

THE FEDERALIST ERA, 1789-1801: FOREIGN POLICY

I. Impact of the French Revolution

- A. popular overthrow of French monarchy and aristocracy, beginning in July 1789
 - 1. France proclaimed itself a republic (similar to the U.S.).
- B. Americans initially pleased (especially Jeffersonians)
 - 1. Saw the French Revolution as the second chapter of the American Revolution
- C. The Reign of Terror
 - 1. mid-1790s, the French revolutionary government executed thousands of conservatives, clergy, & anti-revolutionaries
 - 2. 1793, King Louis XVI & his wife, Mary Antoinette, beheaded
 - 3. Christianity was abolished
 - 4. Jeffersonians continued to support principles of the Revolution in spite of the bloodshed
 - 5. Federalists frightened at the scope of the carnage; viewed Jeffersonian masses with concern
- D. Revolution became a struggle between the France and the monarchies of Europe, ultimately becoming a world war
 - 1. 1792, war breaks out in Europe
 - 2. 1793, Britain sucked into the conflict; became France's main opponent, 1793-1815
 - 3. U.S. had to decide which side to support when war spread to the Atlantic & Caribbean.

II. Washington's Neutrality Proclamation (1793)

- A. U.S. still obligated to France under the Franco-American mutual defense alliance of 1778
 - 1. U.S. had pledged to protect French West Indies from enemies
 - 2. U.S. was militarily weak in 1793
 - 3. Hamilton argued in favor of repudiation of treaty
 - 4. Jeffersonians favored the Alliance
 - 5. President Washington believed war should be avoided at all costs
- B. President Washington's Neutrality Proclamation of 1793
 - 1. Proclaimed U.S. neutrality toward the war between Britain and France
 - 2. Warned citizens to be impartial to both Britain and France
 - 3. Federalists supported the Proclamation
 - 4. Jeffersonians enraged by the Proclamation, especially by Washington not consulting Congress
 - 5. America & France benefited from U.S. neutrality

- a. America's neutrality meant it could still deliver foodstuffs to the West Indies
- b. France did not officially ask the U.S. to honor the Franco-American treaty
- c. If U.S. entered war, British navy would blockade U.S. coasts and cut off supplies the French relied on

C. Citizen Genêt

- 1. Genêt was French minister to U.S who recruited Americans and commissioned American ships to fight for France
- 2. Believed that the Neutrality Proclamation did not truly reflect American public opinion; attempted to bypass Washington by appealing directly to the voters
- 3. Washington demanded Genêt's withdrawal, & the French Government replaced him

III. Jay Treaty of 1794 (ratified by Senate in 1795)

A. Background: British continued harassing American frontier settlers and U.S. maritime commerce

- 1. British remained in their northern frontier posts on U.S. soil in violation of the peace treaty of 1783
- 2. British selling firearms and alcohol to Indians in Old Northwest, who continued to attack American settlers
- 3. Beginning in 1793, British navy seized about 300 U.S. ships trading with French West Indies
- 4. As Britain and France went to war, British pressed hundreds of Americans sailors from U.S. merchant vessels into service on British warships

B. Federalists unwilling to go to war

- 1. U.S. depended on nearly 75% of its revenue from tariffs on British imports
- 2. Jeffersonians nevertheless argued that U.S. should impose an embargo against Britain

C. Washington sent John Jay to London in 1794 to negotiate.

D. Provisions of the treaty that Jay negotiated:

- 1. Generally very favorable to Britain; U.S. won few concessions
- 2. British pledged to remove their posts from U.S. soil by 1796
- 3. British refused to guarantee against future maritime seizures and impressments or the inciting of Indians to violence on the frontier

E. Washington pushed for ratification of the treaty, realizing that war with Britain would be disastrous to the weak U.S.

F. The Senate narrowly approved the treaty in 1795

G. War with Britain was averted

H. Jeffersonian outrage resulted in creation/solidification of the Republican Party

1. South felt betrayed that northern merchants would be paid damages
2. Southern planters would be taxed to pay pre-Revolution debt

IV. Pinckney Treaty of 1795 (ratified by Senate in 1796)

A. Spain feared that Jay Treaty portended an Anglo-American alliance; Spain thus sought to appease U.S. and thus head off U.S. expansion on the frontier

1. Spain a declining power in Europe
2. Spain's position declining on the American frontier

B. Treaty provisions:

1. Very favorable to U.S.
2. Granted free navigation of the Mississippi River to the U.S., including right of deposit at the port city of New Orleans
3. Yielded large area north of Florida that had been in dispute for over a decade

V. War with France

A. French government condemned the Jay Treaty

1. Saw it as an initial step towards a U.S. alliance with Britain
2. Saw it as a flagrant violation of the Franco-American mutual defense treaty of 1778
3. French warships seized about 300 U.S. merchant vessels by mid-1797, mainly in the Caribbean
4. France refused to receive America's newly appointed envoy.

