

George Washington's Farewell Address

Excerpt

Friends and Citizens:

The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, ... that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

While, then, every part of our country... feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass... greater strength, greater resource, proportionally greater security from external danger, [and] a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations;...

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.

I have already intimated to you the danger of [political] parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution of modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be correct by an amendment...

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge... As the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened...

[Avoid] likewise the accumulation of debt,... not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden, which we ourselves ought to bear...

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all...

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is... to have with them as little political connection as possible.

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. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred... from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation...to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

intimated: hint

discriminations: differences

comprehensive: complete

baneful: bad

modification: change

diffusion: spread

posterity: future generations

cultivate: prepare or grow

calculate: plan

inviolate: not harmed

amity: friendship

George Washington's Point of View

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the excerpt of George Washington's Farewell Address with a partner. Choose one or two related quotes in the address that reflect the topic identified for each row. Recognize which words convey a tone. Determine Washington's point of view on the topic specified.

Quote(s)	Washington's Point of View: Summarize Advice
1. 2.	Uniting States Under One Government
1. 2.	Dangers of Political Parties
1. 2.	Need for Education
1. 2.	Foreign Policy