WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY AS A GUIDE FOR TODAY

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This speech was given several times, the income applied to debts on the Willis Avenue house.
Washington's Foreign Policy
As A Guide For Today

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WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY AS A GUIDE FOR TODAY.

There is a peculiar satisfaction in speaking of the work of Washington. Perhaps it is because no phase of his activity calls for reticence. One may follow his career throughout its whole length without feeling any necessity for apology, or any impulse to gloss over a passage.

That is as true of his foreign policy as of any other sphere of his labors. He wrought a policy in that field with the same care, the same caution and sound common sense that were the features of his financial policy, his policy in military matters, and in his relation to Congress.

This is not intended as a lecture upon Washington's foreign policy. At least that is not the primary motive. The real intent is to discuss the applicability of his policy to present day conditions. To do that, of course, implies a knowledge of his policy,—its content, its spirit, its purpose, and the factors which shaped it. Strangely enough, though it is appealed to constantly as though it were a sort of revelation, it is not often understood. There has been no comprehensive or critical study of it in book form for over a generation. Important monographs have appeared which deal with portions of his diplomatic work, but there has been no general study of its whole range. One phrase, coined by Jefferson, but supposed to epitomize Washington's policy, has been pitched upon and treated as though it were a biblical text. The changes have been rung upon "no entangling alliances" until there is no phrase in the whole history of diplomacy, unless it be "the balance of power," or the "Monroe Doctrine" which is more familiar.

The lack of general understanding has opened the way for abuse of Washington. He was no stranger to abuse dur-
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ing his life-time. He was abused as violently as any President in our history—much more so than most, for political manners have improved. In particular his foreign policy, now so admired, was made the basis for abuse which was as violent as it was continuous. We should all recognize in Tom Paine one of the important figures of the American Revolution. His “Common Sense” was an argument in behalf of independence, the persuasiveness of which was testified to by Washington himself. He had been selected as the first secretary of the committee of Congress which controlled the foreign relations of the Revolution. Yet Paine, living in Paris, wrote to Washington a letter that is worth quotation at some length, because it reveals the bitterness and intensity of the criticism which was heaped upon him. “As censure is but awkwardly softened by apology, I shall offer you no apology for this letter. The eventful crisis to which your double policies have conducted the affairs of your country requires an investigation uncramped by ceremony. There was a time when the fame of America, moral and political, stood high in the world, and to be an American citizen gave a title to respect in Europe. The Washington of politics had not then appeared. Elevated to the chair of the Presidency, you assumed the merit of every-thing to yourself, and the natural ingratitude of your character began to appear. From such a beginning what else could be expected than what has happened? A mean and servile submission to the insults of one nation, treachery and ingratitude to another.

“It has for some time been known by those who know him that Mr. Washington has no friendships; that he is incapable of forming any; he can serve or desert a man, or a cause, with constitutional indifference; and it is this cold hermaphrodite faculty that imposed itself upon the world, and was credited for a while for prudence, moderation, and impar-tiality. Being now once more abroad, I began to find that I was not the only one who had conceived an unfavorable opinion of Mr. Washington; it was evident that his character
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was on the decline as well among Americans as among foreigners of different nations.

"Among other things which I confess I do not understand is the proclamation of neutrality. . . .

"The character which Mr. Washington has attempted to act in the world is a sort of nondescribable chameleon colored thing called prudence. It is, in many cases, a substitute for principle, and is so nearly allied to hypocrisy that it easily slides into it. His genius for prudence furnished him in this instance with an expedient that served, as is the natural and general nature of expedients, to diminish the embarrassments of the moment, and multiply them afterward. . . .

"The injury which Mr. Washington's administration has done to the character as well as to the commerce of America is too great to be repaired by him. In what a fraudulent light must Mr. Washington's character appear to the world when his declarations and his conduct are compared together.

"It is laughable to hear Mr. Washington talk of his sympathetic feelings, who has always been remarked, even among his friends, for not having any. It is the ingratitude, as well as the pusillanimity of Mr. Washington, that has brought upon America the loss of character she now suffers in the world, and the numerous evils her commerce has undergone and to which it is yet exposed. The British ministry soon found out what sort of men they had to deal with, and they dealt with them accordingly. This is the ground upon which America now stands. All her rights of commerce are to begin anew, and that with loss of character to begin with. And as to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship, and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you never had any."

