

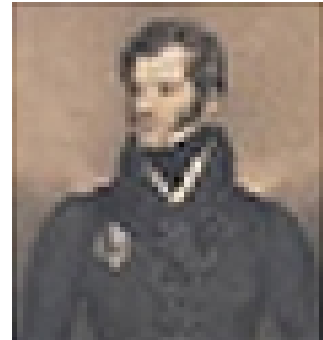
Rush-Bagot Pact 1817

Agreement between the United States and Great Britain
to eliminate their armed fleets from the Great Lakes, excepting small patrol vessels.

During the War of 1812, Great Britain and the United States had built fleets of armed ships on lakes Erie and Ontario. After the war, both powers were wary of one another's military strength; postwar shipbuilding ensued. However, the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, contained no disarmament provisions. Postwar trade rebounded. British political leaders viewed the United States as a valuable trading partner, and that British North America would be expensive and difficult to defend should another war break out.



Secretary of State Richard Rush



Minister Sir Charles Bagot

When US Minister to Great Britain, John Quincy Adams, proposed disarmament on January 25, 1816, British Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh responded favorably. The British Government had already dispatched Charles Bagot as Minister to the United States with the intention of improving relations. Bagot met with Secretary of State James Monroe informally, and finally reached an agreement with his successor, Acting Secretary Richard Rush. The agreement limited military navigation on the Great Lakes to one or two vessels per country on each lake. The US Senate ratified the agreement on April 28, 1818. The British Government considered a diplomatic exchange of letters between Rush and Bagot sufficient enough.

The Treaty settled border disputes along the US border with British North America, including:

- dividing the St. Lawrence and other rivers connecting the Great Lakes to allow both countries navigable channels;
- handed Wolfe Island near Kingston, Ontario to the British and Grosse Île near Detroit to the United States;
- made present-day Angle Inlet, Minnesota the end point of the 1783 border.

(Source: US Department of State. Office of the Historian
Milestones - 1801-1829 - Rush-Bagot Pact
<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/Rush-Bagot>)