

## Chapter 8 Outline - The Early Republic: Conflicts at Home and Abroad, 1789–1800

- I. Introduction

Americans assumed that the Constitution would create consensus, but the nation still faced political, economic, and diplomatic questions that led to partisan politics during the 1790s.

- II. Building a Workable Government

- A. First Congress

The First Congress had the tasks of raising money, creating a bill of rights, setting up the executive departments, and organizing the federal judiciary.

James Madison persuaded Congress to adopt the Revenue Act of 1789.

- B. Bill of Rights

Madison took the lead in presenting the constitutional amendments that came to be called the Bill of Rights. The states ratified ten amendments, which became part of the Constitution on December 15, 1791.

- C. Executive and Judiciary

Congress organized the executive branch with three main departments—War, State, and Treasury—and granted the President the authority to dismiss appointed officials.

The Judiciary Act of 1789 established a Supreme Court, defined federal jurisdiction, created district and appeals courts, and allowed for appeals from state courts to federal courts.

During its first ten years, the Supreme Court handled few cases of

importance. The most notable cases were *Ware v. Hylton*, *Hylton v. U.S.*, and *Chisholm v. Georgia*.

- D. Debate Over Slavery

In 1790 three groups of Quakers petitioned Congress to end the foreign slave trade and to abolish the institution of slavery.

Southerners contended that Congress should not discuss such petitions. Congress accepted a committee report that it could not abolish the foreign slave trade before 1808 and that it could not act to emancipate slaves since that authority resided with the states alone.

- III. Domestic Policy Under Washington and Hamilton

- A. Washington's First Steps

Washington understood the importance his actions would have as precedents, and he moved cautiously at first. He created the president's cabinet by using the heads of the executive departments collectively as his chief advisers.

- B. Alexander Hamilton

Hamilton's zeal had attracted the favor of Washington, who appointed him Secretary of the Treasury. Loyalty to the nation and cynicism about human nature shaped Hamilton's policies. His fiscal policies were always designed to consolidate power at the national level. His cynicism about human nature led him to believe that people were motivated primarily by self interest.

- C. National and State Debts

Hamilton wanted the government to repay its debt at full value and to assume the war debts of the states.

- D. Hamilton's Financial Plan

Hamilton hoped to extend the authority of the national government and gain the support of securities holders.

James Madison led the opposition against assumption of state war debts. However, after some political deals were struck, Hamilton's financial program became law in August 1790.

- E. First Bank of the United States

Hamilton advocated a national bank, which touched off an intense constitutional debate.

- F. Interpreting the Constitution

Madison argued that the creation of a national bank by Congress was unconstitutional. Hamilton's brilliant defense of what became known as "broad constructionism" eventually assured creation of the bank.

- G. *Report on Manufactures*

Hamilton's *Report* outlined a plan intended to encourage and protect the nation's infant industries. The report was rejected by Congress. However, Congress accepted Hamilton's proposal that an excise tax be levied on all whiskey distilled in the United States.

- H. Whiskey Rebellion

When farmers protested the federal tax on whiskey, which they distilled from their grain, Washington showed restraint until violence erupted in western Pennsylvania. He then led a force of some 13,000 troops to quell the "rebellion," thus demonstrating that the national government would not tolerate violent resistance to its laws.

## • IV. The French Revolution and the Development of Partisan Politics

### ○ A. Republicans and Federalists

Supporters of Hamilton and Jefferson gradually divided into opposing camps.

### ○ B. French Revolution

News of the French Revolution was at first welcomed in the United States, but soon the excesses of the revolution caused some to point to France as a perversion of republicanism. Thus the American people began to divide over whether to support France or Great Britain. Commercial interests tied the U.S. to Great Britain, enemy of the French Revolution.

### ○ C. Edmond Genêt

Disagreements over the American response to the French Revolution led to partisanship.

President Washington was faced with a dilemma when Edmond Genêt, a representative of the French government, arrived in Charleston, SC, and began to make his way toward New York City.

Washington received Genêt but issued a proclamation of neutrality with regard to the war between France and Great Britain.

### ○ D. Democratic Societies

Democratic societies, sympathetic to the French Revolution, expressed opposition to the administration's fiscal and foreign policy and thereby generated the first formal political dissent in the United States.

Many Federalists believed the Democratic Societies were a subversive element in the republic, and Washington accused them of having instigated the Whiskey Rebellion.

Washington, Hamilton, and Federalist in general had not yet accepted the presence of a “loyal opposition” within the republic.

