

# Foreign Affairs in the Young Nation

*To what extent should the United States have become involved in world affairs in the early 1800s?*

## Introduction

Did you know that you are carrying a history lesson in your pocket or wallet? You will find it on any \$1 bill. Look at a dollar and see for yourself.

On one side, you will see two circles showing the Great Seal of the United States. For thousands of years, governments have used seals like this one to mark their approval of important documents. Our nation's founders thought that a national seal was so important that they began work on it the same day they declared independence: July 4, 1776. In 1782, Congress approved the design we see on our currency today.

The Great Seal symbolizes the nation's principles. For example, the unfinished pyramid on one side of the seal **signifies** strength and endurance, while the bald eagle on the other side is a symbol of the United States. In one claw, the eagle holds an olive branch, a symbol of peace, and in the other, the eagle holds arrows to symbolize war. The olive branch and arrows of war show that the United States will **pursue** peace but will also protect itself. Notice that the eagle faces peace.

When you turn the dollar bill over, you will see a portrait of George Washington. Americans still honor Washington as the nation's first president, but few remember that Washington defined U.S. foreign policy in the early years of the nation's history.

During his presidency, Washington established policies that would guide the United States in its future dealings with other nations. The United States could be actively involved in world affairs and risk war, or it could avoid involvement in other nations' conflicts in the hope of staying at peace. Which choice would you have made for the new nation? In this lesson, you will read about four dilemmas that faced early U.S. presidents and how their decisions shaped the foreign policy pursued by later presidents.



### **Social Studies Vocabulary**

blockade

embargo

isolationism

Monroe Doctrine

neutrality

## **1. President Washington Creates a Foreign Policy**

When George Washington took office as the nation's first president in 1789, the United States was weak militarily. The army that Washington had commanded during the American Revolution had disbanded and had not been replaced for two reasons. First, the government did not have the money to keep its army active. Second, some Americans feared that a standing national army could be used to take away their liberty. State militia troops, they believed, could handle any threats the country might face.

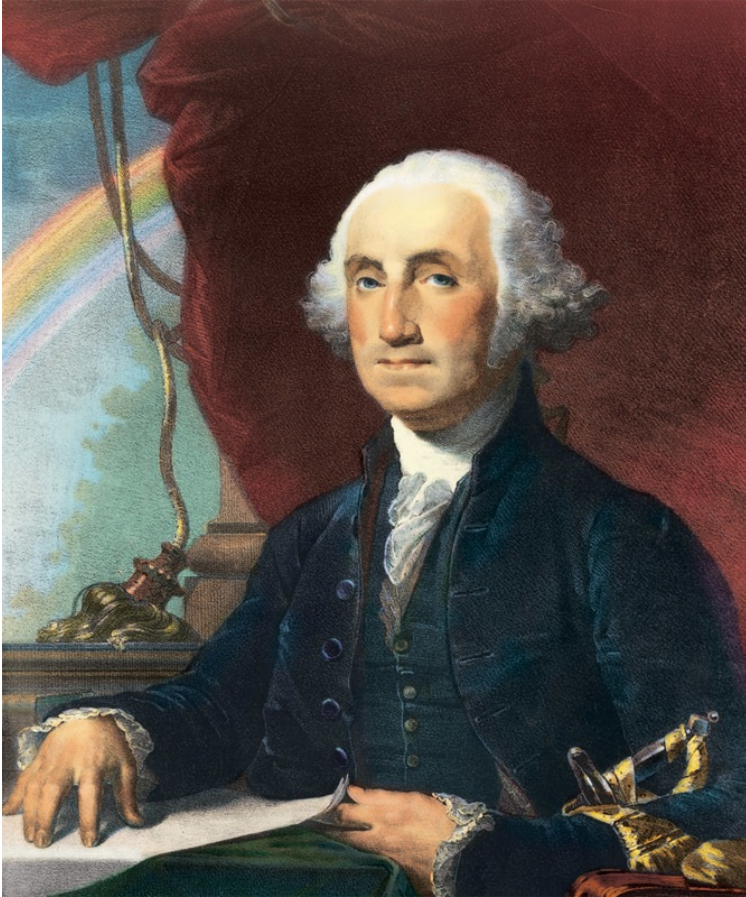
And there were indeed threats because the new nation was surrounded by unfriendly powers. To the north, the British controlled Canada and refused to abandon their forts in the Ohio Valley, even though this region now belonged to the United States. To the south and west, Spain controlled Florida and Louisiana.

Events in Europe also threatened the new nation. In 1789, the French people rose up against their king and fought to make France a republic. Some Americans were thrilled by the French Revolution. In 1793, however, France declared war against Great Britain, presenting President Washington with the difficult problem of deciding which side to take.

During its own revolution, the United States had signed a treaty of alliance with France in 1778. Alliances are agreements made with other nations to aid and support each other. In that treaty, the United States had promised to aid France in time of war, and many Americans were eager to honor that pledge, even if it meant going to war with Great Britain again.

Knowing that the United States was not prepared for war, Washington decided to ignore the treaty and announced a policy of **neutrality**. Under this policy, the United States would do nothing to aid either France or Great Britain in their war.

Before leaving office, Washington summed up his foreign policy in a farewell address to the nation. The United States, he said, could gain nothing by becoming involved in other nations' affairs. "It is our true policy," he declared, "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." Washington's policy of avoiding alliances with other countries became known as **isolationism**. For the next century, isolationism would be the foundation of U.S. foreign policy.







## 2. President Adams's Dilemma: Protecting U.S. Ships

Isolationism sounded good in theory, but it is often hard to stay out of other countries' conflicts. No one knew this better than the nation's second president John Adams, who tried to follow George Washington's policy of neutrality. With France, however, staying neutral proved to be difficult.