Jefferson's opinion of Washington was expressed to Madison only the year before the retirement of the first President; "I wish that his honesty and his political errors may not furnish a second occasion to exclaim, 'Curse on his virtues, they've undone his country!'"
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We must not be too hard in our judgment of Washington's critics. The abuse of public men is a sign of freedom! To speak ill of a Tudor was treason; to abuse Wilhelm II was 
_lève majesté_. To denounce the President in unmeasured terms is politics as it is played. Abuse of that sort, moreover, can be borne. It can be answered; indeed, as we shall see, that was one of the principal purposes of Washington's Farewell Address.

There is, however, another sort of abuse of public men which is more dangerous. It is the use of their words to support policies which are not theirs. The great authority of Washington's name has been used to bolster the policies of other men. It is a peculiarly subtle and dangerous form of abuse because it masquerades as praise. Lip service is rendered to the father of his country at the moment when his words are prostituted to a purpose entirely different from that he sought to serve.

The Farewell Address has been persistently abused in that way. It is a great document,—one that may fairly be said to 'belong to the ages.' It should be read frequently, but it should also be understood. It dealt with many topics, not alone with foreign affairs. Parties, for example, received a considerable share of attention. Washington denounced the spirit of party with great vigor, picturing the evils which flow from parties in vivid phrases. That denunciation is seldom quoted with approval. It is recognized that he had in mind the parties and party spirit of the eighteenth century, that he did not and could not foresee that parties and party organization would have, in the long run, to supply much of the motive power to operate the machinery of government. We appreciate the fact that, however valuable it may have been as a warning in 1796, it has not the same applicability today.

Indeed, the Constitution, amended after the election of 1800, made way for parties. Few of the politicians who are forever quoting one passage of the Farewell Address as though it came from Sinai, would regard this particular passage as part of an authentic revelation!
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What Washington said in the Farewell Address with reference to foreign affairs was equally the product of the circumstances in which he found his country at that moment. Yet it has been treated as though it were laid down as a law of the Medes and Persians "which altereth not." It is a fair question why we should virtually neglect one of his most earnest and moving pleas and then erect the next into a shibboleth.

In reading the text of what Washington said, it is essential to keep his emphasis. I am reminded of one of my classmates who was reading Shakespeare aloud in class: "Who steals my purse steals trash." "That may well be true, Hardy," broke in Professor Winchester with his famous smile, "but I doubt whether Shakespeare had you in mind." The adjectives that Washington used were not mere verbal decorations. They had a real, and occasionally a vital, bearing upon his meaning.

"Nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others should be avoided. . . . Such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be a satellite of the latter.

"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.

"Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote, relation. . . . Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships and enmities.

"Our detached and distant situation invites us to pursue a different course. *If we remain one people, under an efficient government,* the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance, . . . . when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? . . . Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of
any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, or caprice?

"It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. . . .

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

Such then was his own statement of policy. What were the factors which shaped it? The first and fundamental fact which conditioned his policy was that the United States was not yet a nation. It is a point of view difficult to comprehend, but it is worth the effort. The word nation is not easy to define. Nationality has been variously described as arising from common race, common tongue, common traditions, common ideals, or some combination of those factors. When all is said and done, the essential thing is a spirit of unity, the feeling of being one people. That spirit and feeling were then conspicuously lacking. One of the western leaders, later the head of the American army, took a secret oath of allegiance to Spain, and accepted a pension from the Spanish government. George Rogers Clark, who won the Northwest for the United States in the Revolution, twice accepted a commission as a major-general from France, once during Washington's term, and again during that of Adams. The factors which later produced the Hartford Convention with its menace of disunion were abroad in the land, and Washington was peculiarly sensitive to them. In a letter to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, July 8, 1796, he said, "It is a fact too notorious to be denied that the greatest embarrassments under which the administration of this government labors, proceed from the counter-action of people among ourselves who are more disposed to promote the views of another nation than to establish a national character of their own; and that unless the virtuous and independent men . . . will come forward, it is not difficult to predict the consequences. Such is my decided opinion."
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This anxiety over the lack of national spirit is reflected in the Farewell Address. In it he argued at length against sectionalism. He sought to show the natural interdependence of North and South, of the West and the Atlantic Seaboard. The West had been on the verge of breaking away because the new government did not promptly secure the opening of the Mississippi. To the West he makes a special appeal, for "it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious." Such was his argument with the secessionists, those who had fallen in with the intrigues of Genêt, or with Spanish machinations. "It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity. . . . Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations." It is only when we understand the spirit and earnestness of this plea against sectionalism that we can appreciate with what pathetic emphasis Washington said, "If we remain one people." A study of his administration will soon reveal that it was one of his chief anxieties, and when he came to lay down the burdens of office and seek retirement, he knew that the task of consolidating the nation was not yet complete. It was, he felt, an urgent and pressing matter to build a more perfect union of national feeling. Whatever he did in relation to foreign nations was calculated
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with an eye to its effect upon the development of a national sentiment here.

