

SECTION 2

Foreign Affairs Trouble the Nation

MAIN IDEA

Events in Europe sharply divided American public opinion in the late 18th century.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Foreign policy remains a key element of every presidential administration.

Terms & Names

- neutrality
- Edmond Genêt
- Thomas Pinckney
- Little Turtle
- John Jay
- sectionalism
- XYZ Affair
- Alien and Sedition Acts
- nullification

One American's Story

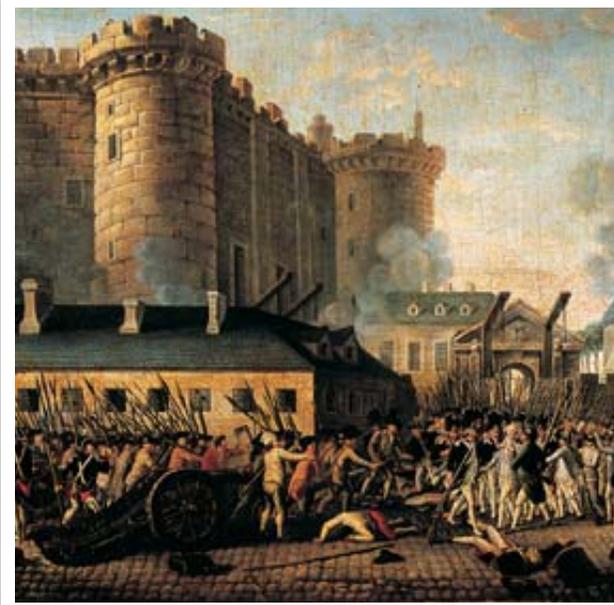
Gouverneur Morris, the man responsible for the final draft of the Constitution, witnessed one of the great events of history—the French Revolution. On July 14, 1789, a mob stormed the Bastille, the infamous Paris prison, releasing the prisoners and killing the prison governor. Not long afterward, while walking on a Paris street, Morris got a close look at revolutionary violence.

A PERSONAL VOICE GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

“[T]he Head and Body of Mr. de Foulon are introduced in Triumph. The Head on a Pike, the Body dragged naked on the Earth. Afterwards this horrible Exhibition is carried thro the different Streets. His crime [was] to have accepted a Place in the Ministry. This mutilated form of an old Man of seventy five is shewn to Bertier, his Son in Law, the Intend't. [another official] of Paris, and afterwards he also is put to Death and cut to Pieces, the Populace carrying about the mangled Fragments with a Savage Joy.”

—quoted from his journal

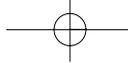
Morris was appointed minister to France in 1792. Despite his horror at the violence around him, Morris remained at his post throughout the bloodiest days of the Revolution. Meanwhile, at home, Americans were divided in their views concerning the events underway in France.



▲ French revolutionaries storm the Bastille in Paris, France, on July 14, 1789.

U.S. Response to Events in Europe

Most Americans initially supported the French Revolution because, like the American Revolution, it was inspired by the ideal of republican rule. Heartened by the American struggle against royal tyranny, the French set out to create a government based on the will of the people. The alliance between France and the United States, created by the Treaty of 1778, served as an additional bond



between the two nations. Whether or not the United States should support the French Revolution was one of the most important foreign policy questions that the young nation faced.

REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION Despite the bonds between the nations, Americans soon became divided over the Revolution. In early 1793, a radical group called the Jacobins seized power in France. They beheaded the French king, Louis XVI, and launched the Reign of Terror against their opponents, sending moderate reformers and royalists alike to the guillotine. In an excess of revolutionary zeal, the Jacobins also declared war on other monarchies, including Great Britain.

