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# James Madison and the Militants: Republican Disunity and Replacing the Embargo

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Historians have studied intensively the origins of the War of 1812. That final vote for war in Congress, in June 1812, came at the end of a long trail of Anglo-American tears, and an equally long trail of anguish for American

politicians. Historiography on the War of 1812 traces both those trails, but it has not paid sufficient attention to the first eruption of genuine militancy in Congress in early 1809, as representatives searched for a substitute for the embargo that would be both politically acceptable and diplomatically effective.<sup>1</sup> The embargo had not lived up to the hopes republican ideology and the Republican administration had invested in the measure. And signals coming in to the party leaders suggested a resurgence of Federalist popularity and further division within the nation if the embargo were not lifted.

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This crisis for the...

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