The second condition of fundamental importance in framing his foreign policy was that the new government, under the Constitution, was not yet known to be permanent. It requires a little effort to recall to our minds the length of the revolutionary stage of our history. It is equally difficult to make real to our imaginations the many changes that came over our institutions. During the first fifteen years of its existence, the United States had no less than three governments. The first was informal and revolutionary, assuming power in a crisis, and exercising and developing its power by virtue of necessity. The second one took six years to frame and adopt and establish; then it lasted only seven years. Indeed, it virtually fell to pieces, and disintegrated before its successor actually appeared on the scene. Washington was the first President under the third government. It was one for which he felt peculiarly responsible. The tentative moves toward its development had taken place in his home. The program of the Constitutional Convention had been framed by the delegation of which he was a member. He had presided over the deliberations of the Convention in Philadelphia. In a peculiar sense, consequently, it was his government.

This government had been accepted by a very narrow margin. The months between the publication of the Constitution and its adoption had been months of dramatic suspense. The tide had turned toward the new instrument slowly, and never in full flood. When at last the Constitution was accepted, there were two states outside the fold, and others had entered with conditions which were no less real for not being explicit in form. The first years of Washington's term were marked by efforts to bring in the two and to meet the implied conditions set by others. The new administration did not entirely escape the menace of rebellion. And it was faced by more insidious methods of organization which Washington said were instituted "primarily to sow among the people seeds
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of jealousy and distrust of the government," and so destroy it. Even at the close of his administration, the task was not yet complete. Factional strife was very keen. Two schools of constitutional interpretation had grown up. Their theories of government differed so widely as to imperil the structure itself. Washington feared that the government of which he was the father would be destroyed or impaired. This, too, is reflected in the Farewell Address; "If we remain one people, under an efficient government," not the government of a confederation, but of the union.

He argued that "the free Constitution which is the work of your hands . . . be sacredly maintained." A confederation is not efficient. "No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute." The Constitution having been adopted should be given fullest opportunity to prove its worth; "it is requisite not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. . . . In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions."

"With me," said Washington, "a predominant motive has been to endeavor to give time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, command of its own fortunes." His policy was to gain time for self discovery and self mastery. This was an important part of the philosophy which underlay the policy of isolation. Isolation was not a permanent policy, but one for the period of national adolescence. During that period, however, he wanted as little foreign influence as possible.

That leads to the third of the underlying forces which shaped the diplomacy of Washington's Presidency,—the fact that the United States was not recognized as completely inde-
PENDENT. The Declaration of Independence had used the proud words "free and independent." The treaty of alliance with France in 1778 had as its "essential and direct end . . . to maintain effectually the liberty, sovereignty, and independence absolute and unlimited, of the said United States." And the treaty of peace with Great Britain of 1783 specifically acknowledged the United States "to be free, sovereign, and independent."

