

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY

LEVEL:

High School (Grades 11-12)

TIMEFRAME:

One class period

OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze Washington's *Farewell Address* in the context of his legacy and U.S. foreign policy afterward.
- Compare and contrast U.S. foreign policy over time using primary sources.
- Work as a group to come to a consensus and present.
- Participate in a Socratic Seminar and debate to discuss the course of U.S. foreign policy since George Washington.

RELATED STANDARDS:

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| • Reading and Writing Literacy in History/Social Studies | • Analysis of Primary Sources |
| • Reading Informational Texts | • Revolution and New Nation |
| | • Other Nations and World Affairs |

PROCEDURE:

1. Put the following Guiding Questions on the board for students to respond to in writing:
 - How has the United States influenced other nations and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?
 - What legacy did George Washington leave as President in terms of American foreign and domestic policy?
2. Pass out copies of the excerpt from George Washington's *Farewell Address* (included in PDF). Read through the address together as a class, and ask students to highlight or underline key points in the address.
3. Pair students and ask them to tell their partners what they highlighted or underlined and to explain why these points seemed important.
4. Bring the class back together and have them share the main ideas they highlighted. Discuss as a class how the *Farewell Address* enhanced or contributed to Washington's legacy.

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5. Divide students into six groups to read excerpts from each of the following documents (included in the ZIP file download):
 - a. *Monroe Doctrine*
 - b. *Roosevelt Corollary*
 - c. *Wilson's Fourteen Points*
 - d. *Truman Doctrine*
 - e. *Kennedy's Inaugural Address*
 - f. *George W. Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address*
6. Pass out copies of each document, one to each group, to read and discuss along with copies of the Written Document Analysis Worksheet (DAW) from the National Archives for students to complete while they work through the document. Allow time for groups to finish work.

The Written DAW is available from the National Archives at:
<http://archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/index.html>
7. As a class, discuss: How do you think George Washington would have responded to the action taken by the government?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Instruct students to place their desks in a circle to conduct a Socratic Seminar. Assign four students to be observers/note-takers.
 - Present the following questions to the class to discuss and debate:
 - What has Washington's influence on U.S. foreign and domestic policy been throughout history?
 - How closely has the U.S. followed Washington's advice?
 - Should the U.S. follow Washington's advice in the future?

1 Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the
2 jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign
3 influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy to be useful must be
4 impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against
5 it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they
6 actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the
7 other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious,
8 while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

9 The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations,
10 to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed
11 engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary
12 interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent
13 controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be
14 unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the
15 ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

16 Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain
17 one people under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury
18 from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any
19 time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of
20 making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose
21 peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

22 Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign
23 ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and
24 prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice?

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

30 Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture,
31 we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

1 Tonight I ... have a message for the men and women who will keep the peace, members of the
2 American Armed Forces: Many of you are assembling in and near the Middle East, and some crucial
3 hours may lie ahead. In those hours, the success of our cause will depend on you. Your training has
4 prepared you. Your honor will guide you. You believe in America, and America believes in you.

5 Sending Americans into battle is the most profound decision a president can make. The technologies
6 of war have changed. The risks and suffering of war have not. For the brave Americans who bear the risk,
7 no victory is free from sorrow. This Nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost, and we dread the
8 days of mourning that always come.

9 We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended. A future lived at the
10 mercy of terrible threats is no peace at all. If war is forced upon us, we will fight in a just cause and by
11 just means – sparing, in every way we can, the innocent. And if war is forced upon us, we will fight with
12 the full force and might of the United States military – and we will prevail.

13 And as we and our coalition partners are doing in Afghanistan, we will bring to the Iraqi people food,
14 and medicines, and supplies ... and freedom.

15 Many challenges, abroad and at home, have arrived in a single season. In two years, America has
16 gone from a sense of invulnerability to an awareness of peril ... from bitter division in small matters to
17 calm unity in great causes. And we go forward with confidence, because this call of history has come to
18 the right country.

19 Americans are a resolute people, who have risen to every test of our time. Adversity has revealed the
20 character of our country, to the world, and to ourselves. America is a strong Nation, and honorable in the
21 use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and sacrifice for the liberty of strangers.

22 Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of
23 every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity.

24 We Americans have faith in ourselves – but not in ourselves alone. We do not claim to know all the
25 ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life,
26 and all of history.

1 We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth
2 from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of
3 Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our
4 ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which
5 this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the
6 world.

7 Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden,
8 meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of
9 liberty.

10 This much we pledge—and more.

11 To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful
12 friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we
13 can do—for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

14 To those new States whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of
15 colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall
16 not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly
17 supporting their own freedom—and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by
18 riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

19 To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass
20 misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not
21 because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free
22 society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

23 To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge—to convert our good words into
24 good deeds—in a new alliance for progress—to assist free men and free governments in casting off the
25 chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all
26 our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the
27 Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own
28 house.

29 To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the
30 instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support – to

31 prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective – to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak
32 – and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

33 Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a
34 request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by
35 science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

36 We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we
37 be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

1 ... At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor
2 residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at
3 St. Petersburg to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on
4 the northwest coast of this continent. A similar proposal had been made by His Imperial Majesty to the
5 Government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The Government of the United States
6 has been desirous by this friendly proceeding of manifesting the great value which they have invariably
7 attached to the friendship of the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his
8 Government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which
9 they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights
10 and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent
11 condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for
12 future colonization by any European powers....