**The Jay Treaty** After the outbreak of war between Great Britain and France in 1793, the British Navy began to attack U.S. merchant ships headed for France. French leaders hoped that these attacks, as well as Great Britain's refusal to leave the Ohio Valley, would lead to war between Great Britain and the United States. However, those hopes were dashed when Washington sent John Jay, chief justice of the Supreme Court, to London to settle things with the British. In the treaty signed in 1794, known as the Jay Treaty, the British finally agreed to pull their troops from the Ohio Valley and halt attacks on U.S. shipping. France, still at war with Great Britain, viewed the Jay Treaty not only as a violation of its own treaty with the United States, made back in 1778, but as an alliance between the United States and Great Britain. In July

1796, the French navy began attacking U.S. merchant ships bound for Great Britain, and over the next year, French warships seized several American ships.

**The XYZ Affair** President Adams sent three envoys, or representatives, to France to ask the French to end the attacks. French foreign minister Talleyrand refused to speak to the Americans. Instead, they were met by secret agents, later identified only as X, Y, and Z. The agents said that no peace talks would be held unless Talleyrand received a large sum of money as a tribute, or money given to someone in exchange for that person's protection. Shocked by the request, the American envoys refused.

The XYZ Affair, as it became known, outraged Americans when the story reached home. At President Adams's request, Congress voted to recruit an army and to build new ships for the nation's tiny navy. The slogan “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!” was heard everywhere as Americans prepared for war.

Meanwhile, Congress authorized U.S. warships and privately owned ships, called privateers, to launch a “half war” on the seas. During this undeclared war, American ships captured more than 80 French vessels.

As war fever mounted, President Adams, hardly a well-loved leader, found himself unexpectedly popular, and his Federalist Party gained support throughout the country. The question facing Adams was whether the popular thing—waging an undeclared war on France—was also the best thing for the country.



### 3. What Happened: Adams Pursues Peace

President John Adams knew that no matter how good war might be for the Federalist Party, it would not be good for the country. In February 1799, he announced that he was sending a group of men to France to work for peace, which likely infuriated Federalist leaders. Some accounts suggest they pleaded with the president to change his mind, but Adams would not budge.

By the time the peace mission reached France, a French military leader named Napoleon Bonaparte had taken over the French government. Napoleon wanted to make peace with both Great Britain and the United States and ordered the navy to stop seizing American ships and to release captured American sailors.

In a treaty made between France and the United States in 1800, Napoleon agreed to end France's 1778 alliance with the United States. In exchange, the Americans agreed not to ask France to pay for all the ships it had seized, which meant that the U.S. government would have to pay American ship owners for their lost property. To Adams, this



seemed a small price to pay for peace with France.

Choosing the olive branch cost Adams political popularity. His pursuit of peace with France created strong disagreements within the Federalist Party, ultimately losing Adams and the Federalists votes when he ran for reelection in 1800. Jefferson defeated Adams in the election, and the Federalist Party lost much of its support. Over the next few years, Adams would watch his Federalist Party slowly fade away.

Still, Adams had no regrets. He wrote,

*I will defend my missions to France, as long as I have an eye to direct my hand, or a finger to hold my pen . . . I desire no other inscription over my gravestone than: "Here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of the peace with France in the year 1800."*



#### **4. President Jefferson's Dilemma: Dealing with Pirates**

Unfortunately, the peace that John Adams achieved with France did not last long. In 1803, France and Great Britain were again at war. As the



conflict heated up, both nations began seizing American ships that were trading with their enemy. President Thomas Jefferson, who took office in 1801, complained bitterly that “England has become a den of pirates and France has become a den of thieves.” Still, like Washington and Adams before him, Jefferson tried to follow a policy of neutrality.

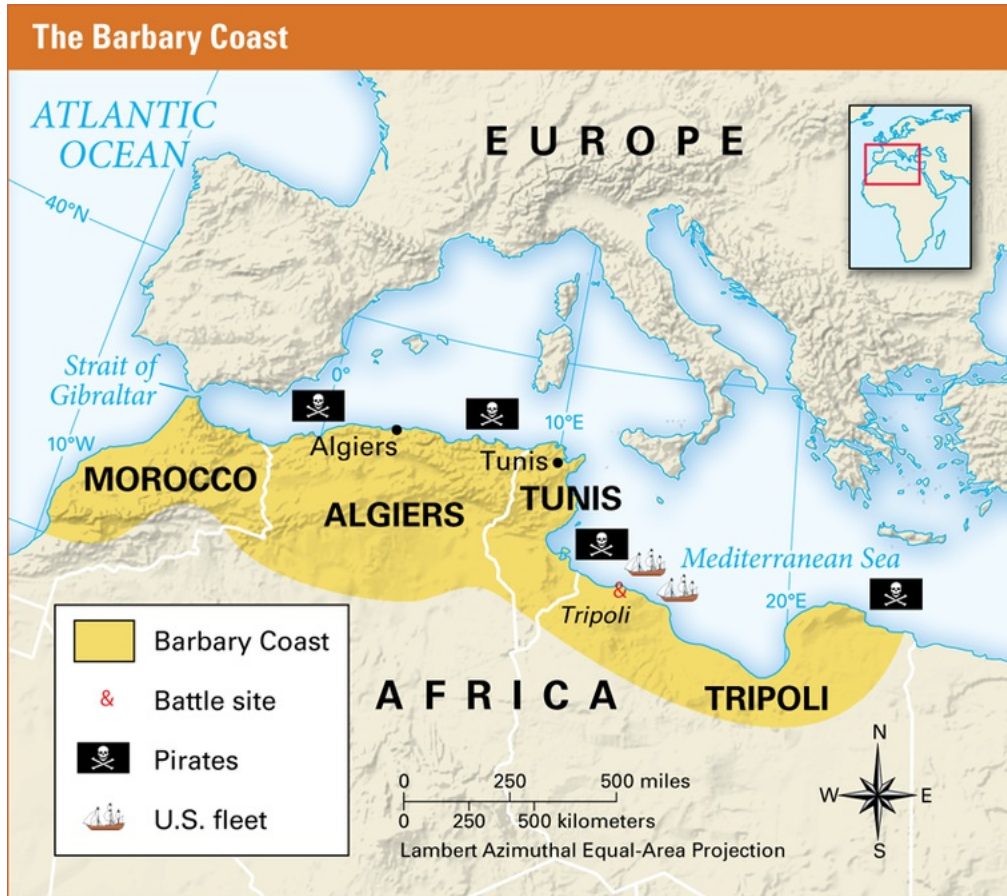
**Impressment** Remaining neutral when ships were being seized was hard enough. It became even harder when Great Britain began impressing American sailors—kidnapping them and forcing them to serve in the British navy. The British claimed that the men they impressed were British deserters. This may have been true in some cases, as some sailors may well have fled the terrible conditions on British ships, but thousands of unlucky Americans were also impressed.

