The War of 1812 left the United States stronger and more self-confident. The new nation had remained strong against a great European power. The United States then turn to diplomacy as a way to settle international issues.

**Settling Disputes with Great Britain**

The Treaty of Ghent had ended the War of 1812, yet there were issues left unresolved.

- The United States and British Canada both wanted to keep their navies and fishing rights on the Great Lakes.
- In the spring of 1817, the two sides compromised by establishing the Rush-Bagot Agreement, which limited naval power on the Great Lakes for both the United States and British Canada.
- Another treaty with Britain gave the United States fishing rights off parts of the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts.
- The treaty known as the **Convention of 1818** also set the border between the United States and Canada at 49 North latitude as far west as the Rocky Mountains.
- Interest in the valuable fur trade in the Oregon Country was another issue resolved by this treaty. Both countries agreed to occupy the Pacific Northwest together, an agreement that would be tested in the years to come.
The United States Gains Florida

The United States also had a dispute over the southern border with Spanish Florida.

- **In 1818** Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, son of John and Abigail Adams, held talks with Spanish diplomat Luis de Onis about letting Americans settle in Florida.

- Meanwhile, President James Monroe, elected in 1816, had sent U.S. forces to secure the U.S.-Florida border. General Andrew Jackson led these soldiers.

- At the same time, conflicts arose between the United States and the Seminole Indians of Florida. The Seminole often helped runaway slaves and sometimes raided U.S. settlements.

- In April 1818 Jackson’s soldiers invaded Florida to capture Seminole raiders. This act began the First Seminole War. During the war Jackson took over most of Spain’s important military posts. He then overthrew the governor of Florida. He carried out these acts against Spain without receiving direct orders from President Monroe. Jackson’s actions upset Spanish leaders. Most American’s, however, supported Jackson.

- Jackson’s presence in Florida convinced Spanish leaders to negotiate. In 1819 the two countries signed the Adams-Onis Treaty, which settled the disputes between Spain and the United States.

  - Under this treaty, Spain gave East Florida to the United States. In return, the United States gave up its claims to what is now Texas.

  - U.S. leaders also agreed to pay up to $5 million of U.S. citizens’ claims against Spain.
The Monroe Doctrine

Meanwhile, Spain had other problems. By the early 1820s most of the Spanish colonies in the Americas had declared independence.

- Revolutionary fighter Simon Bolivar, called the Liberator, led many of these struggles for independence.

- After Mexico broke free from Spain in 1821, President Monroe grew worried. He feared that the rival European powers might try to take control of newly independent Latin American countries. He was also concerned about Russia’s interest in the northwest coast of North America.

- Secretary of State Adams shared President’s Monroe’s concerns. In a Fourth of July speech before Congress, Adams said that they United States had always been friendly with European powers, and that the country did not want to be involved in wars with them. He implied that he supported the newly independent countries but said the United States would not fight their battles.

- Great Britain was also interested in restraining the influence of other European nations in the Americas. This was because Britain had formed close trading ties with most of the independent Latin American countries.

  - Britain wanted to issue a joint statement with the United States to warn the rest of Europe not to interfere with Latin America.

  - Instead, Secretary of State Adams and President Monroe decided to put together a document protecting American interests.

- The Monroe Doctrine was an exclusive statement of American policy warning European powers not to interfere with the Americas.

  - This document was issued by the president on December 2, 1823, during his annual message to Congress.

- The Monroe Doctrine had four basic points.

  - The United States would not interfere in the affairs of European nations.

  - The United States would recognize, and not interfere, with European colonies that already existed in North and South America.

  - The Western Hemisphere was to be off-limits to future colonization by any foreign power.
• The United States would consider any European power’s attempt to colonize or interfere with nations in the Western Hemisphere to be a hostile act.

• Some Europeans strongly criticized the Monroe Doctrine, but few European countries challenged it.

• The doctrine has remained important to U.S. foreign policy. The United States has continued to consider Latin America within its sphere of influence – the area a nation claims some control over.