These formal declarations were not enough. It still remained for practice to conform to the word. Egypt is independent today, but it is not entirely master of its own destiny. The countries of the Caribbean are free, sovereign, and independent, but in the last quarter century they have often found a very watchful friend at their elbows making suggestions which they could not afford to ignore, or actually taking control and putting the suggestions into force. It was this sort of situation which faced the United States. France had no idea of allowing the United States to follow a policy all its own. French interests were to have a special position. This is shown in many ways. During the negotiation of peace in 1783, France had given support to Spanish contentions which would have limited the United States to the area east of the Alleghenies. When the new Constitution was being framed, the French minister was informed by his government "that it is better for France that the United States should remain in their present condition, because if they achieve the unity of which they are capable, they will acquire a strength and a power which they would probably be ready to abuse." Washington was faced with Edmond Genêt, as French minister. Genêt has often been written down as a harebrained youth. But his instructions were audacious to a degree. His government had virtually authorized him to engage in the madcap adventures he undertook, and the instructions paid scant regard to American sovereignty and less to American dignity. His successor, Fauchet, meddled in American politics, and Adet, who followed, not only intrigued with fron-
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tiersmen and Indians, but dabbled with attempts to influence the election of Washington's successor. Talleyrand, in 1800, manoeuvered European diplomacy to help elect Jefferson to the presidency.

France was not alone in treating the new nation as though it still had a semi-colonial status. England had for years refused to send a minister and finally dispatched Hammond who entered American politics as really as did Genêt, though he was somewhat more discreet. Great Britain clung to a great area within the acknowledged boundaries of the United States in defiance of the plain terms of the treaty, which called for retirement "with all convenient speed." British troops occupied the Western posts and British citizens held the valuable fur trade through most of Washington's administration. Spain also intrigued in the West.

What was more, these foreign nations found support among the people of the United States. Washington spoke of that fact in the letter to Pinckney, already mentioned. Jefferson, whose nationalism was the product of his presidency, played into the hands of Genêt. The anti-federalists or republicans were distinguished by two policies—a narrow construction of the Constitution and a decided leaning to France. In fact, until after the War of 1812, parties divided as much on foreign policy as upon any other point. One may fairly say the parties were more consistent in their attitude toward foreign affairs than in anything else.

Throughout the country there sprang up "Democratic Societies." Washington said, "they had been instituted by their father, Genêt," and were designed to "shake the government to its foundation." This French propagandist had instituted "under a display of popular and fascinating guises, the most diabolical attempts to destroy the best fabric of human government and happiness that has ever been presented for the acceptance of mankind."

With passionate earnestness Washington pled in his Farewell Address: "Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence
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(I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy 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."

Washington had given the best years of his life to the military effort to make the United States independent. Coming to the presidency he found his task not yet fully achieved. The United States had yet to win its diplomatic independence. It alarmed him to find that Jefferson, Monroe, and others could not see the issue in the clear light in which he envisaged it. His alarm is reflected in the Farewell Address in his plea against "permanent, inveterate antipathies," against "passionate attachments," "artificial ties," and "permanent alliances."

His policy of neutrality, of getting on with England, of breaking loose from French leading-strings, was designed to give America a truly independent policy, "where we may choose peace or war, as our interests, guided by the principles of justice shall counsel." The choice was to be our own, and not predetermined by reason of any alliance or other tie. We were to be really free,—to have a broader and deeper independence.

The fact that the United States was a debtor constituted the fourth important influence upon his foreign policy. In a series of famous reports, Hamilton dealt with the condition of the public credit. There was a foreign debt of nearly twelve million dollars in addition to domestic obligations amounting to about sixty-seven and a half millions. Under the terms on which the money had been borrowed abroad, payments upon the principal had been due to begin in 1787. No payments had been made. As for payment of interest, there were interest charges overdue for periods varying from four to six years. To make the situation more difficult the currency was in chaos. Paper money issued by Congress had so depreciated as to be virtually valueless. Beyond that there was no revenue system and no system for the management of government finance.
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In the face of such a situation, one would hardly expect a bold or aggressive policy. Before all else it was necessary to build up an economically sound condition. The war of the Revolution had dislocated commerce; it had upset the fishing industry; it had affected the labor situation adversely; it had diverted industry from its normal channels. Recovery from these economic ills was slow. It had to be made in the face of unfavorable conditions at home, due to the weaknesses of the Confederation, and abroad, due to the hostile commercial policies of the mother country. The measures which it was necessary to take to put the new government upon a sound financial basis ran counter to local prejudices and doctrines. The consequence was rebellion which at one time seemed likely to be of a formidable character. There was no surplus energy available for foreign quarrels.

