

Madison knew that current political attitudes would never support a treaty without a ban on impressments. Although this episode caused a brief rift between the three friends, Monroe recognized that the President had to take domestic politics into account when considering his foreign policy options.

Following his return home in 1808, Monroe was tapped by dissident Republicans to oppose Madison for the Democratic-Republican presidential nomination. Although Monroe allowed himself to be nominated, he never considered his challenge to Madison seriously and stressed that he differed with Madison only with respect to foreign affairs; in all other areas, the two saw eye-to-eye. Madison easily won the 1808 presidential election. Three years later, in January 1811, Monroe was once again elected governor of Virginia, though he did not serve for long; that April, Madison named him secretary of state.

Secretary of State and Secretary of War

As the nation's chief diplomat, Monroe focused on relations with Britain and France. The two European countries were at war with one another and their fighting infringed upon U.S. shipping and trade. The United States wanted France and Britain to respect American commercial interests as befitted those of a neutral country. Although both nations targeted American trade, the Madison administration concentrated primarily on Britain because of its frequent practice of seizing U.S. sailors and forcing them to serve in the British navy.

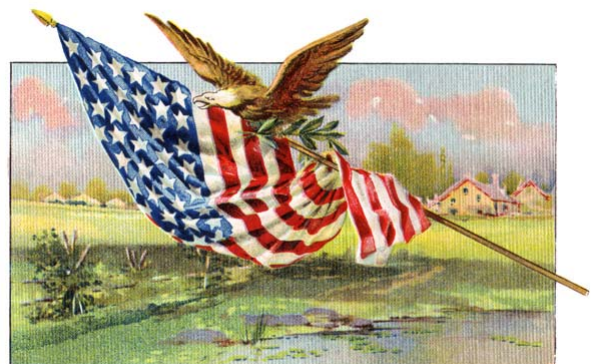
The United States declared war on Britain in June 1812, but the war was far from popular. Many New Englanders found that it disrupted their access to European markets. Additional numbers thought that neutrality rights were not a sufficient reason to go to war. However, Madison and Monroe both believed that the United States needed to resist British depredations by force of arms.

From the beginning, the war was a disaster for the United States. The army was unequipped and unprepared, and the initial military

actions resulted in defeat. When Madison's secretary of war resigned, Monroe took over the office on a temporary basis, from December 1812 to February 1813; he would do so again from August 1814 until March 1815. Monroe was well suited to the demands of the post because of his understanding of the military and his strong organizational skills. He helped reorganize the army and brought new energy to the war effort.

In August 1814, when British troops appeared at the mouth of the Potomac River, Monroe led a scouting party to report on their advance. He sent word to Madison warning that the British were marching toward Washington, D.C. As British troops headed toward the capital, Monroe stayed in the city to help with its evacuation. After the British attacked Washington and burned most of the government buildings, Monroe returned to the city. Madison then placed him in charge of its defenses.

Monroe's popularity rose after the war, due to his tireless service in Madison's cabinet. A new generation of war veterans would remember his leadership with fondness and respect, leaving him well-positioned to receive the Democratic-Republican nomination for President in the 1816 election.



*For mothers, wives and children, for home and country pride
Our flag will guard the freedom Of land and ocean wide.*