Because of their alliance with the United States, the French expected American help. The American reaction tended to split along party lines. Democratic-Republicans, such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, wanted to honor the 1778 treaty and support France. Federalists, such as Alexander Hamilton, wanted to back the British. President Washington took a middle position. On April 22, 1793, he issued a declaration of **neutrality**, a statement that the United States would support neither side in the conflict. Hamilton and Jefferson came to agree; entering a war was not in the new nation's interest. **A**

Earlier in April, the French had sent a young diplomat, **Edmond Genêt**, to win American support. Instead of following diplomatic procedure and presenting his credentials to the Washington administration, Genêt began to recruit Americans for the war effort against Great Britain. This violation of American neutrality and diplomatic protocol outraged Washington, who demanded that the French recall Genêt. By then, however, Genêt's political backers had fallen from power in Paris. Fearing for his life, the young envoy remained in the United States and became a U.S. citizen. Although Jefferson protested against Genêt's actions, Federalists called Jefferson a radical because he supported France. Frustrated by these attacks and by his ongoing feud with Hamilton, Jefferson resigned from the cabinet in 1793.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives

A Why did the United States want to maintain its neutrality?

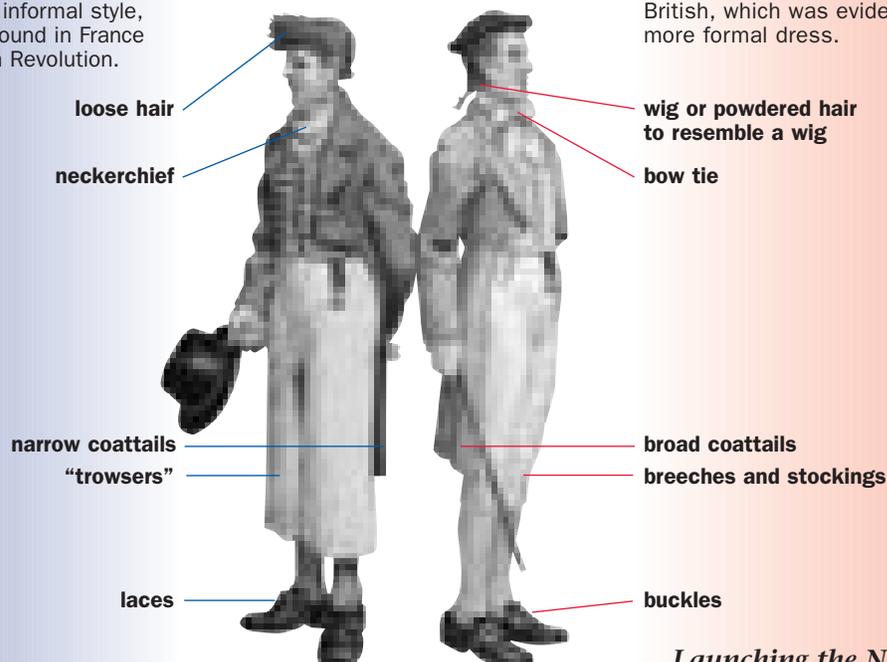
Politics and Style

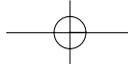
Events in France not only affected politics in the United States, they influenced styles of clothing as well. Political differences could often be detected by observing different styles of dress and appearance.

DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICANS

favored a more informal style, similar to that found in France after the French Revolution.

FEDERALISTS tended to be pro-British, which was evident in their more formal dress.





TREATY WITH SPAIN The United States wanted to secure land claims west of the Appalachian mountains and to gain shipping rights on the Mississippi River. To do this, it needed to come to an agreement with Spain, which still held Florida and the Louisiana Territory, a vast area of land west of the Mississippi River.

Negotiations stalled because of the turmoil in Europe. Spain, unlike Britain, signed a treaty with France. Spain then feared British retaliation and suspected that a joint British-American action might be launched against the Louisiana Territory. Suddenly, Spain agreed to meet with U.S. minister to Great Britain **Thomas Pinckney**, and on October 27, 1795, both sides signed a treaty.

Pinckney's Treaty of 1795, also known as the Treaty of San Lorenzo, included virtually every concession that the Americans desired. Spain gave up all claims to land east of the Mississippi (except Florida) and recognized the 31st parallel as the southern boundary of the United States and the northern boundary of Florida. Spain also agreed to open the Mississippi River to traffic by Spanish subjects and U.S. citizens, and to allow American traders to use the port of New Orleans. **B**

MAIN IDEA

Recognizing Effects

B Why did the United States want access to the Mississippi River?

