

# Chapter 10

## Readings on foreign policy

### George Washington's Farewell Address

On September 17, 1796, President George Washington made his final address to the people of the United States. His farewell was in effect a warning to the American people—a warning against the growth of political parties and, most notably, against the formation of foreign alliances.

**A**solicitude [anxiety] for your welfare which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present to offer to your solemn contemplation and to recommend to your frequent review some sentiments which are the result of much reflection. . . .

The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt [foster] the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation [name] derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes. . . .

In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other. . . .

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our union, it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *geographical* discriminations—*Northern* and *Southern*, *Atlantic* and *Western*—whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients [methods] of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. . . .

Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful [destructive] effects of the spirit of party generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness [most extreme form] and is truly their worst enemy. . . .

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment [excites] occasional riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passion. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another. . . .

Against the insidious wiles [sly tricks] of foreign influence (I conjure [beg] you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy [suspicion] of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike for another cause those whom they actuate [drive] to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to

become suspected and odious [offensive], while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. . . .

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Harmony, liberal intercourse [dealings] with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy

should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences, . . . constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. . . .

Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible [aware] of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech [beg] the Almighty to avert or mitigate [lessen] the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence, and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.



According to Washington, why is it dangerous to form attachments to other nations?

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What does Washington consider the worst enemy of popular forms of government?

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Why?

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What type of foreign-policy agenda is Washington advocating?

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Provide three examples from the excerpt to support your answer.

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**3.**

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# Monroe Doctrine

The Monroe Doctrine, originally delivered as part of President James Monroe's annual address to Congress in 1823, came in response to growing fear that the Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia, and Austria would aid Spain in a reconquest of the newly established independent republics in Latin America. The Doctrine stated in unmistakable terms that the Western Hemisphere was henceforth completely off-limits to any further European expansion.

**A** precise knowledge of our relations with foreign powers as respects our negotiations and transactions with each is thought to be particularly necessary. . . .

[T]he occasion has been judged proper for asserting . . . that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. . . .

In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport [comply] with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense.

With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected. . . . We owe it . . . to candor [honest speaking] and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those [allied] powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it . . . we could not view any interposition [intrusion] . . . by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation [indication] of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. . . .

Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars . . . remains the same, which is not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers. . . . But . . . it is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord.

It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. . . . It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course.



According to Monroe, in what situations would the United States make preparations for defense?

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How will the United States view any intrusion upon the safety of an independent nation?

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To what foreign-policy agenda is Monroe adhering? Explain.

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# Truman Doctrine

On March 12, 1947, President Harry S. Truman addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress to announce that the United States would help defend Greece and Turkey against Communist advances. In what became known as the Truman Doctrine, the president ended the long-term commitment of the United States to isolationism and launched what was to become the U.S. foreign-policy agenda for the next 40 years—containment.

**T**he gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress. The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved. . . .

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will and their way of life upon other nations. . . .

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation [control] by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes. . . .

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East. Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent state would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war. . . .

Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. . . .

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute [determined] action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400 million for the period ending June 30, 1948. . . .

In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detail of American civilian and military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance. . . .

Finally, I ask that the Congress provide authority which will permit the speediest and most effective use . . . of such funds as may be authorized. . . .

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in

the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of

the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events. I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.



According to Truman, what is one of the primary objectives of U.S. foreign policy?

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How does Truman propose to assist people in their struggle for free government?

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Why?

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Explain why the Truman Doctrine marked a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy.

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Do you think this policy change was wise? Explain.

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