Washington was not an expert economist. But he was a man of sound sense. He knew that a foreign war would produce a commercial crisis; it would mean a relapse when the patient was on the road to recovery. A severe financial upset would be likely to destroy the prestige of the new government and lead to the overthrow of the Constitution. The demand which he faced was for joining our French ally in a war with England. But the foreign trade of the United States was primarily with England. War with England would inevitably imperil the whole structure which had been built with such infinite pains. The figure of speech he used cannot be improved upon. The United States, he said, was in a convalescent state. That idea of convalescence appears again and again. Peace and quiet were essential to final and full recovery. Progress toward political maturity and economic health was along that road alone.

The United States needed space. That was the fifth factor which shaped his policy. Again we must make an effort of the imagination to see the problem as it confronted him. The great western country was essential to the independence of the nation; and it was not effectively in our hands.
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Washington had a peculiar and especial interest in the West. In his youth he had gone to the upper waters of the Potomac to do surveying in the great estate of Lord Fairfax. There he learned the life of the frontier, caught the atmosphere of land speculation and adventure which were to affect his own investments and those of thousands of others. From that time on he was never without important interests in the West. When we first catch a glimpse of him as a stripping stepping over the threshold of history, it is in the guise of a herald of colonial mastery of the country west of the Alleghenies. In October, 1753, he set out to notify the French, on behalf of the governor of Virginia, that they must evacuate the Ohio valley. When his clear warning was disregarded, war came. It was he who took the offensive against the French in 1754, and fired the first shot to dislodge them. His was the gesture that opened the decisive struggle between France and England for possession, and there, in his Fort Necessity, he was compelled to surrender July 4, 1754. His connection with the disastrous expedition of Braddock is one of the familiar stories of our history. After the defeat he undertook to protect the wide open frontier. He was called upon "to perform . . . impossibilities; that is to protect from the cruel incursions of a crafty, savage enemy a line of inhabitants, of more than three hundred and fifty miles in extent, with a force inadequate to the task." When the war was over and the French were gone, he secured from veterans of the war land claims until he possessed seventy thousand acres in the western country.

The fact is that this youthful patriot and soldier had caught the idea of "manifest destiny." He was determined that the trans-Allegheny region must belong to Virginia. The western question played an important part in the framing of the Constitution. Gouverneur Morris, a leading figure in the Convention, said that "the Mississippi and the fisheries" were the two great objects of union.

In the face of this fundamental ambition of Washington
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were inexorable facts. France and Spain had combined to block the United States east of the crest of the Alleghenies when peace was made in 1783. French interest in the project did not abate after that time. Washington had to fight Genêt's intrigue in the western country. The fundamental hostility between Spanish and American interest was unchanged by the peace. He had to fight Spanish intrigue as well as French. He felt Spanish fingers at the throat of the West at New Orleans. If the government for which he was responsible did not open the Mississippi, he felt confident the West would secede. So he wrote to Lafayette, "Free navigation of the Mississippi . . . we must have, and as certainly shall have, if we remain a nation." Again there appears the conditional clause with its lurking fear of another future.

He had also to fight British policy. The truth is that France, Spain, and Great Britain all wished to confine the United States east of the Alleghenies. If they could have waived their jealousies and cooperated, they might have succeeded. Their bickerings among one another let the Americans slip between them again and again. As the Spaniards used General Wilkinson, as the French used George Rogers Clark, so the British used Senator Blount in their intrigues. They were of a piece with the French and Spanish—cut from the same cloth with the same pattern. The British, moreover, clung almost throughout the administrations of Washington to the western posts north of the Ohio and had the temerity to add a new one.

Hot bloods called for war. But Washington knew that war was out of the question. By patience, by diplomacy, by persistency, he finally got the British out of the western posts. By the same methods he opened the Mississippi. The idea that lay in his mind was that time was working for America. Time and peace would solve the problem of space. American settlers were pouring in a steady stream over the Alleghenies. They were occupying the land as permanent settlers. In a few years they would be there in such numbers as to control
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the destiny of the whole area. America, he said in the Farewell Address, was still small and weak. He looked forward to the occupation of a Western empire that would make America great in size and in strength.

