

# Seventeenth Congress

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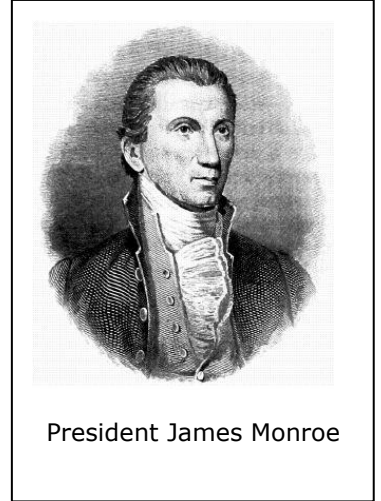
Dec. 3, 1821-Mar. 3, 1823

## Second Administration of James Monroe

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### Historical Background

Continuing expansion of the United States was a major focus of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, specifically efforts to establish a working government in the parts of Florida that Spain ceded to the U.S. in 1819. During the State of the Union address delivered on Dec. 3, 1821, President James Monroe provided details on the transition of authority and the efforts to establish a territorial government. The only problem during the transition, reported Monroe, was that Spanish officials in Florida were not providing all of Spain’s government records. However, Monroe did not say what affect the withholding of documents would have on the administration of the territory, other than the “omission has given rise to several incidents of a painful nature.” Monroe did cover other issues connected to acquiring sections of Florida, including the collection of revenues, the slave trade, and Native American land claims which could interrupt commerce in Florida. To deal with those issues, Monroe said a commission was formed to adjudicate legal matters and that efforts were underway to end the practice of using Florida as a port to unload illegal cargo to then be smuggled into the United States. To deal with the Native American question, Monroe proposed either removing the tribes from Florida, or imposing restrictions on their movements so they were “concentrated within narrower limits where they are.”

In addition to expansion of the United States, Monroe was focused on improving the nation’s infrastructure, specifically the highways that crossed state lines. Improving existing roads or building new highways, Monroe argued, would increase interstate commerce, as well as provide the Army a way to quickly move troops to defend against invaders. Monroe cited the Cumberland Road—a highway that connected Cumberland, Maryland with Vandalia, Illinois and the first roadway to undergo improvements by the Federal Government—as an example of an “internal improvement” project that was beneficial to the country, as well as one that was in need of repair.

House	Senate
Majority Party: Jeffersonian Republicans (155 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (44 seats)
Minority Party: Republican (32 seats)	Minority Party: Federalists (4 seats)
Other Parties: None	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: Philip Barbour	President Pro Tempore: John Gillard

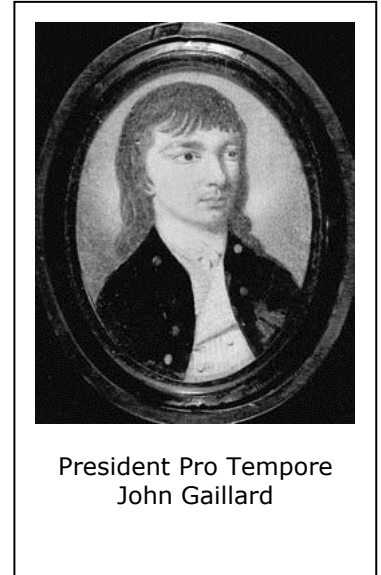
Despite the Cumberland Road's success, Congress had not made appropriations for its maintenance, or funded any more infrastructure projects. According to Monroe, the likely reason for Congress not making allocations for infrastructure was a fear that lawmakers would attain power they should not have. But if Congress "had the right to appropriate money to make the road, they have the right to appropriate it to preserve the road from ruin," he said. Therefore, in order to increase the likelihood of Congress taking up infrastructure projects, and still prevent Congress from acquiring too much power, Monroe proposed an amendment be added to the Constitution that enabled Congress to "execute a system of internal improvements."

In the realm of foreign policy, the United States' attention was occupied by the establishment of diplomatic relations with the new countries in Central and South America that had achieved independence from Portugal and Spain. Recognizing the new countries, Congress began to appropriate funds to establish missions. During the State of the Union address delivered on Dec. 3, 1822, Monroe addressed the situation involving Spain and the new countries south of the United States in more detail. He stressed that while the United States remained neutral in the wars for independence, the U.S. believed that recognition of those nations "would have equal weight with other powers," and thereby induce Spain to end the conflicts. Monroe also sought an end to the wars for independence in Central and South America, because despite the United States' neutrality, U.S. ships had been blocked or seized while navigating South America's coastal waters where conflicts were ongoing.