American anger over impressment peaked in 1807 after a British warship, the *Leopard*, stopped a U.S. warship, the *Chesapeake*, to search for deserters. When the *Chesapeake*'s captain refused to allow a search, the *Leopard* opened fire. Twenty-one American sailors were killed or wounded in the attack, which triggered another case of war fever, this time against Great Britain.

**Piracy** American ships faced a different threat from the Barbary States of North Africa: piracy, or robbery at sea. For years, pirates from Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli had preyed on merchant ships entering the Mediterranean Sea, so that they could seize the ships and hold the crews for ransom.

Presidents Washington and Adams both paid tribute to Barbary State rulers in exchange for the safety of American ships. While Americans were shouting “millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute” during the XYZ Affair, the United States was quietly sending money to the Barbary States.

By the time Jefferson became president, the United States had paid the Barbary States almost \$2 million. The ruler of Tripoli, however, demanded still more tribute, and to show that he was serious, he declared war on the United States. Jefferson hated war, but he also hated paying tribute. The question was, which was worse?



## 5. What Happened: Jefferson Solves the Problem

As much as Thomas Jefferson hated war, he hated paying tribute more. In 1801, he sent a small fleet of warships to the Mediterranean to protect American shipping interests. The war with Tripoli plodded along until 1804, when American ships began bombarding Tripoli with their cannons.

During this time, one of the ships, the *Philadelphia*, ran aground on a hidden reef in the harbor, and the captain and crew were captured and held for ransom. Rather than let pirates have the *Philadelphia*, a young naval officer named Stephen Decatur led a raiding party into the heavily guarded Tripoli harbor and set the ship afire.

After a year of U.S. attacks and a blockade, Tripoli signed a peace treaty with the United States in 1805. Tripoli agreed to stop demanding tribute payments, and in return, the United States paid a \$60,000 ransom for the crew of the *Philadelphia*. This was a bargain compared to the \$3 million first demanded.

Pirates from other Barbary States, however, continued to raid ships in the Mediterranean. By the mid-1800s, piracy in the Barbary States finally ended.

Meanwhile, Jefferson tried desperately to convince both France and Great Britain to leave American ships alone. Unfortunately, all of his diplomatic efforts failed, and between 1803 and 1807, Great Britain seized at least a thousand American ships, with France capturing about half that many.

When diplomacy failed, Jefferson proposed an **embargo**— a complete halt in trade with other nations. Under the Embargo Act passed by Congress in 1807, no foreign ships could enter U.S. ports and no American ships could leave, except to trade at other U.S. ports. Jefferson hoped that stopping trade would prove so painful to France and Great Britain that they would agree to leave American ships alone.

The embargo, however, proved far more painful to Americans than to anyone in Europe, and some 55,000 sailors lost their jobs. In New England, newspapers pointed out that *embargo* spelled backward reads “O grab me,” which made sense to all who were feeling its pinch.

Congress repealed the unpopular Embargo Act in 1809. American ships returned to the seas, and French and British warships continued to attack them.





## 6. President Madison's Dilemma: Protecting Sailors and Settlers

President James Madison took office in 1809. He tried a new approach to protecting Americans at sea by offering France and Great Britain a deal: If you agree to **cease** your attacks on American ships, the United States will stop trading with your enemy.

Napoleon promptly agreed to Madison's offer. At the same time, Napoleon's navy continued seizing American ships headed for British ports. Madison, who desperately wanted to believe Napoleon's false promise, cut off all trade with Great Britain.

Meanwhile, the British continued seizing ships and impressing American sailors. Madison saw only one way to force Great Britain to respect American rights. He began to think about abandoning George Washington's policy of isolationism and going to war with Great Britain.

New Englanders and Federalists generally opposed going to war. Merchants in New England knew that war would mean a **blockade** of their ports by the British navy and preferred to take their chances with the troubles at sea.

Many people in the South and to the west, however, supported going to war. Like all Americans, they resented Great Britain's policy of impressing U.S. sailors, and they also accused the British of stirring up trouble among American Indians in the states and territories to the northwest.

Trouble with the Indians was growing as settlers moved into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys and pushed Indians off their lands. Two Shawnee Indians—a chief named Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet—tried to fight back by uniting Indians along the Mississippi River into one great Indian nation. On November 7, 1811, a militia force led by Indiana governor William Henry Harrison fought against Shawnee warriors at Tippecanoe Creek. Although Harrison defeated the Indian forces, after the battle, Harrison's men discovered that the Indians were armed with British guns.

Americans were outraged. Several young congressmen from the South and West, including Henry Clay of Kentucky and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, were so eager for war with Great Britain that they were nicknamed “War Hawks.” They argued that to make the northwestern frontier safe for settlers, the United States needed to drive the British out of Canada. Once that was done, Canada could be added to the United States.