13 It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and
14 Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted
15 with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different
16 from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much
17 intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators.
18 The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness
19 of their fellowmen on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to
20 themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our
21 rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With
22 the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which
23 must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is
24 essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists
25 in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so
26 much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which
27 we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to
28 the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should
29 consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to
30 our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not
31 interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and
32 maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles,
33 acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in

any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal show that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers whose governments differ from theirs are interested, even those most remote, and surely none more so than the United States. Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. 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. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. 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....

Source: *J.D. Richardson, ed., Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. 2 (1907), 287.*

1 In treating of our foreign policy and of the attitude that this great Nation should assume in the world
2 at large, it is absolutely necessary to consider the Army and the Navy, and the Congress, through which
3 the thought of the Nation finds its expression, should keep ever vividly in mind the fundamental fact that
4 it is impossible to treat our foreign policy, whether this policy takes shape in the effort to secure justice
5 for others or justice for ourselves, save as conditioned upon the attitude we are willing to take toward our
6 Army, and especially toward our Navy. It is not merely unwise, it is contemptible, for a nation, as for an
7 individual, to use high-sounding language to proclaim its purposes, or to take positions which are
8 ridiculous if unsupported by potential force, and then to refuse to provide this force. If there is no
9 intention of providing and keeping the force necessary to back up a strong attitude, then it is far better not
10 to assume such an attitude.

11 The steady aim of this Nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer
12 the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice. There are kinds of peace which
13 are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. Tyrants and oppressors have
14 many times made a wilderness and called it peace. Many times peoples who were slothful or timid or
15 shortsighted, who had been enervated by ease or by luxury, or misled by false teachings, have shrunk in
16 unmanly fashion from doing duty that was stern and that needed self-sacrifice, and have sought to hide
17 from their own minds their shortcomings, their ignoble motives, by calling them love of peace. The peace
18 of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as
19 we shun unrighteous war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all
20 mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not
21 merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others.
22 Generally peace tells for righteousness; but if there is conflict between the two, then our fealty is due first
23 to the cause of righteousness. Unrighteous wars are common, and unrighteous peace is rare; but both
24 should be shunned. The right of freedom and the responsibility for the exercise of that right can not be
25 divorced. One of our great poets has well and finely said that freedom is not a gift that tarries long in the
26 hands of cowards. Neither does it tarry long in the hands of those too slothful, too dishonest, or too
27 unintelligent to exercise it. The eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty must be exercised,
28 sometimes to guard against outside foes; although of course far more often to guard against our own
29 selfish or thoughtless shortcomings.

30 If these self-evident truths are kept before us, and only if they are so kept before us, we shall have a
31 clear idea of what our foreign policy in its larger aspects should be. It is our duty to remember that a
32 nation has no more right to do injustice to another nation, strong or weak, than an individual has to do
33 injustice to another individual; that the same moral law applies in one case as in the other. But we must

34 also remember that it is as much the duty of the Nation to guard its own rights and its own interests as it is
35 the duty of the individual so to do. Within the Nation the individual has now delegated this right to the
36 State, that is, to the representative of all the individuals, and it is a maxim of the law that for every wrong
37 there is a remedy. But in international law we have not advanced by any means as far as we have
38 advanced in municipal law. There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law. When
39 one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be
40 brought. Either it is necessary supinely to acquiesce in the wrong, and thus put a premium upon brutality
41 and aggression, or else it is necessary for the aggrieved nation valiantly to stand up for its rights. Until
42 some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it
43 would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international
44 obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong,
45 to disarm. If the great civilized nations of the present day should completely disarm, the result would
46 mean an immediate recrudescence of barbarism in one form or another. Under any circumstances a
47 sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police; and until
48 international cohesion and the sense of international duties and rights are far more advanced than at
49 present, a nation desirous both of securing respect for itself and of doing good to others must have a force
50 adequate for the work which it feels is allotted to it as its part of the general world duty. Therefore it
51 follows that a self-respecting, just, and far-seeing nation should on the one hand endeavor by every means
52 to aid in the development of the various movements which tend to provide substitutes for war, which tend
53 to render nations in their actions toward one another, and indeed toward their own peoples, more
54 responsive to the general sentiment of humane and civilized mankind; and on the other hand that it should
55 keep prepared, while scrupulously avoiding wrongdoing itself, to repel any wrong, and in exceptional
56 cases to take action which in a more advanced stage of international relations would come under the head
57 of the exercise of the international police. A great free people owes it to itself and to all mankind not to
58 sink into helplessness before the powers of evil.

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.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations; The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

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 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.

30 The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo
31 in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as
32 political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States
33 will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

1 We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made
2 the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secure once for all against
3 their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the
4 world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation
5 which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and
6 fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of
7 the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice
8 be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program;
9 and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

10 I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international
11 understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

12 II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war,
13 except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of
14 international covenants.

15 III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade
16 conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

17 IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point
18 consistent with domestic safety.

19 V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict
20 observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the
21 populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is
22 to be determined.

23 VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will
24 secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered
25 and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and
26 national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of
27 her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may
28 herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid
29 test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and
30 of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

60 In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be
61 intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We
62 cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.

63