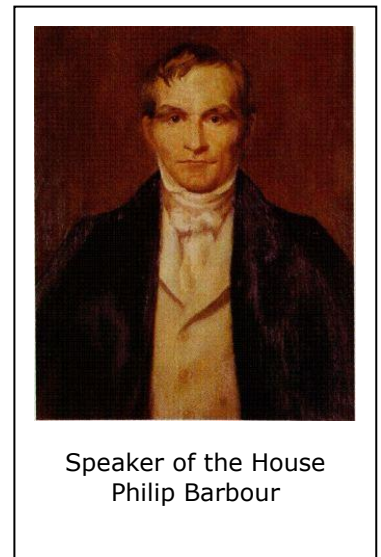
Sources:

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1821. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, H. Doc. 1/1. ProQuest Congressional, 63 H.doc.1/1

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1822. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, H. Doc. 2/1. ProQuest Congressional, 76 H.doc.2/1



President Pro Tempore  
John Gaillard



Speaker of the House  
Philip Barbour

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## War or Peace?

### Fortification and Naval Power

During the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress interruption of U.S. trade by pirates in the waters of the West Indies required deployment of "the usual squadrons" of Navy vessels, said Monroe, who added such Navy deployments were also occurring in the Mediterranean Sea, the Pacific and along the U.S.' Atlantic coast. However, the reason the pirates operating out of the West Indies attracted Monroe's attention was that they had "organized into a system" that "preyed on the commerce of every country" conducting trade in that region. Yet, while the shipping of other countries was also targeted by those pirates, the United States was the lead nation in fighting those pirates, according to Monroe. Furthermore, the U.S. extended the protection

provided by the Navy to the ships of other nations, a policy that “cannot fail to be duly appreciated” by those countries, he said. In addition to combatting pirates, the Navy was also tasked with conducting patrols off the coast of West Africa in an effort to suppress the slave trade. The Navy had orders to seize U.S. vessels engaged in that trade.

The Navy was able to fulfill those missions because it “was in the best condition,” Monroe said. The condition of the Navy was such that while progress has been made in the construction of new war ships, the larger of the new ships had not yet been launched. Instead, those vessels were placed in storage for future use if need be, according to Monroe. But even without the newest ships, the Navy’s performance made it “respected in every sea in which it is employed for the protection of our commerce.” A squadron of Navy ships had been deployed in the Mediterranean Sea, and “peace has been preserved with the Barbary powers” (Morocco and Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis). The maintenance of peace in the area was important to the U.S. following the Barbary Wars which had occurred around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, instigated by the seizure of U.S. merchant ships in the Mediterranean.

In addition, Monroe said that all the branches of the U.S. military were reported to be “well organized [...] and capable of rendering the most important service in case of emergency.” In support of the Army’s mission, progress has been made in the construction of fortifications—both along the shores and in the interior of the country—and at the public armories and arsenals, as well as in the operations of ordnance. The Army continued to expand, and Monroe praised the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. for producing officers who if they did not fill a position in the regular Army, were slated to serve in one of the state militias. Monroe stressed the importance of the militias because the regular Army was small by comparison, and therefore, should the need arise, the militias are “the great resource on which we relay.”

Globally, there were many conflicts occurring that the U.S. kept watch on, including the possibility of war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in connection with the Greek war for Independence and the wars for independence occurring in Central and South America. Monroe said the reason for concern was that any “disorder” created by those conflicts fostered opportunities for pirates to target U.S. shipping.

Sources:

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1821. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, H. Doc. 1/1. ProQuest Congressional, 63 H.doc.1/1

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1822. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, H. Doc. 2/1. ProQuest Congressional, 76 H.doc.2/1

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## Economic Trends and Conditions

Trade and the economy were major concerns of President Monroe, as evidenced by trade issues dominating the State of the Union address delivered on Dec. 3, 1822. During that address, Monroe detailed the existing tonnage duties imposed on foreign vessels, and on the goods produced in foreign lands when imported into the United States by foreign vessels rather than by U.S. vessels. Monroe also discussed a quid pro quo system of trade in which the United States would waive the duties on both goods and on ships arriving from foreign nations that reciprocated by waiving the duties on U.S.-made goods transported to a country aboard U.S. ships. Monroe said the waiving of duties was open to all nations, and that it was believed to be “fair and liberal.” However, while Great Britain agreed to the reciprocal waiving of import duties, it would not extend the policy to U.S. ships docking at its colonies in the West Indies. Great Britain was not alone in obstructing the U.S.’ system of trade, according to Monroe. France “demanded other conditions,” that would be “more favorable” to French vessels, he said. Despite the U.S.’ effort to attain robust trade with France, including negotiating a treaty of “navigation and commerce” in June 1822, six months prior to the State of Union address, Monroe said it was “improper to accede” to France’s demands. Therefore “the direct commerce between the two countries, in the vessels of each party, has been in a great measure suspended,” adding that despite ongoing negotiations, it was not expected that normal trade relations with France would resume.

