Agent, the United States government is currently seeking to purchase land from Canada in order to add more territory for future states. In order to fully understand what the United States government can expect from this massive land deal, we have to understand how the only other deal of this magnitude “went down.” We desperately need your help in solving these key questions regarding the “Louisiana Territory.”

Here is what we know about the Louisiana Territory: In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson purchased a massive plot of land (may have done so illegally) that more than doubled the size of the United States. This land is referred to as the Louisiana Territory. Just like today, the United States was very enthusiastic about acquiring new territories; after all, this allows for more states to be admitted to the Union and will help support our growing population. However, the last thing a prosperous country like us needs is to be indebted to a country forever, or to have been “duped” into buying a useless piece of land. A picture of the land in question is included below.

We need your help! Use the following documents to answer the questions below about the Louisiana Territory. You should submit documentation of each question on the appropriate “Louisiana Territory Briefing Submission” form.

Agent, there is one more thing I must mention. I hope you understand the seriousness of this investigation. Because of this, your answers to the below questions cannot be short nor simple. They are required to be deep, complex, and must show a strong use of the documents in this case file.

**QUESTIONS:**

1.) What did President Jefferson want when he purchased the Louisiana Territory?

2.) How did Jefferson ultimately end up purchasing the entire Louisiana Territory, and under what terms?

3.) Once acquired, what did Jefferson want done with the area? Were these aims successful?

4.) What controversies arouse regarding Jefferson’s purchase of the Louisiana Territory?
Q1: What did President Jefferson want when he purchased the Louisiana Territory?

CIRCLE DOCUMENTS USED:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11

DEBRIEFING:

(In thorough, complete sentences, give your best answer to the question. You must refer back to each document that you circled to show how it was used to justify your answer. For example: "President Jefferson wanted the Louisiana Territory because of the large amount of animals which were highly valued in the fur trade (Doc 8). In Document 8, Jefferson clearly states, "......")
NOTES FOR QUESTION 1:

“What did President Jefferson want when he purchased the Louisiana Territory?”

(Use this paper to organize your thoughts before answering the short essay. Write down any important details from the document that may help you answer the question.)

DOCUMENT: ______

I. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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II. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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III. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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IV. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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DOCUMENT: ______

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DOCUMENT: ______

I. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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III. ___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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Thomas Jefferson's letter to Robert Livingston (early 1802).


"There is on the globe one single spot the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans. Through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market ... France places herself in that door, and her defiance to let us bring goods to foreign markets should wreck us. Spain might have retained New Orleans quietly for years. Her pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there, so that her possession of the place would be hardly felt by us . . . Not so can it ever be in the hands of France ... circumstances render it impossible that France and the United States can continue long friends when they meet in so irritable a position...

I should suppose that all these considerations might, in some paper form, be brought into view of the government of France. Though stated by us it ought not to give us offense, because we do not bring them forward as a menace but as an inquiry . . . If France considers New Orleans...she might perhaps be willing to look about for arrangements which might reconcile it to our interests. If anything could do this, it would be the ceding to us the island of New Orleans and the Florida . . . Every eye in the United States is now fixed on the affairs on Louisiana. Perhaps nothing since the Revolutionary War has produced more uneasy sensations through the body of the nation.

[Signature]
JANUARY 11, 1803.

Gentlemen of the Senate:

The cession of the Spanish Province of Louisiana to France, and perhaps of the Floridas, and the late suspension of our right to deposit goods at New Orleans are events of primary interest to the United States....In order to prevent future disturbances (to other countries and our own people) I wish it best to enter into negotiations with France. The objects of these negotiations are to obtain the territory on the left bank of the Mississippi and eastward of that, if practicable, on conditions to which the proper authorities of our country would agree, or at least to prevent any changes which might lessen the secure exercise of our rights.