From the point of view of international relations, Europe was the world. This was the sixth fundamental condition which shaped the foreign policy of Washington. Africa was still utterly dark. Only the Barbary States existed as international forces—pests to the commerce of the world. Asia was outside the field of politics. China, Japan, and Korea were all sealed. The rivalry of France and Britain in India was after all a European colonial question. South America was unborn as a body politic; it was still absolutely in the hands of Spain and Portugal. Four-fifths of North America was in a colonial status. Consequently, it is exact to say that outside Europe, there were no directing forces in international life. Whatever of policy there was sprang from Europe.

Europe had used America as a make-weight in the balance of power for a century and a half. Europe's wars cast their long shadows across the Atlantic. They had, in the wilderness, their counterparts to the battles on the fields of Europe. The last and greatest of the colonial wars had, indeed, been kindled by a shot in the woods. Possessing all of South and Central America, and a vast preponderance of North America, Europe expected to continue to use America as a pawn in its chessboard diplomacy. That, indeed, had been a fundamental motive of France in its support of the American Revolution. It was a fresh move to redress the balance of power, to take from England something comparable to what had been taken from France in 1763, and to give to French interests in the New World badly needed support.

Was America to play this rôle, so marked out? One point was certain. No rival system could be set up. The materials were wanting. The choice was to join Europe or go it alone! Tradition and the colonial frame of mind were both on the side of joining Europe.
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The geographical position of the United States invited us to set a new and independent course,—literally to go it alone. That was the seventh, and final, fundamental condition which shaped Washington's policy. It is difficult to realize how dependent we have become upon modern means of communication and how far away Europe really was in Washington's day. It took more than four weeks to make the trip under reasonably favorable conditions. Upon one occasion, it took from October 18 to January 22 for an important letter to go from Washington, in New York, to Gouverneur Morris, in Paris.

The very obvious relation of this fact to American international relations was not first discovered by Washington, but in the Farewell Address he discussed it with convincing logic. "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies" into which we shall be drawn if we create artificial ties. "Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course . . . Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?"

The doctrine of diplomatic isolation rested, therefore, upon three salient facts: first, Europe was the world of international relations; second, we stood apart by ourselves; third, we were in no condition, by reason of political immaturity, economic instability, and smallness of size, to play a leading or aggressive part. The validity of the doctrine was certain to be impaired whenever those factors changed.

There is one last point with reference to the Farewell Address, upon which this analysis of Washington's policy has been founded,—namely the occasion for it. If we are to trust his own explanation, "The principal design of it is to remove doubts at the next election." In 1796 he was sixty-four years old; his health was not of the best. He wanted no third term. Beside his theories as to propriety in the matter, he was so worn down by political strife that he exclaimed on one occasion, "I had rather be in my grave than in the presidency."
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But there were no nominating conventions, no direct primaries, or other means of formal nomination. No third term had been offered him. It is difficult to decline something not offered; it opens the way to taunt and embarrassment. But by a valedictory one may take leave of public life without raising any inferences as to what might or might not happen otherwise. That was the happy solution which Washington hit upon. His long and eminent services gave him the right to take leave of the people as he had taken leave of his army when the Revolution was over.

There was another idea involved in this document. It opened the way for a dignified answer to the extraordinary campaign of villification of which he had been the object. An opportunity was offered to defend his course, to set forth the philosophy of his behavior and policy, and, most important, to furnish a platform for his followers. It was a grave question whether, with his retirement, the government might not fall into the hands of those who were hostile to his principles. Here was an opportunity under solemn circumstances to make a moving appeal to "the virtuous and independent men" to come forward and prevent such an event.

Fundamentally, therefore, it was explanation of the past. It was also advice for the future, but especially the immediate future; it was a campaign document for the approaching election. It was not designed that this political testament should create any entail which would tie up the policy of the United States for generations to come. Such a notion was entirely foreign to his character; and he never conceived of himself in such conceited terms. He was not one of those who believed that wisdom would die with him. His strong practical sense would have revolted at the thought that he was lashing the steering wheel at the moment of turning the ship of state over to a new pilot.

