

of Spanish America was a fact, that the recognition of the new governments was a matter of time and circumstance, that neither country desired any portion of Spain's former dominions, but that neither would look with indifference upon the transfer of any portion of them to another power.

On October 9, 1823, this proposal reached Washington. The answer would be framed by able and most experienced statesmen. The President, James Monroe, had been almost continuously in public service since 1782. He had been minister to France, Spain, and England, and had been Secretary of State. In his earlier missions he had often shown an unwise impetuosity and an independent judgment which was not always well balanced. He had, however, grown in wisdom. He inspired respect by his sterling qualities of character, and he was an admirable presiding officer. William H. Crawford, his Secretary of the Treasury, John Calhoun, his Secretary of War, William Wirt, his Attorney-General, and even John McLean, his Postmaster-General, not then a member of the Cabinet, were all men who were considered as of presidential caliber.

Foremost in ability and influence, however, was John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State.