Native Americans Resist White Settlers

Pioneers moving west assumed that the 1783 Treaty of Paris, in which Great Britain had ceded its land rights west of the Appalachians, gave them free rein to settle the area. But the British still maintained forts in the Northwest Territory—an area that included what is now Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin—in direct violation of the treaty. In addition to this continued British presence, the settlers met fierce resistance from the original inhabitants.





▲ The Miami war chief Little Turtle negotiates with General Anthony Wayne.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

C Why did Native Americans demand negotiations with the United States over the Northwest Territory?

FIGHTS IN THE NORTHWEST Having been excluded from the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Paris, Native Americans in the Northwest Territory never accepted the provisions. They continued to claim their tribal lands and demanded direct negotiations with the United States. They also took heart from the presence of British troops, who encouraged their resistance. When white settlers moved into their territory, Native Americans often attacked them. **C**

To gain control over the area that would become Ohio, the federal government sent an army led by General Josiah Harmar. In 1790, Harmar's troops clashed with a confederacy of Native American groups led by a chieftain of the Miami tribe named **Little Turtle**. The Native Americans won that battle. The following year, the Miami Confederacy inflicted an even worse defeat on a federal army led by General Arthur St. Clair.

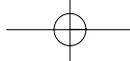
BATTLE OF FALLEN TIMBERS Finally, in 1792, Washington appointed General Anthony Wayne to lead federal troops against the Native Americans. Known as “Mad Anthony” for his reckless courage, Wayne spent an entire year drilling his men. Greatly impressed, Little Turtle urged his people to seek peace.

★ A PERSONAL VOICE LITTLE TURTLE

“We have beaten the enemy twice under different commanders. . . . The Americans are now led by a chief who never sleeps. . . . We have never been able to surprise him. . . . It would be prudent to listen to his offers of peace.”

—speech to his allies

The other chiefs did not agree with Little Turtle and replaced him with a less able leader. On August 20, 1794, Wayne defeated the Miami Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near present-day Toledo, Ohio. After the battle, Wayne's army marched defiantly past the British Fort Miami, only two miles away, and then built an American post nearby.



This victory ended Native American resistance in Ohio. The following year, the Miami Confederacy signed the Treaty of Greenville, agreeing to give up most of the land in Ohio in exchange for \$20,000 worth of goods and an annual payment of nearly \$10,000. This settlement continued a pattern in which settlers and the government paid Native Americans much less for their land than it was worth. Meanwhile, in the Northwest Territory, new sources of conflict were developing between Britain and the United States.

JAY'S TREATY At the time of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, **John Jay**, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, was in London to negotiate a treaty with Britain. One of the disputed issues was which nation would control territories west of the Appalachian Mountains. When news of Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers arrived, the British agreed to evacuate their posts in the Northwest Territory and a treaty was signed on November 19, 1794. The treaty managed to pass the Senate, but many Americans, especially western settlers, were angry at its terms, which allowed the British to continue their fur trade on the American side of the U.S.-Canadian border. **D**

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

D Why were so many Americans dissatisfied with Jay's treaty with Britain?

Adams Provokes Criticism

The bitter political fight over Jay's Treaty, along with the growing division between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, convinced Washington not to seek a third term in office. In his "Farewell Address" he urged the United States to "steer clear of permanent alliances" with other nations. Then, in 1797, Washington retired to his home at Mount Vernon.

In the presidential election of 1796, Americans faced a new situation: a contest between opposing parties. The Federalists nominated Vice-President John Adams for president and Thomas Pinckney for vice-president. The Democratic-Republicans nominated Thomas Jefferson for president and Aaron Burr for vice-president.

In the election, Adams received 71 electoral votes, while Jefferson received 68. Because the Constitution stated that the runner-up should become vice-president, the country found itself with a Federalist president and a Democratic-Republican vice-president. What had seemed sensible when the Constitution was written had become a problem because of the unexpected rise of political parties.