I therefore nominate Robert R. Livingston and James Monroe to be ministers extraordinary and plenipotentiary, with full powers to both jointly, or to either on the death of the other, to enter into a treaty or convention with the First Consul of France for the purpose of enlarging and more effectually securing our rights and interests in the river Mississippi and in the Territories eastward thereof, first seeking only that of New Orleans to secure our shipping practices, but also inquiring about that of part or all of Florida....

OCTOBER 17, 1803.

Gentlemen of the Senate:

In my message of this day to both Houses of Congress I explain the circumstances which had led to the conclusion of conventions with France for the cession of the Province of Louisiana to the United States. Although we sought nothing more initially than that of New Orleans, it seems a much grander opportunity has developed....Abandoning aspirations in this America, the French leader Napoleon has decided to leave this land altogether. We sought only New Orleans yet they seek to rid all of Louisiana and focus on their own Europe. Livingston and Monroe have been offered this large territory, an estimated 800,000 square miles for the sum of fifteen mill...I have secured the sale...Those conventions are now laid before you with such communications relating to them as may assist in deciding whether you will advise and consent to their ratification.
Excerpt from President Jefferson's Instructions to Captain Meriwether Lewis June 20, 1803

To Meriwether Lewis esq. Capt. of the 1st regimt. of infantry of the U. S. of A.

Instruments for ascertaining the geography of the country through which you will pass, have been already provided. Light articles for barter and presents among the Indians, arms for your attendants, say for from 10. to 12. men, boats, tents, & other travelling apparatus, with ammunition, medecine, surgical instruments and provisions you will have prepared with such aids as the Secretary at War can yield in his department...

...The object of your mission be three-fold. The main object is to explore the Missouri river, or a principal stream of it, as, by it's course & communication will lead to the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregan, Colorado or another river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce.

Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, you will take careful observations of latitude & longitude, at all remarkeable points on the river, & especially at the mouths of rivers, at rapids, at islands, & other places & objects distinguished by such natural marks & characters of a durable kind, as that they may with certainty be recognised hereafter...

The commerce which may be carried on with the people inhabiting the line you will pursue, renders a knowledge of those people important. You will therefore endeavor to make yourself acquainted...with the names of the nations & their numbers; the extent & limits of their possessions; their relations with other tribes of nations; their language, traditions, monuments; their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war...

Other objects worthy of notice will be the soil & face of the country, it's growth & vegetable productions...; the animals of the country...; the remains or accounts of any which may be deemed rare or extinct; the mineral productions of every kind;...climate, as characterized by the thermometer, by the proportion of rainy, cloudy, & clear days, by lightening, hail, snow, ice, by the access & recess of frost, by the winds prevailing at different seasons, the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flower, or leaf, times of appearance of particular birds, reptiles or insects...

Lastly, In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly & conciliatory manner which their own conduct will admit; allay all jealousies as to the object of your journey, satisfy them of its innocence, make them acquainted with the position, extent, character, peaceable & commercial dispositions of the U.S. of our wish to be neighborly, friendly & useful to them...

To your own discretion therefore must be left the degree of danger you may risk, and the point at which you should decline, only saying we wish you to err on the side of your safety, and to bring back your party safe even it if be with less information.

Given under my hand at the city of Washington this 20th day of June 1803.

TH: JEFFERSON
Pr. U.S. of America
Peace medals became an integral part of the U.S. government’s relations with American Indians in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Lewis & Clark Expedition, or the “Corps of Discovery” maintained this practice of presenting peace medals to ensure goodwill between the United States government and the American Indians since the expedition depended—both for its economic and political success—on winning the respect and friendship of the American Indian tribes they encountered. However the medals given out on the Lewis and Clark expedition came with a price. Only if the chief would promise to be under the rule of “the Great Father,” and would make peace with the other Indian tribes in the area, would he be given a medal.
Drawn by C. Mead.
From a specimen brought by Lewis & Clark.
The feathers about the heads, breast, back and wings are yellow, some have the tips of the back feathers gray and dull about the edge. There is a species called the "Cook" of the Pileated Woodpecker. The heads of these birds are black with white stripes and the tails have a dark brown color on the upper side; the lower side is black. The bill is black and the feet are black and white.

