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The Foreign Policy of the Early Presidents

The early leaders of the United States greatly influenced its foundation. From doubling its size with the Louisiana Purchase to holding our own in the War of 1812, I will be covering the first five Presidents’ foreign policies. You will learn how the young nation interacted with its comrades from Washington to Monroe.

Our first President, George Washington, began and upheld a foreign policy of neutrality towards European countries, not involving the U.S. with any of their wars. Washington also tried to negotiate overseas trade agreements with Britain, but wasn’t that successful. On top of that, he also created a viable Navy to stop North African pirates. Next, John Adams dealt with the XYZ Affair in which the French asked for money, and when they didn’t get it, they attacked. In response, Adams built up the Navy, coastal defenses, and Army. After which he upheld neutrality. Thomas Jefferson negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the nation’s size. He also enacted the Embargo Act, which halted all trade with european countries in order to get Britain and France to respect American rights during the Napoleonic Wars. James Madison removed the Embargo Act and was also President during the War of 1812. James Monroe halted the colonization of the western hemisphere by European countries. Monroe also upheld neutrality similarly to Washington and Adams. He also bought Florida from the Spanish after he sent Andrew Jackson to stop Native American raids coming from Florida. Jackson took this as take over Florida. After the fighting, Spanish and the United States negotiated a treaty to purchase Florida.

The citizens were pleased with Washington’s foreign policy because they had just finished a war and did not want to fight in wars that had nothing to do with them, but the trade agreement was the first time people were unhappy with the President. The same goes for Adams, whose policies were almost the same as Washington’s. Jefferson left quite a few citizens irritated with his banning of international trade, however justified it may be, but he also doubled the nation’s size with the Louisiana Purchase, so who knows. Although Madison got rid of the embargo act, the War of 1812 happened, and its conclusion brought about renewed national pride in its people. Monroe stopped further colonization of the western hemisphere by Europe and purchased Florida, so those were positive as well as upholding neutrality like Washington and Adams.

As you can see, these men greatly influenced the course of not only United States history, but world history. They blazed a trail for presidents to come, as well as influenced european nations. Clearly these men have changed the course of history for better or worse.

Works Cited

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