We have then, I assume, Washington's consent to investigate the applicability of his policy to our present situation.
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The United States of 1789 was not yet a nation. Today it is a nation in the fullest sense. There is no longer a question whether we shall remain one people. That question came to its great and dramatic climax in 1861, and before peace was restored it was settled as decisively as things may be in a changing world. The United States is much the largest compact nation in the world. Russia, China, and the British Empire are larger, but two are in eclipse as effective forces and the third is a collection of semi-independent states tied with singularly strong bonds of sentiment. The United States, moreover, is much more perfectly compacted than most nations large or small.

The "new" government of Washington's day is today one of the two governments in the whole world which have not been overthrown or reorganized by revolution since that time. One may call the roll of the great powers,—Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Japan,—and then of all the lesser powers, and not one, save only Britain and the United States, has escaped revolutionary reconstruction. Britain and America have the oldest stable governments in the world. The institutions which Washington described as "yet recent" have matured. America and Britain have reached a condition of political maturity unmatched by any other power. Our institutions have furnished a model for many states new and old.

The United States had not, in Washington's day, fully vindicated its diplomatic independence. It did not succeed in that great task until the Napoleonic wars were finished. But for a century or more, the United States has been free to "choose peace or war as our interests, guided by the principles of justice, shall counsel." We have risen to the rank of a great power in the world, possessing force physical, material, and moral, that gives us a position of undoubted leadership when we choose to exercise it. No nation has, "humanly speaking," more perfect "command of its own fortunes."

From being a debtor, in default, and in economic disorder,
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we have become the greatest creditor nation in the history of the world. In a single decade we have moved from the position of the largest borrower in history to that of the largest lender. This alteration of position brings a whole new set of forces into play. "It is a condition, not a theory, which confronts us." Sensible men will take the new facts into consideration with the same care with which Washington analyzed the situation of his day.

As long as you owe a man money you have no financial interest in his not fighting. If he destroys himself you may have lost a creditor without heirs. It is so with nations. When a creditor nation goes to war, it diverts energy from production to destructive effort. It is compelled to purchase goods abroad, of its debtors. By expanding the debtor's market, prices are driven up. By its own failure to produce, the value of the creditor's money goes down. With the drop of exchange it becomes easier for the debtor to pay its bills. Washington understood this. He said, upon one occasion, that the United States, as a neutral debtor, would gain from a European war. Events proved his analysis to be sound. It was in precisely that manner that the United States, in the years after 1914, discharged its enormous debt to Europe in an astonishingly brief time and became, in its turn, the great creditor nation.

When a man owes you money, on the other hand, you have a direct and immediate financial interest in his keeping the peace. If he gets in a fracas and is injured, his capacity to repay his debt is impaired; it may be utterly destroyed. It is so with nations. France had financed Russia to a considerable extent before the war. When Russia went red and repudiated its debts, it was a staggering blow to France. The United States has today, therefore, a direct financial interest in a stable, prosperous, and peaceful Europe. The newspapers are full of the pleas of one of our great debtors that the war so impoverished it, and laid such burdens upon it, that its capacity for prompt payment has been seriously impaired.
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Further trouble, further wars, mean further impairment of the capacity of our debtors to discharge their obligations. No complicated train of reasoning is necessary to establish that point.

When you loan a man money on a mortgage, elementary business sense prompts you to require that he should cover the face of the mortgage with fire insurance. In the international field we are confronted by a vital difference. We have a fifteen billion dollar mortgage upon Europe,—and we have no insurance; nor is there anyone who will write a policy. It behooves us as a matter of sound business practice at least to see to it that Europeans do not play with matches. Whereas in Washington's day good business said let Europe pursue its own course and go to war if it must, good business today demands that we shall exert our whole influence to help Europe keep the peace.

The United States was small and needed space. Washington could speak of it as "small and weak" in comparison with the nations of Europe. It was a question whether it would be able effectively to establish its control beyond the Allegheny range. In the course of the nineteenth century it added more territory capable of exploitation by white men than any other nation in the world. When one thinks of Louisiana, an inland empire; Florida; Texas; Oregon; California and all that went with it at the close of the Mexican War; Alaska; Hawaii; Samoa; Porto Rico; the imperial proportions of the change became manifest. When one adds to that the growth in population and the effectiveness of our occupation of the land, the contrast with the days of Washington becomes overwhelming. There is no longer pressing demand for expansion of territory.

