

# Madison and jefferson's federalist ideas

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From 1801-1817 there was a clear separation of the United States. The Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties were in strong opposition of one another. Though the Republicans were usually characterized as strict constructionists, who were opposed to the broad constructionism of the Federalists, both Jefferson and Madison's presidencies highlighted Federalist ideals in many of their decisions. This included Jefferson's unconstitutional decision in purchasing the vast Louisiana territory and Madison's... The standard Democratic-Republican had many beliefs in which followed the Constitution whole heartily. Jefferson writes, " The true theory of our Constitution is surely the wisest and best that the states are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything respecting foreign affairs"(Doc A). This belief that anything not mentioned within the Constitution was reserved for the states was represented the Democratic-Republican ideals a good deal. Thus, as in the Kentucky resolutions, both concluded that the federal government had exceeded its constitutional powers and that the states should not accept the Alien and Sedition Acts. Also, the Republicans strived for democracy; a weak central government; a rigid economy; the reduction of federalist office holders; state banks; relative freedom of the press and speech; concentration of agriculture in the South; minimal navy for coastal defense, which was achieved by Jefferson; and were primarily pro-French. These ideals were addressed during the Jefferson and Madison presidencies. However, in times of great crisis, the two presidents seemed to abandon their Democratic-Republican beliefs and lean towards a strong central government. The Louisiana Purchase was an event in which recognized Jefferson's abandonment of Democratic-republican ideals and

strive for a strong central government. While the Spanish surrendered the trans-Mississippi region to the French in 1800, Jefferson decided to acquire more territory at once. He feared that French territory in the United States would bring British war on American soil. As a result, President Jefferson sent James Monroe and Robert Livingston to Paris. Monroe's was given a maximum of ten million dollars to buy New Orleans and as much land east as possible. However, in opposition to Jefferson's wishes, Monroe purchased all of Louisiana for a hefty fifteen million dollars. Although the Democratic-Republicans were in favor of the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson, still in shock of Monroe's settlement, questioned the constitutionality of the treaty. This purchase did not specifically empower the president or Congress to annex foreign territory. This event inevitably led to the Hartford Convention of 1815, in which contradicted Jefferson's purchase (Doc E). Though the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States, the President had incorporated a great deal of territory into the Union. Jefferson was not expecting this territory, though he authorized its purchase. As a result, this purchase was unconstitutional because Jefferson did not have the right to ratify the purchase, the House and the Senate did. Even though the House and Senate could not resist this opportunity for such land gain, Jefferson had exemplified Federalist ideals by giving great power to the central government. Perhaps this is why he felt it necessary to state, " I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions... But I know also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind"(Doc G). He is stating that although he does not like broad constructionism, he agrees with the steady alteration of such laws

in order to create a prosperous nation. During this purchase he contradicted his earlier statement made upon opposing Hamilton's bank and had succeeded exceeding his constitutional mandate. During Madison's presidential term, the arrival of June 1st, 1812 meant Madison's abandonment of his Democratic-republican ideals for Federalist beliefs. As his friend, Jefferson, had done in the presidential term before him, Madison would have to lean towards a strong central government in order for the United States to prosper. As the Indians continued to receive help from the British, the embargo was placed on Britain, impressments of American merchant ships were out of control, and the war hawks expressed their desirability to go to war, war was seemingly unavoidable. His power enabled Congress to regulate commerce and equalize tariffs on the whole United States. He did this because as unorganized states regulated commerce, the nation was financially struggling. Plus, the loss of British trade was weakening the US greatly; a strong central government was needed. Unfortunately, Madison's decision to give more power to the federal government was not seen beneficial to all: " Their principle now is old Federalism, vamped up into something bearing the superficial appearance of republicanism...for this government created and gave power to Congress to regulate commerce and equalize duties on the whole of the United States, and not to lay a duty but with a steady eye to revenue..."(Doc F). Many Democratic-republicans questioned both Madison and Jefferson's decisions for a strong central government. However, the effects of war were primarily positive, which would highlight the Federalist ideals, which worked in America's favor. While two major events in the United States occurred during

both Jefferson and Madison's presidencies, the two men seemingly crept towards a stronger central government. The Louisiana Purchase was a huge advantage to the United States, though it didn't exemplify the Democratic-Republican ideals. Additionally, the Congressional ability to regulate trade further granted more power to the central government during Madison's administration. These two factors were important events in history. Although both strict-constructionist, Democratic-Republicans, the two presidents were able to strengthen the central government for the prosperity of the United States of America.