

“It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. There can be no greater error than to expect, or calculate, upon real favors from nation to nation.”

-George Washington

Farewell Address
September 19, 1796

Washington's vision for America

1. No political parties

GW: parties weaken government

Beware of regional differences

Unity = success

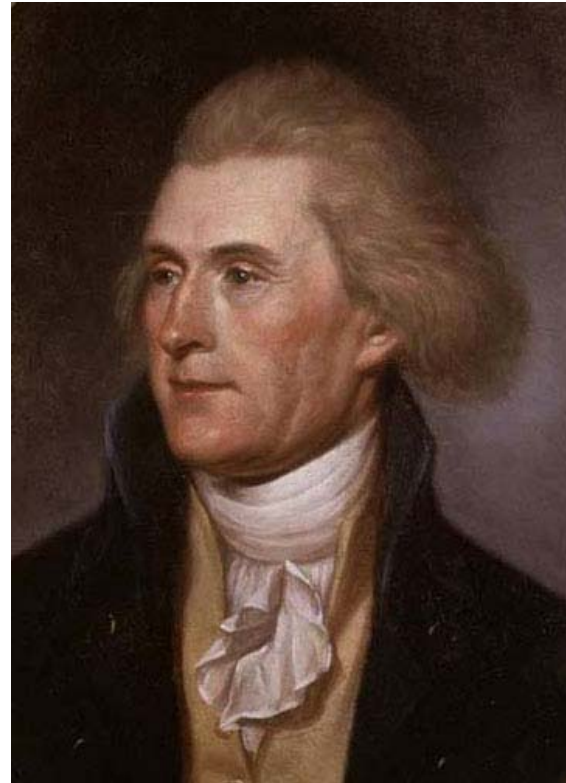
2. Mind your own business (diplomatically)

True independence means avoiding deals with other countries

3. Stay out of debt

Owing money to other countries gives them power

Election of 1796



John Adams vs. Thomas Jefferson

Election of 1796

Federalist Party vs. Democratic-Republican Party

Federalists nominate John Adams

Platform: Increase industry and trade

Most popular in New England, New York

“Republicans” nominate Thomas Jefferson

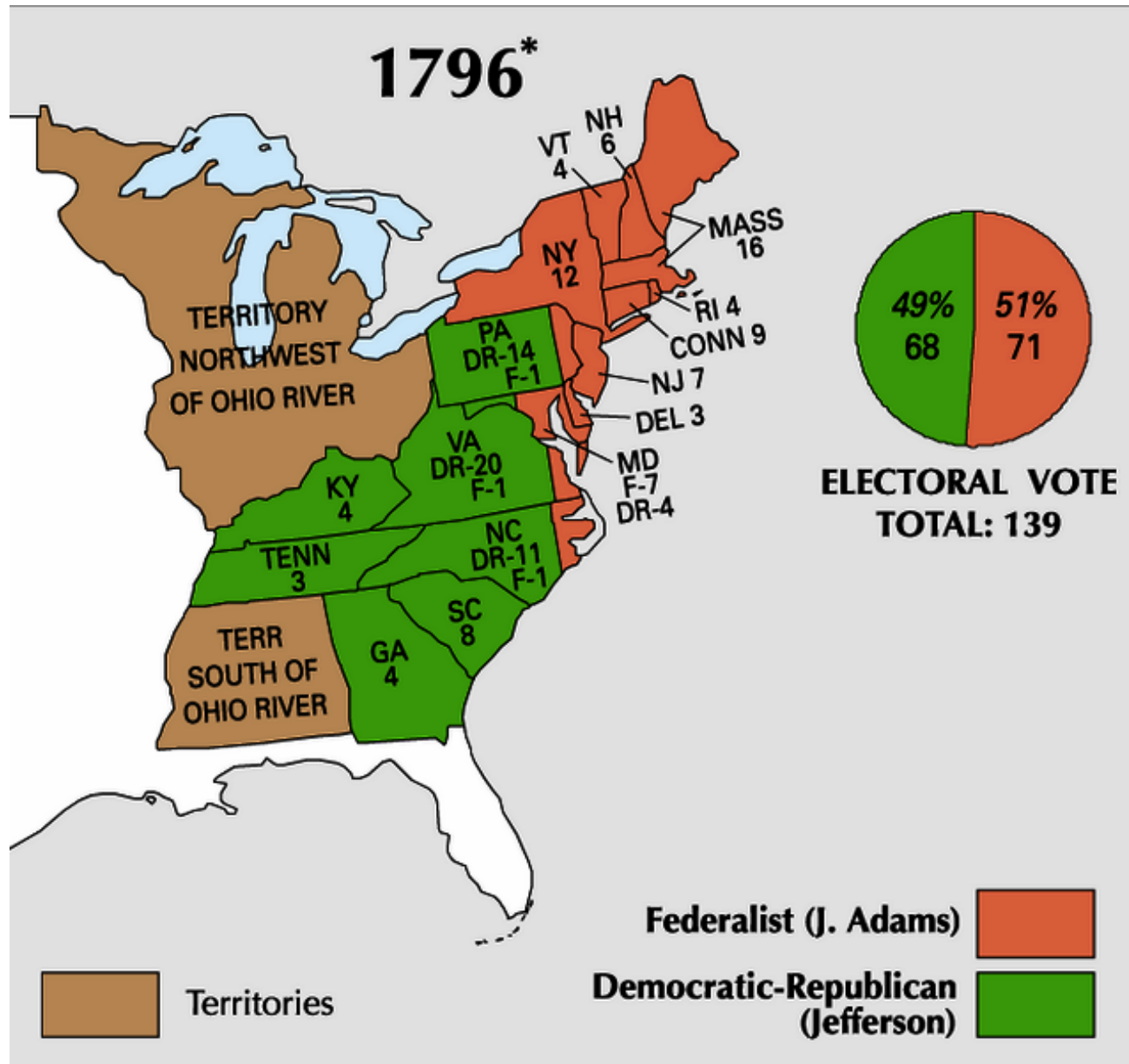
Platform: Limit power of federal government