Losses at sea, national pride, and a desire to make the frontier safe for settlement all contributed to the enthusiasm for war, but Madison still hesitated. Was the nation strong enough to launch the arrows of war, or should Madison hold tightly to the olive branch of peace?



## 7. What Happened: The War of 1812

James Madison chose to abandon isolationism. At his request, Congress declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. This was a bold step for a nation with an army of 7,000 poorly trained men and a navy of only 16 ships.

**Battles on Land and Sea** War Hawks were overjoyed when the War of 1812 began. They thought that conquering Canada was “a mere matter of marching.” They were wrong. In 1812, 1813, and again in 1814 U.S. forces crossed into Canada, but each time British forces drove them back.

The British, too, found the going much rougher than expected. On September 10, 1813, a U.S. naval force under the command of Oliver Hazard Perry captured a British fleet of six ships on Lake Erie. Perry's victory enabled William Henry Harrison to push into Upper Canada, where he defeated the British in a major battle. Chief Tecumseh, who was fighting on the side of the British, was killed. However, in December, the British drove the Americans back across the border.

By 1814, Napoleon had been defeated in Europe, and Great Britain was able to send thousands of troops across the Atlantic. American plans to conquer Canada came to an end.

Meanwhile, in August 1814, another British army invaded Washington, D.C. The British burned several public buildings, including the Capitol and the White House. President Madison had to flee for his life.

Next the British attacked the port city of Baltimore, Maryland. On September 13, an American lawyer named Francis Scott Key watched as the British bombarded Fort McHenry, which guarded the city's harbor. The bombardment went on all night. When dawn broke, Key was thrilled to see that the American flag still waved over the fort, proving that the fort had not been captured. He expressed his feelings in a poem that was later put to music as “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

**The Battle of New Orleans** A British fleet had surrendered to U.S. forces after the Battle of Lake Champlain in New York just two days before the unsuccessful attack on Baltimore. In Great Britain, news of this defeat would greatly weaken the desire to continue the war. But the news took time to travel, and in the meantime British commanders in the United States launched another invasion. This time, their target was New Orleans.



New Orleans was defended by General Andrew Jackson and a diverse army of 7,000 militia that included a few African Americans, Indians, and pirates. On January 8, 1815, more than 7,500 British troops marched confidently into battle, where they were met with deadly fire from Jackson's troops. Some 2,000 British soldiers were killed or wounded, compared with only about 70 Americans.

The Battle of New Orleans was the greatest U.S. victory of the War of 1812. It was also unnecessary. Two weeks earlier, American and British diplomats meeting in Ghent (GHENT), Belgium, had signed a peace treaty ending the war. The news did not reach New Orleans until after the battle.

**Results of the War** Although both sides claimed victory, neither Great Britain nor the United States really won the War of 1812. The Treaty of Ghent settled none of the issues that had led to the fighting. Instead, the problems of impressment and ship seizures faded away as peace settled over Europe. Still, the war had important effects.

First, the war severely weakened Indian resistance in the Northwest Territory. Over the next 20 years, the U.S. government would force most of the American Indians who fought with Tecumseh out of the Ohio Valley and west of the Mississippi River.

Second, national pride in the United States surged. Many Americans considered the War of 1812 “the second war of independence.” They felt that by standing up to the British, the United States had truly become a sovereign nation.

Third, the war had political effects. The Federalists were badly damaged by their opposition to the war, and their party never recovered. Two of the war's heroes—William Henry Harrison and Andrew Jackson—would later be elected president.





## 8. President Monroe's Dilemma: A New Foreign Policy Challenge

James Monroe became president in 1817. After the excitement of the War of 1812, he was relieved to return the nation to its policy of isolationism. Americans began to turn their attention away from Europe, however, and direct it to events happening in Latin America. From Mexico to the tip of South America, Latin Americans were rising up in revolt against Spain.

**Latin America's Revolutions** In Mexico, the revolt against Spanish rule was inspired by a Catholic priest named Miguel Hidalgo (me-GHELL heh-DAHL-goh). On September 16, 1810, Hidalgo spoke to a crowd of poor Indians in the town of Dolores. “My children,” Hidalgo said, “will you make an effort to recover from the hated Spaniards the lands stolen from your fore-fathers three hundred years ago? Death to bad government!” Hidalgo's speech, remembered today as the “Cry of Dolores,” inspired a revolution that lasted ten years. In 1821, Mexico finally won its independence from Spain.



Two other leaders **liberated** South America. In 1810, a Venezuelan named Simón Bolívar (see-MOHN buh-LEE-var) launched a revolution in the north with this cry: “Spaniards, you will receive death at our hands! Americans, you will receive life!” José de San Martín (ho-ZAY de SAN mar-TEEN), a revolutionary from Argentina, led the struggle for independence in the south. By the end of 1826, the last Spanish troops had been driven out of South America.

**New Latin American Nations** Many Americans were excited by independence movements in Latin America. The British also supported the revolutions—for their own reasons. Spain had not allowed other nations to trade with its colonies. Once freed from Spanish rule, the new Latin American nations were able to open their doors to foreign trade, including trade with Great Britain.

Other European leaders were not so pleased. They feared that revolutions, even on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, threatened their rule, and some even began to talk of helping Spain recover its lost colonies. In 1823, Great Britain asked the United States to join it in sending a message to these leaders, telling them to leave Latin America alone.

President James Monroe asked former presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison for advice. Should the United States do something to support the new Latin American nations? If so, what?



## 9. What Happened: The Monroe Doctrine

Both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison liked the idea of joining with Great Britain to send a warning to the nations of Europe. Jefferson wrote to James Monroe, “Our first and fundamental maxim [principle] should be, never entangle ourselves in the broils [fights] of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle [interfere] with . . . America, North and South.”

President Monroe's secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, agreed with Jefferson. But Adams insisted that “it would be more candid [honest], as well as more dignified,” for the United States to speak boldly for itself. President Monroe agreed.

