

President Jefferson's Dilemma



“England has become a den of Pirates, and France has become a den of thieves”

- John Adams made peace with France, but not for long.
- 1803- France and Britain were at war again
- Both nations started to capture US ships that were trading with their enemy
- Jefferson took office in 1801, and tried to stay neutral.

Impressment

- To make matters worse, Britain began impressing American soldiers
- impress=kidnapping soldiers and forcing them to serve in your military

War Fever

- In 1807 *The Leopard* (British ship) stopped *The Chesapeake* (US ship) to search for deserters.
- *The Chesapeake's* captain refused to allow the search.
- *The Leopard* opened fire.
- 21 US sailors were killed or wounded.
- Americans were furious with Britain!

Piracy



- US ships faced another threat from North Africa: Piracy (robbery at sea)
- Pirates from Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were attacking US merchant ships.
- The pirates seized the ships and held the crews for ransom.



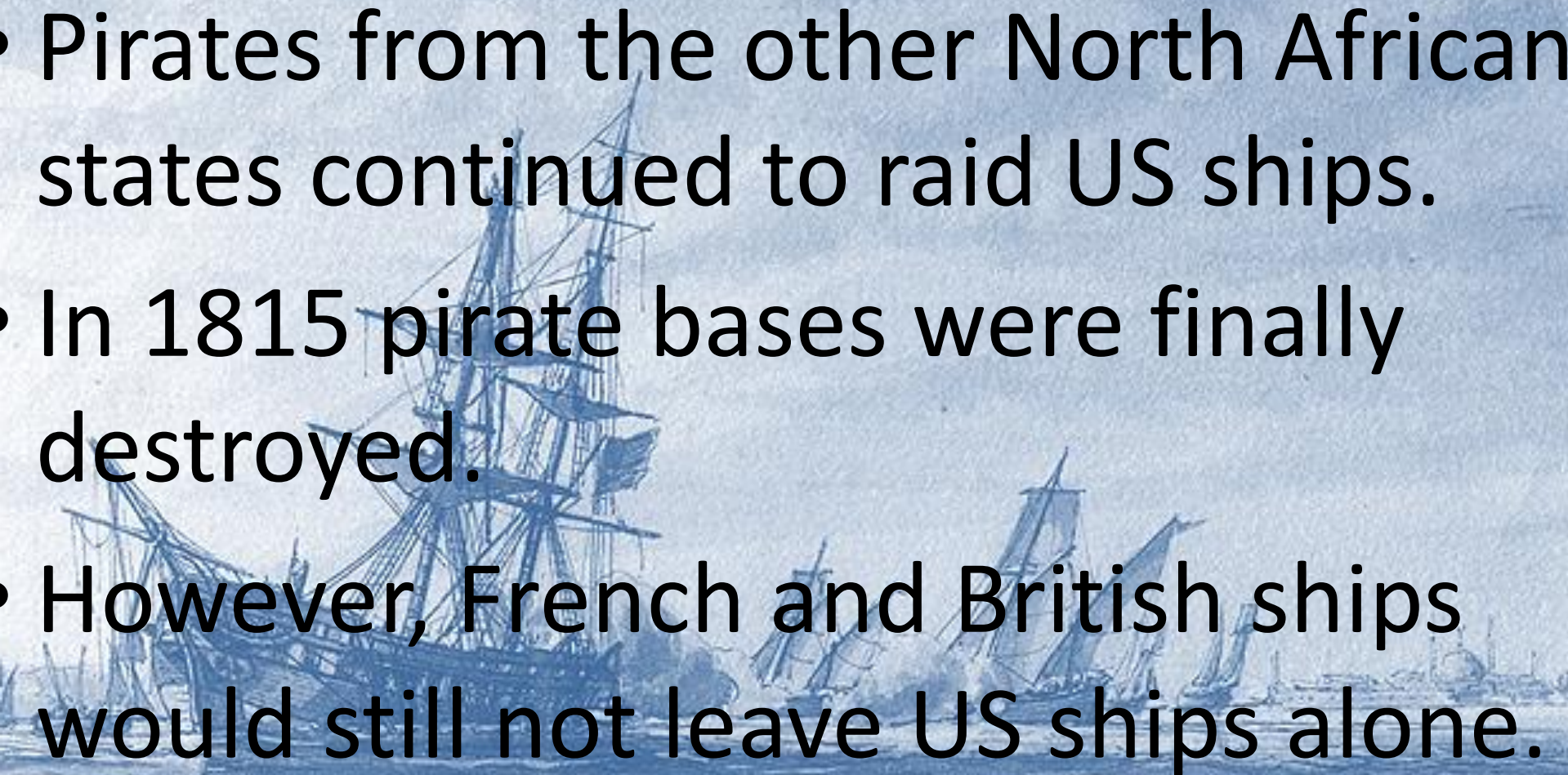
Declaring War

- Washington and Adams had both paid a tribute to North African rulers to stop the piracy.
- The ruler of Tripoli (North Africa) demanded more tribute from Jefferson then threatened war on the US.
- Which was worse, paying tribute or war?

Jefferson Solves the Problem

- Jefferson decided not to pay the tribute.
- He sent warships to “protect” American ships.
- The war with Tripoli lasted from 1802 to 1804.
- Tripoli signed a peace treaty with the US in 1805.

Piracy Continues

- Pirates from the other North African states continued to raid US ships.
 - In 1815 pirate bases were finally destroyed.
 - However, French and British ships would still not leave US ships alone.
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Embargo Act



- In retaliation, Jefferson imposed an **Embargo**- a complete halt in trade with other nations.
- No ships could enter or leave US ports.
- Jefferson hoped this would be so painful to France and Britain that they would leave American ships alone.

Back to “normal”

- The embargo, ended up being more painful to Americans than to anyone in Europe.
- 55,000 sailors lost their jobs.
- Congress reversed the unpopular Embargo Act in 1809.
- American ships returned to the seas, and French and British warships continued to attack them.