- V. Partisan Politics and Relations with Great Britain

- A. Jay Treaty Debate

In 1794, John Jay negotiated a treaty with Great Britain in an effort to resolve several differences between the two nations. The treaty faced strong opposition but was ratified by the Senate and signed by Washington.

The House of Representatives had to appropriate funds to carry out the provisions of the Jay Treaty. Federalists encouraged that petitions supporting the treaty be sent to House members. The Federalists also successfully linked the Jay Treaty to the more popular Pinckney’s Treaty.

The House approved appropriations for the Jay Treaty by a vote of 51–48, with the vote divided along partisan and regional lines.

- B. Bases of Partisanship

Republicans, generally from the southern and middle states, tended to be optimistic, to espouse democracy, and to embrace individualism. Non-English ethnic groups found the democratic rhetoric of the Republicans attractive.

Federalists, mostly from New England, expressed more fears for the future and tended to come from English stock and from the commercial class.

- C. Washington’s Farewell Address

As he left office, Washington encouraged Americans to maintain commercial ties but not political relations with other nations and to avoid permanent alliances. He also expressed sorrow over factional

divisions within the republic. In effect, Washington was calling on his fellow countrymen to rally behind the Federalist banner and to reject the Republicans in the upcoming elections.

- D. Election of 1796

Federalist John Adams won the presidency in 1796, but the constitutional means of determining a vice president led to the election of Thomas Jefferson, a Republican.

- VI. John Adams and Political Dissent

- A. XYZ Affair

When Americans learned that French agents had demanded a bribe of American negotiators, anti-French sentiment swept the United States, and Congress formally abrogated the Treaty of Alliance with France.

- B. Quasi-War with France

The U.S. fought an undeclared naval war with France, mostly in Caribbean waters.

- C. Alien and Sedition Acts

Federalists hoped to capitalize politically on Americans' anger toward France by passing four laws to suppress dissent and limit the growth of the Republican party.

- D. Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions

Jefferson and Madison responded to the Alien and Sedition Acts by claiming that since a compact among the states created the Constitution, the states could judge the constitutionality of federal actions.

- E. Convention of 1800

Negotiations between French and American diplomats ended the Quasi-War and freed the United States from its alliance with France.

- VII. The West in the New Nation

- A. War in the Northwest Territory

An Indian confederacy under Little Turtle scored major victories over American troops in the Northwest Territory in 1790 and 1791. An Indian defeat at Fallen Timbers led to the Treaty of Greenville that opened up much of Ohio to settlement, but the accord also protected some Indian claims.

Pinckney's Treaty established the boundary between the United States and Florida.

The Southwest Ordinance of 1790 attempted to organize the Old Southwest. It made the region attractive to slaveholders by permitting slavery.

- B. "Civilizing" the Indians

The Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1793 was a well-intentioned plan to "civilize" Native Americans, but the plan ignored the cultural traditions of the eastern Indian peoples.

- C. Iroquois and Cherokees

The Cherokees adapted some of the teachings of Quaker missionaries and Indian agents to their own culture.

Iroquois culture, due largely to the influence of Handsome Lake, adapted to European patterns to survive in the midst of changed circumstances.

- VIII. "Revolutions" at the End of the Century

- A. Fries's Rebellion

In 1798–1799, German-American farmers in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley protested against the taxes levied by Congress to finance the Quasi-War by sending petitions to Congress and non-violently preventing tax assessors from measuring their homes.

After a federal judge order the arrest of twenty of the resisters, John Fries led a contingent of 120 militiamen and surrounded the tavern where the prisoners were being held temporarily.

Although the prisoners were released, Fries and many of his neighbors were arrested. Fries and two other were convicted of treason and sentenced to be executed. They were subsequently pardoned by President Adams.

- B. Gabriel's Rebellion

African Americans took the revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality seriously. They learned the benefits of fighting collectively from the slave revolt in St. Domingue in 1793.

Gabriel Prosser led an unsuccessful revolt in Virginia in 1800 that he hoped would bring equality for African Americans.

In the aftermath of Gabriel's Rebellion, there was a hardening of the institution of slavery in the South.

- C. Election of 1800

In the presidential election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were the Republican nominees for president and vice-president and ran against Federalists John Adams and Charles C. Pinckney.

Because Jefferson and Burr received the same number of votes in the electoral college, the election was decided by the out-going House of Representatives, controlled by Federalists. Jefferson was elected president on the 36th ballot.



President John Adams attempted to strengthen Federalist control over the judiciary by naming John Marshall chief justice of the Supreme Court and by appointing “midnight justices” to new positions created by the Judiciary Act of 1801.