In addition to France’s demand for special status in the waiving of import duties, an incident occurred involving a merchant ship of French registry that was seized by U.S. officials which also affected trade with France. The ship—the *Apollo*—was transporting cargo into Florida, but it landed in an area of Florida that was immediately across the border from the United States. There was a small settlement where the *Apollo* landed, but it was in an area essentially ungoverned by Spain, Monroe said. That a ship would land there attracted the attention of U.S. officials, who suspected the ship was there to unload cargo that would ultimately be smuggled into the United States, thereby evading U.S. import duties. U.S. officials seized the ship, an action the French protested, but an action Monroe said the French had “little cause” to complain about. “The claim of the government of France has excited not less surprise and concern because there does not appear to be just foundation for it,” Monroe said. The process of Spain ceding Florida to the United States had been ongoing at the time of the seizure, and once the United States assumed control of the territory, and the “danger of further breach of our revenue laws ceased, an order was given for the release of the vessel,” he said.

While Great Britain and France did not engage in the plan of reciprocal waiving of important duties, Norway responded favorably to the idea, but with a variation of the quid pro quo strategy. In an effort to increase trade with the United States, Norway had ports under the dominion of the King of Sweden opened to U.S. vessels, but the import duties were not waived. Rather, the duties imposed on U.S. ships were the same as those imposed on Norwegian ships. In exchange, Norway wanted the United States to impose the same fees on Norwegian ships as those imposed on U.S. ships docking at

the Danish ports. However, Congress needed to approve the Norwegian plan, so Monroe turned it over to the lawmakers.

While a reduction in trade had a negative effect on the U.S economy and on Government revenues, the long-term impact was that it increased domestic manufacturing, according to Monroe. By decreasing dependence on imports “the greater and more stable” the nation would become, he said. He claimed that through “the increase of domestic manufactures, will the demand for the crude materials at home be increased, and thus will the dependence of the several parts of our Union on each other, and the strength of the Union itself, be proportionally augmented.”

In the fiscal reports for 1821 and 1822, Monroe said the United States began 1821 with a surplus of more than \$1.1 million, and revenues for that year were only reported up to Sept. 30; those revenues were reported as surpassing \$16.2 million. Expenditures up to Sept. 30, 1821 surpassed \$15.6 million. Monroe added that revenues for the final quarter of 1821 were expected to surpass expenditures, but he did not provide any figures. During the fiscal report for 1822, Monroe said the U.S. started 1822 with a surplus of more than \$4.1 million, and revenues collected from Jan. 1, 1822 through Sept. 30 exceeded \$14.7 million, and expenditures during that period exceeded \$12.2 million. He did not provide any revenue or expenditure figures for the last quarter of 1822. Nonetheless, during the 1821 State of the Union address, Monroe said that revenues were expected to “progressively increase through the next and several succeeding years.”

Sources:

Crawford, William Harris. [\*Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting his annual report on the state of the finances.\*](#) General Land Office, Department of Treasury, Dec. 10, 1821. H. Doc. 3. (T1.1:821, I21.1:821) ProQuest Congressional, 63 H.doc.3

Crawford, William Harris. [\*Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting his annual report on the state of the finances.\*](#) General Land Office, Department of Treasury, Dec. 23, 1822. S. Doc. 8. (T1.1:822, I21.1:822) ProQuest Congressional, 73 S.doc.8

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1821. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, H. Doc. 1/1. (Pr5.1/1:821) ProQuest Congressional, 63 H.doc.1/1

Monroe, James. [\*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Seventeenth Congress.\*](#) House, Dec. 3, 1822. 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, H. Doc. 2/1. (Pr5.1/1:822) ProQuest Congressional, 76 H.doc.2/1

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## Major Treaties

**The Convention of Navigation and Commerce between the United States of America and his Majesty the King of France and Navarre.** The treaty outlined a temporary agreement that set the price of import duties for goods arriving in either France or the United States; it also set the quantities of goods that constituted a ton. Signed June 24, 1822. Proclaimed February 12, 1823. (8 Stat. 278)

Source:

[“Convention of Navigation and Commerce between the United States of America and his Majesty the King of France and Navarre. June 24, 1822.”](#) (8 Stat. 278; June 24, 1822). ProQuest Congressional

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## Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

*Cohens v. Virginia*, held that the U.S. Supreme Court holds the authority to review any state supreme court decisions in criminal law matters when the defendant claims that their Constitutional rights have been violated. Further held that State laws in opposition to national laws are void. The U.S. Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction for any U.S. Case and final decision-making power. 19 U.S. 264 (1821)