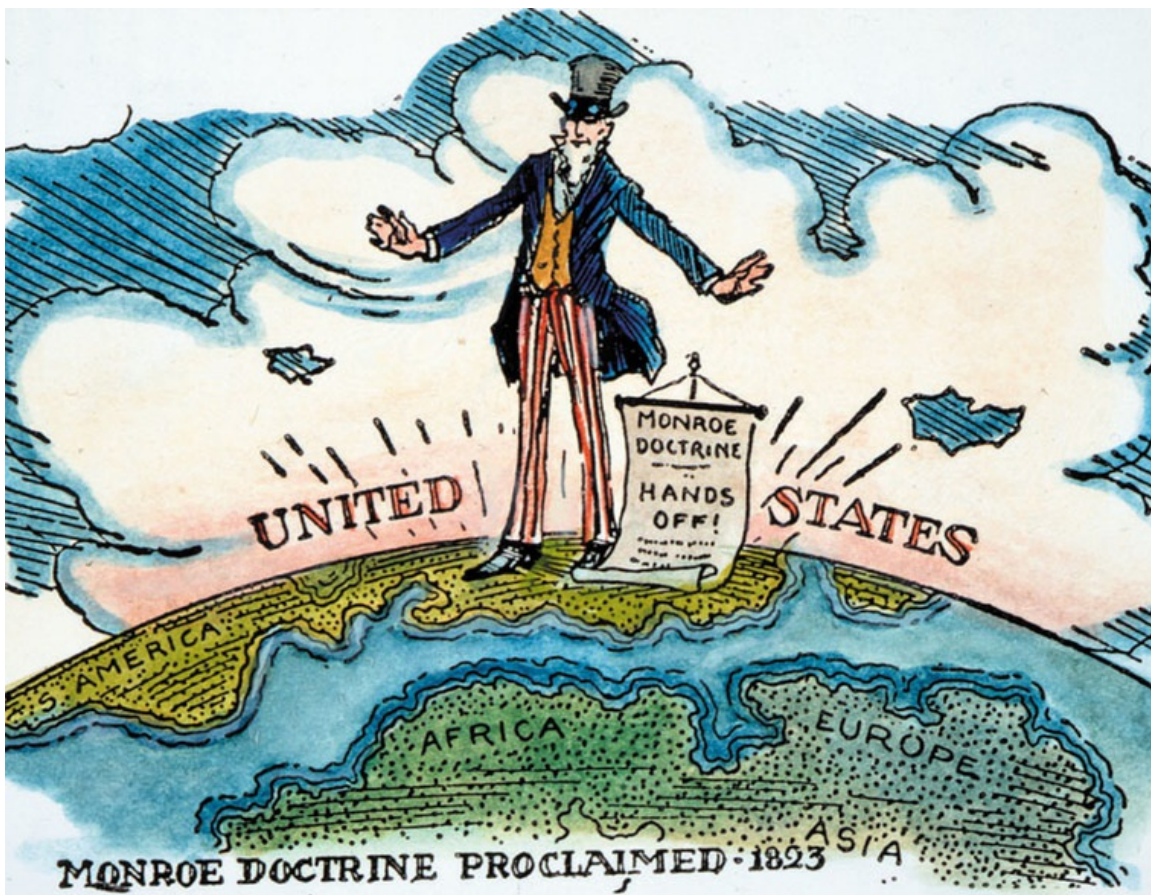
In 1823, Monroe announced in his annual message to Congress a policy that became known as the **Monroe Doctrine**. Monroe stated that the nations of North and South America were “free and independent” and were “not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” The United States, he said, would view efforts by Europeans to take over “any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous

to our peace and safety.”

Europeans denounced Monroe's message as arrogant. By what right, asked a French newspaper, did the United States presume to tell the other nations of the world what they could do in North and South America?

Americans, however, cheered Monroe's message. It made them proud to see the United States stand up for the freedom-loving people of Latin America.

In the years ahead, the Monroe Doctrine joined isolationism as a basic principle of U.S. foreign policy. The doctrine asserted that the United States would not accept European interference in the affairs of the Americas. It also contained another, hidden message. By its very boldness, the Monroe Doctrine told the world that the United States was no longer a weak collection of quarreling states. It was becoming a strong and confident nation—a nation to be respected by the world.



## Lesson Summary



**In this lesson, you learned about the development of foreign policy in the United States under the nation's first five presidents.**

**President Washington Creates a Foreign Policy** The first U.S. president knew that the young nation was unprepared for war. George Washington established a policy of isolationism to avoid alliances with other countries which could draw the country into wars abroad.

**President Adams's Dilemma** During the presidency of John Adams, France attacked U.S. ships. Adams followed Washington's policy of isolationism and kept the United States at peace by securing a treaty with France.

**President Jefferson's Dilemma** President Thomas Jefferson also faced threats at sea. When peace talks failed, he passed the Embargo Act of 1807, which would also prove to be unsuccessful.

**President Madison's Dilemma** President James Madison tried to negotiate with both France and Great Britain, but the attacks at sea continued. He finally abandoned isolationism and declared war on Great Britain. The War of 1812 ended in a peace treaty with Great Britain.

**President Monroe's Dilemma** President James Monroe, in support of the new Latin American states, issued a policy called the Monroe Doctrine, which warned European nations to respect the independence of Spain's former colonies. The Monroe Doctrine established the United States as a strong nation, willing to stand up for its own freedom and that of its neighbors.





## Reading Further

## Tecumseh, the Shooting Star

**When white settlers began moving in to Ohio and other parts of the Northwest Territory in the early 1800s, American Indians faced a critical choice. The American Indians could forfeit their land peacefully and try to live among the settlers. Or, they could stand and fight for their way of life. For one visionary American Indian leader, the choice was never in doubt.**

The Shawnee canoes slid swiftly down the Wabash River toward the town of Vincennes, the capital of the Indiana Territory. Though the Shawnee hoped for peace, their canoes were prepared for war.

