

12-1-2004

## Vice President against President

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### Recommended Citation

Whitney, Gleaves, "Vice President against President" (2004). *Ask Gleaves*. Paper 35.  
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## Vice President against President

Has a vice president ever seriously opposed a president, and were the consequences important for the nation?

At least twice a vice president seriously opposed the president with whom he served. The first and most dramatic instance occurred when Vice President Thomas Jefferson, totally at odds with President John Adams, decided to run against him for the top job -- and in the election of 1800 beat his boss.

The second occurred in 1811 when Vice President George Clinton opposed President James Madison's stand on the Bank of the United States. In his book *An Empire of Wealth*, John Steele Gordon explains that the charter for the bank "was due to expire on March 4, 1811, and the Madison administration submitted a bill to renew it for twenty years on January 24. Unfortunately Madison, while richly deserving of his place in the American pantheon as the father of the Constitution, was a largely ineffective president. He did not push hard enough to get the bill through or even to keep members of his own administration in line. When his vice president, George Clinton of New York, broke a tie vote in the Senate against the bank bill, the measure died. It was the most significant independent political act -- nearly the only one -- in the history of the vice presidency, and it would have disastrous consequences."<sup>[1]</sup>



*(Question from Andrea L. of Nashville, TN)*

<sup>[1]</sup> John Steele Gordon, *An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), pp. 116-17.