B. XYZ Affair

1. President Adams sent a delegation to Paris in 1797 to settle the problem
2. U.S. delegates approached by three French agents, to whom the delegates referred in their official dispatches as "X, Y, and Z"
"X, Y, and Z" demanded a large loan and a bribe of \$250,000 for the privilege of opening discussions with French foreign minister Talleyrand
3. Americans refused to pay; negotiations broke down.
4. News of the episode insulted and infuriated Americans, and war hysteria swept the U.S.

C. Undeclared Naval Warfare, 1798-1799 -- "Quasi -War"

1. U.S. war preparations set in motion
 - a. Navy Department at the cabinet level was created: - ship navy expanded
 - b. Marine Corps established
 - c. Army of 10,000 men was authorized (not fully raised)
 - d. Washington was top general, but he gave active command to Hamilton (the leading Federalist)

2. Adams suspended all trade with France and authorized American ships to capture armed French vessels
 3. Undeclared hostilities ensued for 2 1/2 years between 1798-1800
 - a. Principally in the West Indies.
 - b. U.S. privateers and U.S. Navy captured over 80 French armed ships
 - c. Several hundred U.S. merchantmen were lost to the French.
- D. Convention of 1800 (Adams's "Finest Moment")
1. France, reluctant to encourage an Anglo-American alliance, became eager to negotiate a peace
 2. Adams sent new foreign envoys to France
 - a. Hamiltonian "High Federalists" enraged; sought conquest, expansion, and military glory
 - b. Jeffersonians and moderate Federalists approved, favoring one last try for peace
 3. 1800, U.S. negotiated with Napoleon (who was bent on European conquest)
 4. Convention of 1800
 - a. France agreed to end the 22-year Franco-American alliance with the U.S.
 - b. U.S. agreed to pay the damage claims of American shippers
 5. Significance:
 - a. Major war with France avoided
 - b. Improved relations made possible the Louisiana Purchase 3 years later--if war had occurred, Napoleon would not have sold Louisiana
 - c. Adams felt this to be his finest achievement

VI. Domestic consequences of the undeclared naval war with France

- A. The Alien and Sedition Acts (1798)
 1. Anti-French hysteria played into the hands of the Federalists
 2. Largest ever Federalist victory in 1798-99 congressional elections
 3. This popular approval led Federalists to pass a series of four controversial national security laws in 1798 to neutralize power of French agents in U.S and prevent interference with war effort; these laws are collectively known as the Alien and Sedition Acts
 - a. A collateral effect of the laws was to reduce the power of Jeffersonians and silence their anti-war opposition

b. This was a deliberate effect; many Federalists saw the Jeffersonians as tools or partners of the French revolutionary government

4. Alien Acts

a. A series of naturalization acts that raised residence requirements for U.S. citizenship from 5 yrs to 14 years and allowed the president to deport dangerous foreigners

b. Alien Acts were never enforced, but some frightened foreign agitators left

5. Sedition Act

a. Anyone who conspired to impede the policies of government or falsely or maliciously criticized its officials, including the president, would be liable to a heavy fine and imprisonment.

b. Law would automatically expire in 1801 the day before Adams's term was to end; this showed the law's political character (if a Republican became president in 1801, Republicans wouldn't be able to use the Sedition Act to prosecute Federalists.)

c. A Republican member of Congress and ten Republican newspaper editors were brought to trial and convicted

B. Republican response to the Alien and Sedition Acts—The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions (authored by Jefferson and Madison)

1. A series of resolutions adopted by the Virginia and Kentucky state legislatures, secretly authored by Jefferson and Madison

2. Argued that some of the Alien and Sedition Acts were unconstitutional (especially the Sedition Act)

3. Argued that individual state governments had the right to nullify unconstitutional federal laws

a. Nullification: Individual states were the final judges of whether a federal law was constitutional

4. Resolution's purpose was not to break up the Union but to preserve it by protecting civil liberties

C. Backlash against heavy-handed Federalist measures led to Republican victories in presidential and many congressional and state elections of 1800