Most popular in South and the Western Frontier

Election of 1796

Adams is elected, barely

Jefferson is his reluctant vice president



XYZ Affair

Adams' first challenge as president

1798: American relations with France had deteriorated

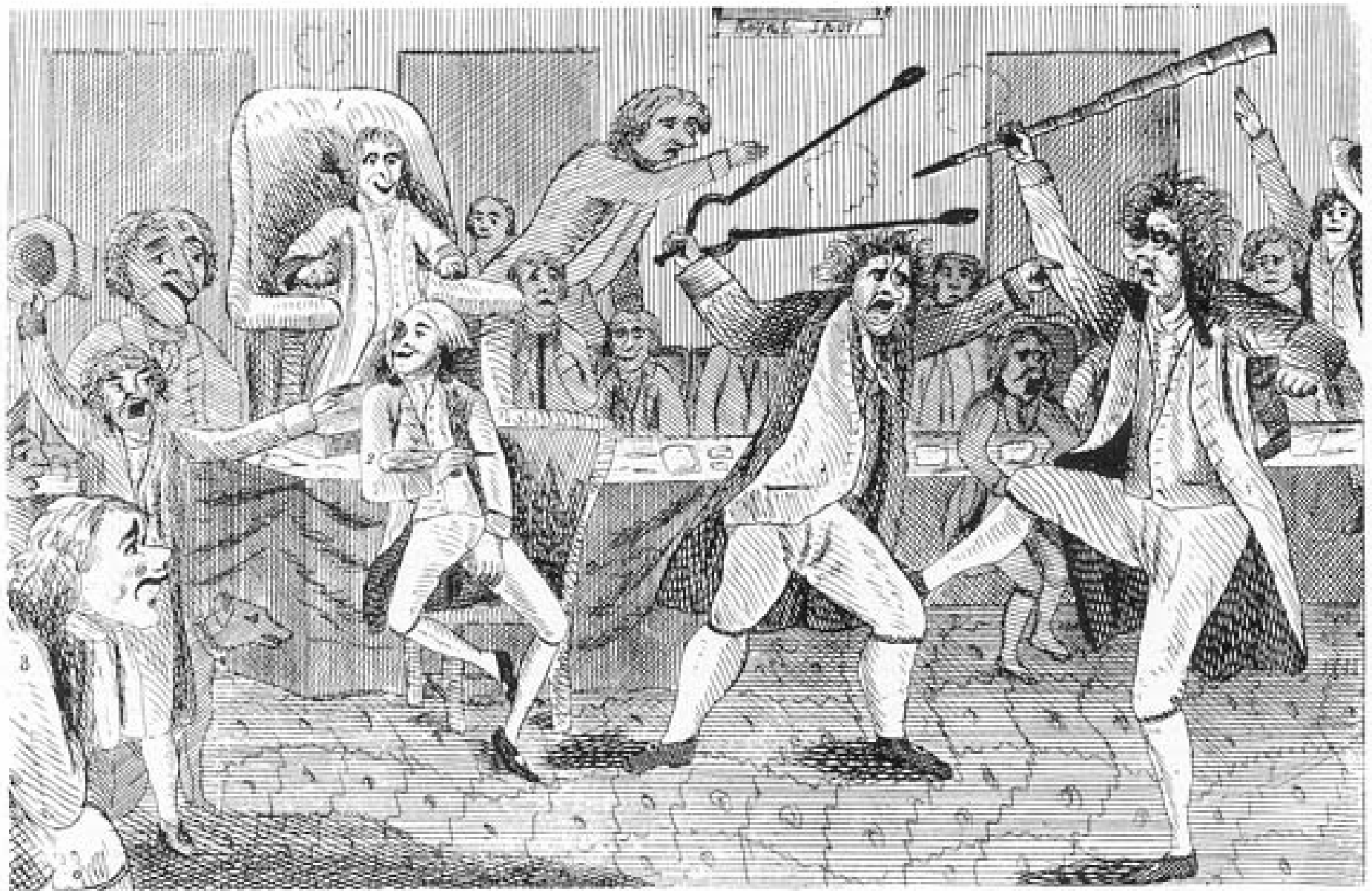
Adams sends diplomats to France

Foreign minister refuses to see them

Secret agents called "X, Y, and Z" show up

Diplomats can talk to the minister... but only if the U.S. pays \$250,000 and lends France another \$12 million

War with France? Adams says "No".



1798: Alien and Sedition Acts

Republican newspapers criticize Adams mercilessly

Adams pushes Federalists in congress to pass Alien and Sedition Acts

It becomes illegal to criticize the president in print

- First abuse of presidential power
- Wrecks the career of Adams
- Destroys Federalist Party
- Jefferson elected in 1800