The date was August 12, 1810, and the Shawnee—about 75 of them—had come to meet with the governor, William Henry Harrison. For several days, they camped outside of town, waiting for the meeting to begin at the governor's mansion. Harrison had set up tables and chairs on the mansion's large porch, but the Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, insisted they sit on the lawn. As he put it, “The earth was the most proper place for the Indians, as they liked to repose [rest] on the bosom of their mother.”

As everyone took a seat, Tecumseh, a tall, handsome man, with long hair and an athletic build, remained standing. The people in attendance would later agree that the man, whose name in Shawnee meant “Shooting Star,” had a commanding presence and a gift for words.

Tecumseh faced Governor Harrison and began to describe the injustices his people had suffered at the hands of the U.S. government. He spoke of unfair treaties and broken promises that had stripped them of their homes. He said the government had persuaded Indians to sell land that did not belong to them. The land, he said, “was never divided, but belongs to all.” And he continued,

*No tribe has the right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers. Sell a country? Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?*

Tecumseh claimed to speak for all American Indians when he said his people wanted to live in peace, but they would fight if necessary. Harrison was unmoved by Tecumseh's words, but he knew he could not ignore the Shawnee leader. When Harrison later called him “one of

those uncommon geniuses which spring up occasionally to produce revolutions and overturn the established order of things," he was expressing his desire to ensure Tecumseh did not stand in the way of U.S. expansion.

Who was Tecumseh, and how did he become such a powerful figure?



### **The Making of a Warrior**

Tecumseh was born around 1768 in the Ohio Territory, a beautiful land of rivers and forests rich in wildlife. It was a sacred place to the Shawnee that they called the "center of the world."

Despite the Ohio Territory's picturesque landscape, Tecumseh grew up in troubled times in which white settlers crossed the Appalachians and seized Indian lands. During the American Revolution, most Indians fought on the British side, hoping to halt western settlement. After the war, however, westward expansion continued and so did the conflict between Indians and white Americans.

Indians called the Americans "Long Knives" because of the army swords some of them carried. Tecumseh lost his father to the fighting against the Long Knives. He and his family also had to resettle many times as the Americans raided and burned their villages.

These experiences encouraged Tecumseh to become a warrior. As a boy, he saw Shawnee war parties prepare for battle and watched them paint their faces and put on their war feathers. As a young man, he studied the arts of warfare, and by his early twenties, he had become a brave and skillful warrior.

At first, the Indians enjoyed great success in their battles with the Long Knives. But, in 1794, they suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and were forced to sign the Treaty of Greenville the following year. Under this treaty, they surrendered most of the Ohio Territory to white settlement in exchange for money and the promise of lands in western Ohio and Indiana.

Tecumseh refused to sign the treaty because he believed Ohio was the land of his people and knew the government had failed to honor previous agreements. Nevertheless, many older Indian leaders had grown tired of fighting and did not imagine they could defeat the Long Knives. Tecumseh, however, would not give up the land so easily.

### **The Quest for Indian Unity**

After the Treaty of Greenville, Tecumseh and his followers migrated west into the Indiana Territory, but the white settlers continued to move closer. They cleared the land and killed the wild game, ensuring there would soon be nothing left to sustain the Indian way of life.

By the early 1800s, Tecumseh knew that he had to do something to save his people. The only solution, he believed, was to form a single Indian nation.

Indians had formed tribal confederacies in the past but Tecumseh's plan was much bigger. He imagined a grand confederation of Indian peoples, stretching from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico that would unite dozens of tribes around the common goal of defending their land. To these various tribes, he declared, "Brothers, we all belong to one family."

It was an enormous challenge, perhaps too big even for an inspired leader like Tecumseh. But he received crucial help from his younger brother, Lalawethika.

In 1805, Lalawethika fell into a fire and nearly died, but in the midst of his suffering he had a mystical vision that told him how his people could be saved. If they embraced Indian customs and rejected the ways of the white world, the white people would be driven from their land.

This message had a powerful effect on other Indians, who began calling Lalawethika “the Prophet.”

Tecumseh realized that he could combine the Prophet's message with his own call for Indian unity to forge a powerful movement. Together, the two brothers founded a new Indian village, called Prophetstown, which drew many Indians to join the confederation.

Although these events made Governor Harrison very nervous, he continued with his plans to settle Indiana. In 1809, he gathered a number of Indian leaders together and persuaded them to sign another unfavorable treaty. The Treaty of Fort Wayne required the Indians to sell 3 million acres of land to the government for just pennies an acre.

Tecumseh was furious and went to meet Harrison at Vincennes—the famous meeting of 1810—to inform him that the treaty was invalid. In his view, the Indians had no right to sell the land. When Harrison declined to listen, Tecumseh went away more convinced than ever that only Indian unity—and war—could save his people.

### **Tecumseh's Defeat**

In the fall of 1811, war came sooner than Tecumseh expected. While Tecumseh was away trying to secure new allies, Governor Harrison made his move and marched his militia into Prophetstown, ordering the Indians to leave. Tecumseh had warned the Prophet not to get drawn into war while he was gone. But the Prophet ignored this command, believing his spiritual power would protect the Indians from harm.

Just before dawn on November 7, a small force of several hundred Indian warriors crept into the militia camp where a thousand American soldiers were stationed. Hoping to take the camp by surprise, they advanced upon the unsuspecting soldiers with a flurry of war cries. The Battle of Tippecanoe had begun.

After gaining the upper hand in the darkness and confusion of battle, it seemed that the Indians' strategy might work. But as the day dawned and the fighting wore on, it was clear the Indians would be forced to retreat by the superior American militia. Harrison and his troops entered Prophetstown and burned it to the ground, allowing the governor to return home in victory.

