From Disaster to Prosperity

Burdened by crushing war debt, the United States faced economic disaster in the 1790s. President Washington instructed Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton to develop a plan to rescue the country’s economy. Thus, Hamilton proposed establishing a National Bank.

The controversial idea angered detractors like Thomas Jefferson who complained that it gave the federal government too much power. But Hamilton convinced Washington that the centralized bank would stimulate investment, reduce the national debt, and strengthen America’s status abroad.