The election also underscored the growing danger of **sectionalism**—placing the interests of one region over those of the nation as a whole. Almost all the electors from the southern states voted for Jefferson, while all the electors from the northern states voted for Adams. **E**

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

E How did political parties affect the results of the election of 1796?

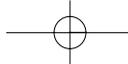


▲ Portrait of a young John Adams by Joseph Badger

ADAMS TRIES TO AVOID WAR Soon after taking office, President Adams faced his first crisis: a looming war with France. The French government, which regarded the Jay treaty with Britain as a violation of the French-American alliance, refused to receive the new American ambassador and began to seize American ships bound for Britain. Adams sent a three-man delegation consisting of Charles Pinckney, minister to France; future Chief Justice John Marshall; and Elbridge Gerry to Paris to negotiate a solution.

By this time, the Reign of Terror had ceased and the French government consisted of a legislature and a five-man executive branch called the Directory. French power and prestige were at a high point because of the accomplishments of a young general named Napoleon Bonaparte who had conquered most of western Europe. The Directory had little patience with the concerns of the Americans.

The American delegation planned to meet with the French foreign minister, Talleyrand. Instead, the Directory sent three low-level officials, whom Adams in



Analyzing Political Cartoons

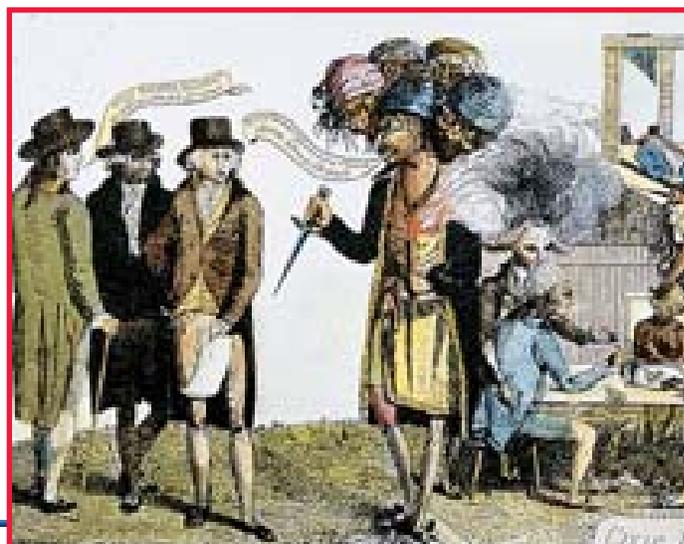
“THE PARIS MONSTER”

“*Cinque-tetes*, or the Paris Monster,” is the title of this political cartoon satirizing the XYZ Affair. On the right, the five members of the French Directory, or ruling executive body, are depicted as a five-headed monster demanding money. The three American representatives, Elbridge Gerry, Charles Pinckney, and John Marshall, are on the left, exclaiming “Cease bawling, monster! We will not give you six-pence!”

SKILLBUILDER Analyzing Political Cartoons

1. How would you contrast the cartoon’s depiction of the American representatives with its depiction of the French Directory?
2. What other details in the cartoon show the cartoonist’s attitude toward the French?

 SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R24.



his report to Congress called “X, Y, and Z.” These officials demanded a \$250,000 bribe as payment for seeing Talleyrand. News of this insult, which became known as the **XYZ Affair**, provoked a wave of anti-French feeling at home. “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute” became the slogan of the day. The mood was so anti-French that audiences refused to listen to French music.

In 1798, Congress created a navy department and authorized American ships to seize French vessels. Twelve hundred men marched to the president’s residence to volunteer for war. Congress authorized the creation of an army of 50,000 troops and brought George Washington yet again out of retirement to be “Lieutenant General and Commander in Chief of the armies raised or to be raised.” While war was never officially declared, for the next two years an undeclared naval war raged between France and the United States.