Source:

Costello. George A. and Johnny H. Killian. [Constitution of the United States of America. Analysis and Interpretation](#). Senate, Jan. 1, 1996. 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, S. Doc. 103-6. ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

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## 1821 Events

- **Jan. 17:** A proposal by Moses Austin to establish an English-speaking colony in Texas is approved by Mexico, but Austin dies before establishing the colony, so his son Stephen Austin completes the plan
- **Feb. 24:** [Mexico gains independence from Spain](#)
- **Mar. 25:** *Greek War of Independence* - [A coalition of Greeks declare open revolt against the Ottoman Turks who had ruled Greece since 1453](#)
- **June 23:** Dutch troops conquer Palembang, Indonesia
- **June 24:** Outside Caracas, Venezuela, General Simon Bolívar defeats royalists at the Battle of Carabobo, thereby leading the way for Venezuela’s independence
- **June 28:** [Peru declares independence from Spain](#)
- **Aug. 4:** The polar expedition led by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, a naval officer and explorer, arrives in Kronshtadt, Russia after being the first to circumnavigate Antarctica
- **Aug. 10:** [Missouri is admitted into the Union as 24th State](#)
- **Aug. 24:** Spanish Viceroy Juan de O’Donojú signs the Treaty of Córdoba, thereby recognizing Mexico’s independence from Spain
- **Sep. 15:** Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua achieve independence from Spain
- **Nov. 28:** Panama declares independence from Spain



- **Dec. 12:** [The United States officially recognizes Mexico as an independent nation](#)

## 1822 Events

- **Jan. 5:** The First Mexican Empire annexes the Federal Republic of Central America, which is comprised of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica
- **Feb. 4:** [Free American Blacks settle Liberia, West Africa](#)
- **Feb. 9:** Haiti invades the newly founded Dominican Republic
- **Mar. 30:** [Congress combines east and west Florida into the Florida Territory](#)
- **May 24:** The Battle of Pichincha, Bolívar secures independence of Quito from Spain
- **June 18:** Part of the border separating the United States and British North America (Canada) is determined
- **June 18:** Denmark Vesey and Peter Poyas, the leaders of a planned slave rebellion in South Carolina, are arrested; eventually they are executed along with 35 other blacks accused of being part of the planned uprising
- **July 8:** The Chippewa tribe in British North America relinquishes a huge tract of land in Ontario to the United Kingdom
- **July 25:** General Agustín de Iturbide is crowned Agustín I, the first Emperor of Mexico
- **Sep. 27:** Jean-François Champollion announces that he has deciphered the Rosetta stone
- **Dec. 1:** Dom Pedro is crowned emperor of Brazil

Sources:

["An Act to authorize the people of the Missouri territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union on an equal footing, with the original states, and to prohibit slavery in certain territories."](#) (3 Stat. 545, Chap. 22; Mar. 6, 1820). ProQuest Congressional

["An Act to authorize the President of the United States to take possession of East and West Florida, and establish a temporary government therein."](#) (3 Stat. 523, Chap. 93; Mar. 3, 1819). ProQuest Congressional

[Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the President's message concerning the recognition of the late Spanish Provinces in America.](#) Committee on Foreign Affairs. House, Mar. 19, 1822. 17th Congress, 1st Session, 17 H. Rpt. 73. ProQuest Congressional, 71 H.rp.73

Mercer, Charles Fenton. [Colonization of free people of colour.](#) House, Mar. 8, 1827. 19th Congress, 2nd Session, H.rp.101. ProQuest Congressional, 160 H.rp.101

Monroe, James. [Message from the president of the United States, Transmitting translations of two Letters from Don Joaquin d'Anduaga to the Secretary of State, upon the subject of the conduct of Gen. Jackson in Florida, and the independence of Mexico.](#) House, May 6, 1822. 17th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 128. ProQuest Congressional, 69 H.doc.128

Monroe, James, et al. [Political condition of the Spanish Provinces of South America. Department of State](#). Department of State, Mar. 8, 1822. 17th Congress, 1st Session, For.rel.327. ProQuest Congressional, ASP04 For.rel.327

Monroe, James. [Present condition and future prospects of the Greeks](#). Department of State, Dec. 31, 1823. 18th Congress, 1st Session, For.rel.363. ProQuest Congressional, ASP05 For.rel.363

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## Major Acts

**Latin American Republics Act.** Appropriated \$100,000 for diplomatic missions to the Latin American Republics of Columbia, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, all of which had recently gained independence from European powers. Approved May 4, 1822. ([3 Stat. 678, Chap. 52](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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