The Struggle Over Foreign Policy
Chapter 6  Section 2

Focus Question: How did foreign policy challenges affect political debate and shape American government?

- The nation had to make peace with Native Americans, control its borders, and establish itself internationally.
- Renewed war between Britain and France threatened neutrality.
- Americans debated the right response to the European war and to the French Revolution.

British Threat to the Northwest
- The new nation faced challenges on its Northwestern frontier
  - The British continued to man forts along the Great Lakes and supplied Indian tribes with guns.
  - In 1790 and 1791, Chief Little Turtle defeated American forces as the Miami Indians fought American expansion in the Ohio Valley.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers
- In 1794, General Anthony Wayne defeated Native Americans in the Battle of Fallen Timbers.
- The resulting Treaty of Greenville gave the United States control of Ohio.

The French Revolution
- In 1789, Americans were divided by the French Revolution.
  - Federalists worried about the anarchy and public executions. Hamilton feared Democratic Republicans might want to do the same in America.
  - Jefferson decried the violence but publicly admired the French Revolution’s principles.

War Between England & France
- Americans worried about the British and French war as most of America’s imports and tariff revenue came from British goods.
  - President Washington issued a proclamation of neutrality in 1793.
  - But Britain ignored him and began seizing American trading ships at sea.
  - Americans were outraged but powerless to respond.

Jay’s Treaty
- Washington sent John Jay to London in 1794 to negotiate.
  - The resulting Jay Treaty was narrowly approved by the Senate. Federalists praised it, but Democratic Republicans attacked it.
  - Britain agreed to give up forts on American soil, but Americans had to repay pre-Revolutionary War debts still owed to Britain.
  - Restrictions remained on American shipping, which angered many Americans.
Pinckney’s Treaty
- A more popular treaty was negotiated with Spain in 1795.
  - The Pinckney Treaty allowed Americans to use the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans.
  - With access to the Mississippi, removal of the British, and defeat of the Native Americans, settlers poured into the west.
  - 400,000 Americans lived beyond the Appalachians by the 1800s.

Washington Retires
- President Washington chose to retire in 1796.
  - He felt that voluntary retirement after two terms would set an important precedent for the peaceful transfer of the office.
  - In his farewell address, Washington advised successors to temper political strife in favor of national unity.
  - In foreign affairs, he suggested Americans avoid “entangling alliances” with European powers.

Washington’s Report Card
- Washington helped the young nation survive early tests.
  - As first President, Washington:
    - Established the government
    - Opened western land for settlers
    - Kept the nation out of war
    - Developed foreign trade
    - Put the nation on solid financial footing.

1796 Presidential Election
- John Adams was elected President in 1796.
  - He narrowly defeated Thomas Jefferson who became his vice president.
  - The vote was largely along regional lines with the North favoring Adams, the South favoring Jefferson.

John Adams
- Early in his presidency, Adams faced a crisis with France.
  - Like Britain, France began seizing American ships. Adams sent envoys to negotiate.
  - French officials identified only as X, Y, and Z demanded bribes for the right to negotiate.
  - Americans were angered and insulted by this XYZ Affair and sentiment against France grew.

Alien and Sedition Act
- In 1798 Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts making it a crime to criticize the government.
  - Immigrants, most of whom tended to favor Democratic Republicans, could be deported.
  - The Federalists claimed the acts were necessary to stop unhealthy criticism that was undermining trust in the government.
  - Democratic Republicans charged the acts violated the Constitution and were aimed to silence the opposition.
Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions
- In 1798 and 1799, Jefferson and Madison attacked the Sedition Act as unconstitutional in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions.
- They suggested that states can “nullify” or reject unconstitutional laws.

1800 Presidential Election
- Shortly before the 1800 election, President Adams sought peace with France.
  - This angered other Federalists, including Alexander Hamilton who then worked against Adams’ bid for re-election.
  - Despite a tie in the electoral college, Thomas Jefferson won the presidency.

The End of the Federalist Era
- The election of 1800 changed the balance of power and ended the Federalist era in government.
- The election of 1800 marked an important precedent as the first peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another.