Vocabulary

alien: belonging to or coming from another country; foreign

Vocabulary

sedition: rebellion against one’s country; treason

THE ALIEN AND SEDITION ACTS Anti-French feeling continued to flourish, and many Federalists believed that French agents were everywhere, plotting to overthrow the government. New arrivals from foreign countries were soon held in particular suspicion, especially because many immigrants were active in the Democratic-Republican party. Some of the most vocal critics of the Adams administration were foreign-born. They included French and British radicals as well as recent Irish immigrants who lashed out at anyone who was even faintly pro-British, including the Federalist Adams.

To counter what they saw as a growing threat against the government, the Federalists pushed through Congress in 1798 four measures that became known as the **Alien and Sedition Acts**. Three of these measures, the Alien Acts, raised the residence requirement for American citizenship from five years to 14 years and allowed the president to deport or jail any alien considered undesirable.

The fourth measure, the Sedition Act, set fines and jail terms for anyone trying to hinder the operation of the government or expressing “false, scandalous, and malicious statements” against the government. Under the terms of this act, the federal government prosecuted and jailed a number of Democratic-Republican editors, publishers, and politicians. Outraged Democratic-Republicans called the laws a violation of freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.

VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY RESOLUTIONS The two main Democratic-Republican leaders, Jefferson and James Madison, saw the Alien and Sedition Acts as a serious misuse of power on the part of the federal government. They decided to organize opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts by appealing to the states. Madison drew up a set of resolutions that were adopted by the Virginia legisla-



ture, while Jefferson wrote resolutions that were approved in Kentucky. The Kentucky Resolutions in particular asserted the principle of **nullification**—that states had the right to nullify, or consider void, any act of Congress that they deemed unconstitutional. Virginia and Kentucky viewed the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional violations of First Amendment citizens rights. **F**

The resolutions warned of the dangers that the Alien and Sedition Acts posed to a government of checks and balances guaranteed by the Constitution.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

F How did the Kentucky Resolutions challenge the authority of the federal government?

A PERSONAL VOICE THOMAS JEFFERSON

“Let the honest advocate of confidence [in government] read the alien and sedition acts, and say if the Constitution has not been wise in fixing limits to the government it created, and whether we should be wise in destroying those limits.”

—8th Resolution, The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions

Moreover, Virginia and Kentucky claimed the right to declare null and void federal laws going beyond powers granted by the Constitution to the Federal government.

The resolutions also called for other states to adopt similar declarations. No other state did so, however, and the issue died out by the next presidential election. Nevertheless, the resolutions showed that the balance of power between the states and the federal government remained a controversial issue. In fact, the election of 1800 between Federalist John Adams and Republican Thomas Jefferson would center on this critical debate.

THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON Throughout 1799, George Washington remained active, writing letters to recruit possible generals and making plans for the army that might be needed in a possible war against France. However, on December 14, Washington died after catching a severe cold. Washington was buried according to his wishes with a military funeral at Mount Vernon.

Ironically, Washington’s death was instrumental in improving relations with France. Napoleon Bonaparte, now first consul of France, hoped to lure American friendship away from the British and back to the French. Napoleon ordered ten days of mourning to be observed in the French armies for the American leader. Soon, Napoleon would offer even greater concessions to the Americans.



ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- neutrality
- Little Turtle
- sectionalism
- Alien and Sedition Acts
- Edmond Genêt
- John Jay
- XYZ Affair
- nullification
- Thomas Pinckney

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

List some of the disputes mentioned in this section. Indicate the dispute and each side’s arguments.

Dispute	
One side	Other side

Choose one dispute and defend one side’s arguments.

CRITICAL THINKING

3. ANALYZING ISSUES

Do you agree with the Democratic-Republicans that the Alien and Sedition Acts were a violation of the First Amendment? Were they necessary? Support your opinion. **Think About:**

- the intent of the First Amendment
- what was happening in Europe
- what was happening in America

4. EVALUATING DECISIONS

Should the United States have officially supported the French revolutionaries against the British? Support your opinion with examples from the text. **Think About:**

- Federalist and Republican attitudes toward France and Great Britain
- the Reign of Terror
- U.S. gratitude to France for its support against Britain