

U.S. Response to Events in Europe

In 1789, the French overthrew their monarchy. Then the French went to war against Britain. The United States had a treaty with France. Democratic-Republicans (led by Thomas Jefferson) wanted to honor the treaty and support France. Federalists (led by Alexander Hamilton) wanted to back the British. Washington decided on neutrality - to support neither side. In April 1793, the French sent a diplomat, Edmond Genêt, to the United States to win American support. Genêt, however, did not officially present himself to President Washington. Instead, he tried to get Americans to help the French against Great Britain.

Washington was outraged that the French did not respect his country's neutrality. Concerned over Alexander Hamilton's ideas about government and Washington's proclamation of neutrality in the French Revolution, Thomas Jefferson resigned from his position as Secretary of State on December 31, 1793 declaring, "I shall beg leave to retire to scenes of greater tranquility, from those which I am every day more and more convinced that neither my talents, tone of mind, nor time of life fit [this government]."

Meanwhile, the United States and Spain worked to negotiate an agreement over lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. In 1795, U.S. Ambassador **Thomas Pinckney** negotiated a treaty with Spain. Under the agreement, known as Pinckney's Treaty, Spain gave up its claims to the land east of the Mississippi River. Spain also agreed to open the Mississippi River to American use. This treaty paved the way for American expansion west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Even before Pinckney's Treaty in 1795, Americans had been moving west of the Appalachians in search of new lands to settle. One region many Americans streamed into was the Northwest Territory. This area included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. American settlers encountered much trouble in this land, however. First, despite losing the Revolutionary War, the British still maintained forts in the area. In addition, numerous Native Americans inhabited the region.

As American settlers moved in, Native Americans there grew angry. Conflicts eventually broke out between the Native Americans and the white settlers. One notable clash occurred in 1790. Under the leadership of **Little Turtle**, a chieftain of the Miami Tribe, Native Americans defeated American troops as they fought for control of what would become Ohio. After this series of losses the U.S. sent in General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, given his name because he was enthusiastic about undertaking missions that seemed doomed for failure; Little Turtle became concerned, "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 [wise] to listen to his offers of peace."

In 1794, "Mad Anthony" defeated Native Americans at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. This defeat ended Native American resistance in Ohio. That same year, U.S. diplomat **John Jay** negotiated a treaty with Britain. Under the Jay Treaty, the British agreed to give up their forts in the Northwest Territory. However, the British continued to bother American ships in the Caribbean. Thus, the treaty did not resolve this problem of British harassment.

1. What were America's earliest foreign policy problems?

2. How did U.S. expansion affect Native Americans?