

Connecting History

Isolationism

Washington's advice laid the ground for America's policy of isolationism, or steering clear of foreign affairs. This policy lasted through most of the country's history before World War II.

Terence Kennedy's 1847 *Political Banner* combined several symbols of the young nation. **Would the banner have had greater appeal to Jefferson or Hamilton?**

Washington's Final Concerns During Washington's second term, opponents of Jay's Treaty, and other critics, led attacks on the president's policies. Thomas Paine, for example, called Washington "treacherous in private friendship . . . and a hypocrite in public life" because he failed to support the French Revolution. Washington saw such attacks as the outcome of political disagreements. In his farewell address, he warned that such differences could weaken the nation. Despite this advice, political differences became a part of American politics.

Americans listened more closely to Washington's parting words on **foreign policy**, or relations with the governments of other countries. He urged the nation's leaders to remain neutral and "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." He warned that agreements with foreign nations might work against U.S. interests.

Political Differences Continue Despite Washington's warnings against political differences, Americans were deeply divided over how the nation should be run. Hamilton and Jefferson had hotly debated the direction the new nation should take. But, after his frustrated resignation from public office in 1793, Jefferson returned to Virginia. During Washington's second term, Madison replaced Jefferson in the debates with Hamilton.

The two sides disagreed notably on how to interpret the Constitution and on economic policy. Hamilton favored the British and wanted to preserve good relations with them. He opposed the French Revolution. Jefferson and Madison supported it. Hamilton believed in a strong central government. Jefferson and Madison feared such a government might lead to tyranny. Hamilton wanted a United States in which trade, manufacturing, and cities grew. Jefferson and Madison pictured a rural nation of farmers.

Growth of Political Parties These differences on foreign and domestic policy led to the nation's first political parties. A **political party** is a group of people that tries to promote its ideas and influence government. It also backs candidates for office.

Together, Jefferson and Madison founded the Democratic-Republican Party. The party name reflected their strong belief in democracy and the republican system. Their ideas drew farmers' and workers' support to the new political party.

Jefferson and Madison's Democratic-Republican party eventually turned into the Democratic Party that is still active today. Hamilton and his friends formed the Federalist Party which reflected their belief in a strong national government. Many Northern merchants and manufacturers became **Federalists**, following the supporters of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

 **SUMMARIZE** List the dangers Washington warned about.