While the defeat at Tippecanoe upset Tecumseh's plans, he continued to build his confederacy. When the War of 1812 began, he and several new Indian allies joined with British forces in Canada to fight the U.S.



army.

Once again, Tecumseh demonstrated his bravery and brilliance, awing British commanders with his military genius. In 1813, however, Tecumseh and the British were defeated by a much larger U.S. force at the Battle of the Thames. "Our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit," Tecumseh declared. "We are determined to defend our lands, and if it is his will, we shall leave our bones upon them." Although the British quickly fled the battlefield, Tecumseh refused to retreat and was killed in the battle.

After Tecumseh's death, Indians continued to lose their lands and their lives to U.S. expansion. Although Tecumseh failed to realize his vision of a great American Indian nation, he set an example in his dedication to his ideals and his commitment to his people. Even though his star burned bright only for a brief time, Tecumseh is regarded today as an American hero.







## The War of 1812

After the American Revolution, the nation's early presidents wanted peace. They tried to have good relationships with other countries. However, in 1812, the new nation could not escape war. What caused the United States to give up peace so soon after Americans formed a new nation?

In the early 1800s, France and Britain were at war. Both nations began to capture American ships. They felt that America was trading with the enemy. This made Americans angry. Then British captains forced American sailors to work on their ships. This made many Americans furious. Americans who wanted to go to war were called "War Hawks." They came up with the saying, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights!" Other Americans wanted peace.

Many Americans who wanted peace lived in New England. People thought that the war would cost too much. They also feared that the United States would lose a war against the British. The U.S. navy had just sixteen ships. Great Britain had hundreds of ships. How would the United States defeat the most powerful navy in the world?

Most War Hawks were from the South and the Northwest Territory (the present-day Midwest). They were angered by the actions of British sailors at sea.

The War Hawks had other reasons to be angry at the British. After the American Revolution, the British had agreed to give up their forts in the Northwest Territory. But this had not happened. Many also accused Great Britain of causing trouble between American settlers and Indian tribes.

Leading up to the War of 1812, there were problems in the Northwest Territory. Settlers moving into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys pushed Indians off their lands. Some Indians, such as Shawnee leader Blue Jacket and Miami chief Little Turtle tried to stop settlers from living on Indian lands. They had support from other tribes, such as the Delaware, Chippewa, and Iroquois.

The Indians won more than one battle against the U.S. army. However, in 1794, American General Anthony Wayne defeated Blue Jacket at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. After the defeat, the Shawnees agreed to reach a deal with the Americans. In 1795, Blue Jacket signed the Treaty of Greenville. The Indians had to give up all the land in what is now Ohio except for a small area in the northwest.



Other Indians also tried fighting back. Two Shawnee Indians—a chief named Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet—tried to unite all the American Indian tribes. They knew that one tribe alone couldn't stop white settlers from taking more land. In a speech to southern tribes known as "Sleep Not Longer, O Choctaws and Chickasaws," Tecumseh told them,

*". . . unless every tribe unanimously combines to give check to the ambition and avarice of the whites, they will soon conquer us apart and disunited, and we will be driven away from our native country and scattered as autumnal leaves before the wind."*

But the Choctaw and Chickasaw did not join with the Shawnee as Tecumseh urged.

On November 7, 1811, Shawnee warriors fought against soldiers led by William Henry Harrison. The fight was called the Battle of Tippecanoe Creek. Harrison defeated the Indian forces. After the battle, Harrison's men found out that the Indians were armed with British guns. Many Americans were very angry.

Meanwhile, the War Hawks wanted the United States to expand. Some wanted more American Indian lands in the Northwest. Others wanted Spanish Florida to the South. Because Spain and Great Britain were allies, Southerners hoped that defeating the British would help them achieve this goal. Still others wanted land to the north in Canada. These Americans thought that settlers in Canada would want to become part of the United States rather than stay under British rule. They were wrong.

## **Fighting the War of 1812**

The actions of the British at sea and on American land, as well as conflicts with Indians finally pushed the United States into war. On July 17, 1812, Congress declared war on Great Britain. This was a daring step for a nation with an army of 7,000 poorly trained men and a navy of only sixteen ships.

The United States planned an invasion of British Canada. The War Hawks thought that conquering Canada would be easy. However, the war began badly for the United States. The invasion of Canada was a disaster.

In 1813, Americans did have some success. The United States built Fort

Meigs in present-day Ohio. The fort became an important place to stage an American invasion of Canada. British forces tried to capture the fort twice in 1813, but were defeated.

Then, on September 10, 1813, the Battle of Lake Erie took place. U.S. Captain Oliver Hazard Perry and the navy captured British warships on the lake. It was an important victory. Both sides wanted control over the lake. The lake was the best way to send troops and supplies into the enemy's territory. Now the United States had control over the lake. The British supply line into the American northwest was cut. This also meant that the British could no longer provide American Indians with weapons.

The victory at Lake Erie helped the American General William Henry Harrison to push into upper Canada. He defeated the British and their Indian allies in a major battle. In this battle, Tecumseh was killed. With him died his dream of uniting all American Indians.

By 1814, the war in Europe between the British and the French had ended. The British had won. This was very bad news for Americans. The British were able to send many more troops to fight in the United States. In August 1814, British soldiers landed near Washington, D.C. They marched to the Capitol and set it on fire. They burned the Library of Congress and all the books inside. Then they marched to the president's house. (It was not yet called the White House.) They burned that, too. Next, they attacked Baltimore, a city in nearby Maryland. An American named Francis Scott Key watched the "rockets' red glare" and the "bombs bursting in air" as British ships fired at Fort McHenry in Baltimore harbor. He wrote the words that became the national anthem of the United States. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is proudly sung by Americans today, including at many sporting events.

