

Another conflict grew out of Britain's shortage of sailors. Life in the British navy was so bad at the time that few British citizens chose to join—and many deserted. To fill its need for sailors, Britain used the policy of **impressment**, or kidnapping, of American merchant sailors. Between 1803 and 1812, the British impressed about 6,000 Americans to work on British ships.

**No More Trade** Instead of declaring war, Jefferson asked Congress to pass legislation that would stop all foreign trade. The president described his policy as “peaceable **coercion**.” Coercion means forcing someone to act in a certain way by pressure or threats. Jefferson believed that the legislation would prevent further bloodshed.

In December, Congress passed the **Embargo Act of 1807**, which forbade American ships from sailing to foreign ports. The act also closed American ports to British ships. The policy harmed the United States more than it harmed France or Britain. American farmers lost key markets for their products. Shippers lost income, and many chose to violate the embargo by making false claims about where they were going.

The embargo became an issue in the election of 1808, which James Madison won. By then, Congress had repealed the act. Madison's solution to the problem was a law that allowed merchants to trade with any country except France and Britain. Trade with them would resume when they agreed to respect U.S. ships. This law was no more effective than the embargo.

**Tecumseh and Native American Unity** British interference with American shipping and impressment of U.S. citizens made Americans angry. Many also believed the British were trying to stop American expansion in the Northwest by stirring up Native American resistance to frontier settlements.

Since the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, Native Americans had continued to lose their land to white settlers. **Tecumseh**, a Shawnee chief, vowed to stop this. He believed that Native American tribes had to unite in order to protect their land. Events in 1809 proved him right. That September, William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, signed the Treaty of Fort Wayne with chiefs of the Miami, Delaware, and Potawatomi tribes. They agreed to sell more than three million acres of land. But Tecumseh declared the treaty void. He believed that the sale could go through only with the agreement of all tribes, not just some.

(below right) The Shawnee were defeated at the Battle of Tippecanoe. How did the Battle of Tippecanoe affect Tecumseh's hopes for unity?



Chief Tecumseh

