Maclean had defended the antiphlogistic theory with "ability and skill." Harboring a compromise system which tried to reconcile the two theories, Mitchill concluded that both theories had some strong points, but remained incomplete.⁴⁹ In 1798, Adet republished *Réponse* in Paris. Taking immediate notice, Fourcroy and Berthollet praised Adet's attack on Priestley's "shaky doctrine of phlogiston." Unconvinced by any of these antiphlogistians, Priestley's reply in *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water, Part II* emphasized the lack of experimentation done by Adet and especially Maclean. Not begrudging the tone of Adet, his departed friend, Priestley took Maclean to task for not conducting any experiments for *Two Lectures* and consequently making errors. After seven more years of controversy, Priestley died an outspoken phlogistian in 1804.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ John Maclean, *A Memoir of John Maclean, The First Professor of Chemistry in the College of New Jersey* (Princeton, 1876), 13–14; John Maclean, *Two Lectures on Combustion and an Examination of Doctor Priestley's Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston* (Philadelphia, 1797) reprinted in Foster, ed., *Lectures on Combustion*, 113, 116; *Medical Repository* 1 (1798), 521–22.

⁴⁹ Samuel Mitchill, "Review of *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water, Part the Second* by Joseph Priestley," *Medical Repository* 1 (1798), 542; idem, "Review of *Réponse aux Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et la Decomposition de l'Eau*," *Medical Repository* 1 (1798), 225, 229; idem, "Review of *Two Lectures on Combustion . . .* by John Maclean," *Medical Repository* 1 (1798), 350. For more on Mitchill, see Robert Siegfried, "An Attempt in the United States to Resolve the Differences between the Oxygen and the Phlogiston Theories," *Isis* 46 (1955), 327–36.

⁵⁰ P[ierre]-A[uguste] Adet, *Réponse aux Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et sur la Decomposition de l'Eau* (2d ed., Paris, 1798); J. R. Partington, *A History of Chemistry* (New York, 4 vols., 1962), 3: 244; Claude-Louis Berthollet, Antoine François de Fourcroy, et al., "Review of *Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et la Decomposition de l'Eau*, par Joseph Priestley," *Annales de Chimie* 26 (1798), 303; Joseph Priestley, *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water, Part II* (Philadelphia, 1797), 18, 27, 29. For a complete account of the American phlogiston controversy, see Michael F. Conlin, "Joseph Priestley's American Defense of Phlogiston Reconsidered,"

While Adet disputed chemical principles with Priestley, he served as the de facto French minister, despite the fact that Consul General Joseph Phillipe Létombe was technically the ranking French official. Adet, however, could do little as the French legation was bankrupt and he had no official status. As French privateers began to prey on American ships, the two republics moved towards war. When word of Georges Henri Victor Collot's arrest reached the eastern seaboard, and the American attempt to open diplomatic relations by sending Charles C. Pinckney to Paris was rebuffed, American criticism of French policies inevitably fell on Adet. Reports that Adet had ordered the capture of American vessels received at Guadeloupe were widely circulated in American newspapers. When Benjamin Franklin Bache "foretold" in the *Aurora* that Pinckney "would not be received" by the French Republic, some Americans believed that "he had obtained" this information "by going with a half a dozen other evil spirits at midnight to Citizen Adet's." In May 1797, shortly after the publication of *Réponse aux Réflexions sur la Doctrine du Phlogistique et sur la Decomposition de l'Eau*, Adet finally departed for France. On his arrival in Paris, he immediately reported to the Directory, recommending that diplomatic relations with the United States be restored. "As the means of settling differences which it is not in our interests to prolong," Adet advised the "reception of the [American] commissioners and a frank negotiation." His advice was ignored and the Quasi War, a two year undeclared Franco-American naval war, resulted. Adet remained active in French politics until his death in 1834, nimbly moving with the changes from republic to empire and back again.⁵¹

Citizen Pierre-Auguste Adet's American mission provides a unique opportunity to examine the importance of the network of American, French, and Irish Republicans in Philadelphia and beyond in the history of politics, diplomacy, and science in the early American republic. Working with American Republicans, Adet gained access to a secret treaty, recruited Napper Tandy and Wolfe Tone to the French army, employed Collot as a

Ambix 43 (1996), 129-45.

⁵¹ Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 2:1010-16; Elkins and McKittrick, *Age of Federalism*, 565; Aaron Burr to Joseph Phillipe Létombe, January 15, 1797 in Mary-Jo Kline, ed., *Political Correspondence and Public Papers of Aaron Burr* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), 286n; *Mercury*, Jan. 24, 1797, Jan. 31, 1797, April 18, 1797; *Connecticut Courant*, Jan. 30, 1797.

spy, and nearly got Jefferson elected as president. Although Adet's revolutionary diplomacy was unsuccessful, his mission would have been a complete failure without the help of his Republican comrades. Adet failed, in part, because he based his actions on the unfounded assumption of the Committee of Public Safety that the American people were republicans loyal to the ideals of the French Revolution, that the Republicans could be manipulated by the agents of France, and that the Federalists were British dupes.

Republican networks played an equally important role in Adet's support of French science and his defense of the Chemical Revolution. Showing great resourcefulness, Adet mixed science with diplomacy by charging Victor du Pont and Collot with geographical objectives. Stretching the scarce monies of the legation's treasury to the limit and relying on the help of his Republican friends, Adet supported the geographical work of Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry and Claude-Corentin Tanguy de la Boissière, and the natural history of Ambroise Palisot de Beauvois and André Michaux. Relying on the good graces of his Republican friends, Adet transmitted the cream of American chemistry to France without regularly attending the meetings of the scientific societies in Philadelphia. Adet's friendship with Republicans also served him well in his scientific dispute with Joseph Priestley. Despite conducting nearly identical responses to Priestley's *Considerations on the Doctrine of Phlogiston and the Decomposition of Water*, Adet remained on good terms with his Republican compatriot, while John Maclean alienated the grand old man of pneumatic chemistry. Adet employed Republican networks to pursue his diplomatic ends, to defend antiphlogistic chemistry, and to support French science, highlighting the intimate relationship between diplomacy, science, and politics in the early American republic.

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