

that was once the capitol of the United States. None of the other 49 governors can make this claim and none of them has the special honor of performing his duties in a building where George Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army and where the American Revolution came to an official close.

Maryland may be a little State, but some big events have occurred here, not least of which were the two which I have just mentioned. It was on December 23, 1783, that General Washington laid down his sword to become plain George Washington, Esquire; and some weeks later, on January 14, 1784, the United States in Congress assembled signed the Treaty of Paris, right here in the Old Senate Chamber.

All of you present today are, I am sure, familiar with the thrilling story of those happenings. But I cannot resist restating that this very building in which we are assembled was the first peacetime capitol of the United States, thus making Annapolis our nation's first peacetime capital city.

Prior to January 14, 1784, the United States existed as an independent nation only by virtue of the Declaration of Independence. By 1784 Cornwallis had, of course, surrendered and England had accepted defeat by signing the Treaty of Paris. But the treaty was not legally in force because it lacked final approval by the American Congress. One can only speculate on what might have happened had that Congress been unable to assemble a quorum to sign the treaty. However, we do know that Thomas Jefferson was deeply worried that it would not be ratified because several delegates were absent. It took all of his energy to keep the Congress in session and finally gather enough delegates together to approve it. And so it was that on January 14, 1784, here in this venerable building, that the curtain was rung down on the final act in that great drama—the American Revolution.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the first peacetime government of the United States took up the problems facing it. And they were indeed multitudinous. There were matters of trade, commerce, foreign relation, administrations of public lands, military establishments, and, not least of all, finance—all of which had to be handled. The Congress that met here in Annapolis, however, was a Congress without real power, although the delegates did not lack the power of speech and, as the records show, there was plenty of talk. Jefferson was the guiding hand of that Congress and due to his genius some things were accomplished. He drew up a treaty of amity and commerce to