Europe was the world of 1789. Since then a new world has come into being. The United States stands as leader of the American continents. For over a century we have taken a special and characteristic attitude toward the affairs of this hemisphere. We have joined in a series of international con-
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ferences with the other American states, and have united with
them in the formation of the Pan American Union and other
agencies of importance. It was the United States which
ushered the nations of America on to the world stage at the
Second Hague Conference. Today the Pacific rivals the
Atlantic in importance. The United States early took an
active part in its affairs. American diplomacy opened Japan
and Korea, and the United States was the second nation to
make a treaty with China. Since that time we have insisted
upon, having our point of view taken into consideration when
Pacific questions have been under discussion. The policy of
the “open door” has found in the United States its principal
champion. The protection of the integrity of China has been
distinctly an American principle. In Pacific and Far Eastern
affairs, the United States pursues no policy of isolation.

Finally, the geographical position of the United States no
longer invites us to go it alone. From a position on the fringe
of the world, we have come to stand at its center, the only
world power facing both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The
Panama Canal has become the Fifth Avenue and Forty Second
Street of world commerce. The wilderness which insulated
us is now peopled and we rub elbows with our neighbors to
the north and south along thousands of miles of frontier.
Steam transportation has brought Europe within five days of
us. It requires little more time to go from New York to Lon-
don than from New York to San Francisco. Freight moves
between the two former ports more rapidly and more cheaply
than between the two American ports. The cable and the
wireless have been shrinking the effective size of the world
beyond the dreams of our fathers. In place of the three
months it took Washington to communicate with Gouverneur
Morris, we apparently get news in less than no time; for, by
reason of the difference in time, the resignation of a French
premier at noon was reported at the Department of State at
ten o’clock in the morning. It was bulletined by the news-
papers before another thirty minutes had passed.

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The world is not only smaller, it is more closely integrated. When one stops to consider it, the reach and range of our interests is almost beyond belief. I think of my father's father in the hills of West Virginia. When his family gathered at breakfast, they sat before a home-made table on home-made chairs. All the food, save coffee, came from the United States and nearly all from his own farm, or those of his neighbors. Today the wood for our tables is from Central America; it travels to Grand Rapids, and at last searches us out. Coffee is brought from Brazil, sugar from Cuba, milk from Vermont. Wheat from Minnesota is shipped to be baled like hay at Niagara Falls before being served. Before the day is over we have laid tribute on many countries and several states for food alone. The markets of the world are so closely tied together that the price of wheat for the most of the world is dominated by the Liverpool market, the price of fur by St. Louis and London, of copper by Boston, and of money by New York and London. A financial crisis that swept Japan a few years ago was reflected in the price of men's neckties in the retail stores of Connecticut within three weeks.

These bonds that now attach us to the fate of Europe and Asia are not the "artificial" ties that Washington deplored. They are the natural and inevitable ties of an integrated world. Our economic destiny is already "interwoven" and "entangled" with that of Europe,—and through no one's plan or design, and by no act of politicians or statesmen. The ties represent a process of growth which, if now reversed, would mean a complete reorganization of our economic system such as very few would be ready to contemplate. We no longer occupy either a "detached" or a "distant" situation, and American enterprise and inventive genius have been foremost in destroying detachment and shrinking distance.

George Washington was, before all else, a practical man. He was not a doctrinaire. He was not a man of great imagination. His distinguishing characteristic was not boldness
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or originality of thought, but sound common sense. He built his policy and framed his explanation of it to suit the facts of his day. He broke with tradition because the colonial tradition did not suit the condition of a free, sovereign, and independent nation. He abandoned an old and tenaciously held theory of foreign relations, because the facts of the international world made it untenable.

If this analysis of his policy and his character has any validity, it shows that Washington would be among the first to recognize the logic of our new situation. He would be intent to discern the force and meaning of the factors that have contributed to it. He would be insistent that we face the facts and shape our policy to meet them as they now exist,—not as they were a century and a quarter ago.