In the end, the British decided they did not want to fight another long, costly war in North America. In the peace treaty, both sides agreed to go back to the way things were before the war. Nothing would change.

## **After the War of 1812**

However, the War of 1812 did cause some changes. In the West, American Indians lost their only ally when the British withdrew. Many American Indians also lost their land in the peace agreement. During the war, the Sauk and Fox peoples fought beside the British. The British included nothing in the treaty to protect them or their other American Indian allies from U.S. settlers.

Madison's ban on trade with Britain caused an increase in U.S.

manufacturing, as Americans began to produce goods they had previously imported. Another economic impact of the war was that it inspired American expansionism, which promoted a spirit of inventiveness and business across the nation and the continent.

The War of 1812 led to other changes, too. The president's home had to be repaired and painted. It later became known as the White House. The war gave Americans new symbols, such as the national anthem and new pride in their nation. The United States had faced one of the most powerful countries on Earth, and peace had been restored.

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- "Sleep Not Longer, O Choctaws and Chickasaws" delivered to southern tribes by Tecumseh, in *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains* compiled by W. C. Vanderwerth. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971, p. 54.

- "Defence of Fort M'Henry" known as "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Francis Scott Key, 1814

Entire Selection: <http://www.music.army.mil/music/nationalanthem//p>>

Accessed March, 2017

### **Secretary of State John Quincy Adams's July Fourth Address (1821)**

On July 4, 1821, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams delivered a speech to the House of Representatives on foreign policy. During this period, U.S. intervention abroad, particularly in Latin America, was a major issue. Many Americans were sympathetic to events overseas and wanted the government to intervene. Adams did not believe that foreign policy should be based on sentiment or emotion.

Adams stated that the United States should support movements for freedom and independence, "but she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." In other words, the United States would not intervene in the affairs of other nations. He feared that using military force to promote liberty would undermine the United States' principles and mission.

The ideas expressed by Adams are still relevant today. The notion of the United States going abroad "in search of monsters to destroy"

remains at the heart of discussions about U.S. intervention.

Below is the speech John Quincy Adams delivered to the House of Representatives.

*AND NOW, FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN, if the wise and learned philosophers of the elder world, the first observers of nutation and aberration, the discoverers of maddening ether and invisible planets, the inventors of Congreve rockets and Shrapnel shells, should find their hearts disposed to enquire what has America done for the benefit of mankind?*

*Let our answer be this: America, with the same voice which spoke herself into existence as a nation, proclaimed to mankind the inextinguishable rights of human nature, and the only lawful foundations of government. America, in the assembly of nations, since her admission among them, has invariably, though often fruitlessly, held forth to them the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, of generous reciprocity.*

*She has uniformly spoken among them, though often to heedless and often to disdainful ears, the language of equal liberty, of equal justice, and of equal rights.*

*She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations while asserting and maintaining her own.*

*She has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart.*

*She has seen that probably for centuries to come, all the contests of that Aceldama the European world, will be contests of inveterate power, and emerging right.*

*Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be.*

*But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy.*

*She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all.*

*She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.*

*She will commend the general cause by the countenance of her voice,*



*and the benignant sympathy of her example.*

*She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom.*

*The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force . . .*

*She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit . . .*

*[America's] glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of the mind. She has a spear and a shield: but the motto upon her shield is, Freedom, Independence, Peace. This has been her Declaration: this has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice.*

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- Speech to the U.S. House of Representatives on Foreign Policy, *known as July Fourth Address*, by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, delivered July 4, 1821.

Entire Selection: <http://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/july-4-1821-speech-us-house-representatives-foreign-policy>

Accessed March, 2017

### **President James Monroe's Monroe Doctrine from his Seventh Annual Address to Congress (1823)**

The Monroe Doctrine was the basis for many American foreign policy decisions in the early 1820s. It also affected and influenced the way that the United States would later deal with European and Latin American nations for decades after that. In 1821, the Russian czar issued a decree that he was claiming all territory for Russia that was north of the fifty-first parallel. This area was above the border that the United States now shares with Canada. It included places like what is now British Columbia. The czar also declared that Russian territory would extend 100 miles into the Pacific Ocean.

American Secretary of State John Quincy Adams strongly objected to this Russian attempt to gain territory. He told the Russian minister that the 'American continents' are no longer subjects of any new European colonial establishments.' The United States was also worried about the effects of Spanish rule in Central and South America. People in the Spanish colonies in those regions had begun to revolt against Spain. Great Britain supported these revolts because it wanted Spain to lose its colonies. The British wanted to work together with the United States against Spain, but Adams opposed this idea. He warned that America would be acting in British interests instead of American ones. Adams did not want to see any European nations once again become dominant in North or South America. He felt that Europe's leaders should not be allowed to continue to create colonial governments in the region.

During his 1823 annual message to Congress that he gave on December 2 of that year, President James Monroe formally stated that European nations were to respect the Western Hemisphere and consider it to be the "sphere of interest" of the United States.

Below are the remarks President Monroe made to Congress that would come to be known as the Monroe Doctrine.

*. . . At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at St. Petersburg to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the northwest coast of this continent. A similar proposal has been made by His Imperial Majesty to the Government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The Government of the United States has been desirous by this friendly proceeding of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the friendship of the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his Government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. . . .*

*It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the*

*results have been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators.*

*The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do.*

*It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers.*

*The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted.*

*We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintain it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.*

*In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgement of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.*

*The late events in Spain and Portugal shew that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers whose governments differ from theirs are interested, even those most remote, and surely none of them more so than the United States.*

*Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none.*

*But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course. . . .*

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- Monroe Doctrine, excerpt from Seventh Annual Message to Congress by President James Monroe, delivered December 2, 1823.

Entire Selection: <http://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-2-1823-seventh-annual-message-monroe-doctrine>

Accessed March, 2017