The Cassie Black and White Elephant is a species of the Cassie family, closely related to the Elephas family. They are similar in size and color to the Elephas, but their horns are shorter and their tusks are more pronounced. They are found in Africa and southern Asia.

The Cassia, or Black, is a tree that grows in Africa and Asia. It is a large tree with dark green leaves and white flowers. The fruit is a pod that contains several seeds. The wood of the Cassia is used for making furniture and other objects. The bark of the Cassia is used in medicine and for making dyes.

Salal is a shrub that grows in the Pacific Northwest. It is a woody plant with deep purple berries. The leaves are dark green and the flowers are white. The fruits are eaten by birds and other animals. The Salal is an important food source for many animals in the region.
On September 23, 1806, Lewis wrote to President Jefferson:

"It is with pleasure that I announce to you the safe arrival of myself and party.... In obedience to your orders we have penetrated the Continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean, and sufficiently explored the interior of the country to affirm with confidence that we have discovered the most practicable rout which dose exist across the continent by means of the navigable branches of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. However, no water passage through the continent exists...one must take two."
This treaty must of course be laid before both Houses, because both have important functions to exercise respecting it. They, I presume, will see their duty to their country in ratifying & paying for it, so as to secure a good which would otherwise probably be never again in their power. But I suppose they must then appeal to the nation for an additional article to the Constitution, approving & confirming an act which the nation had not previously authorized. The constitution has made no provision for holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The Executive in seizing the fugitive occurrence which gives so much advances to the good of our country, has done an act beyond the Constitution. The Legislature must ratify & pay for it, and then must throw themselves on their country for doing this unauthorized act what we know they would have done for themselves had they been in a situation to do it. It is the case of a guardian, investing the money of his ward in purchasing an important adjacent territory; & saying to him when of age, I did this for your good; I pretend to no right to bind you: you may disavow me, and I must get out of the scrape as I can: I thought it my duty to risk myself for you.

Thomas Jefferson To John C. Breckinridge
Monticello, Aug. 12, 1803

Thomas Jefferson
Congress may admit new states, but can the Executive by treaty admit them? As by the Louisiana Treaty, the ceded territory must be formed into states & admitted into the Union, is it understood that Congress can annex any land in the future? If not, as slavery is authorized & exists in Louisiana, and the treaty engages to protect the property of the inhabitants, will not the present inequality arising from the representation of slaves be increased?

The provision of the Constitution on annexing land may be regarded as this deals greatest blemish, since our founding document clearly states the Executive has no such power... it would be foolish to consent to its being extended to the Louisiana states. Such an allowable act would only make matters more complicated and...more controversial... can the Executive now create states?....has the Executive single-handedly now offered representation to the inhabitants of this Louisiana or of New Orleans?...will slave property be protected by an order of the Executive? On account of the effect upon the public opinion produced by alterations of the fundamental laws of a country, we should hesitate in proposing what may appear to be beneficial; but I know of no alteration of the Constitution of the U.S...

...While I rightfully agree this territory is a wise investment, its rolling hills doubling the size of our great nation, securing us the great Mississippi for the transportation of our goods, New Orleans firmly resting in our strategic grips....we must be careful to not alter our young Constitution for I fear one may lead to another, and another may become common place.

Let’s ignore the fact that an Executive cannot purchase land. That is a power given solely and only to Congress. But if he was, this land is nothing but a great waste, a wilderness unpeopled with any beings except wolves and wandering Indians. 15 million is twice our national allowance, to simply dispose of it for something so useless is beyond the foolishness of a child. If I must provide more logic, the sole reason the French rejoiced once we opened negotiations is because they have no true claim to the land. This “Louisiana” is a Spanish possession. We may very easily be committing an illegal Executive act, and tremendously overpaying for a ruin wasteland, all to eventually fight the Spanish for our right to something we believe to be ours but yet they refuse to recognize!”