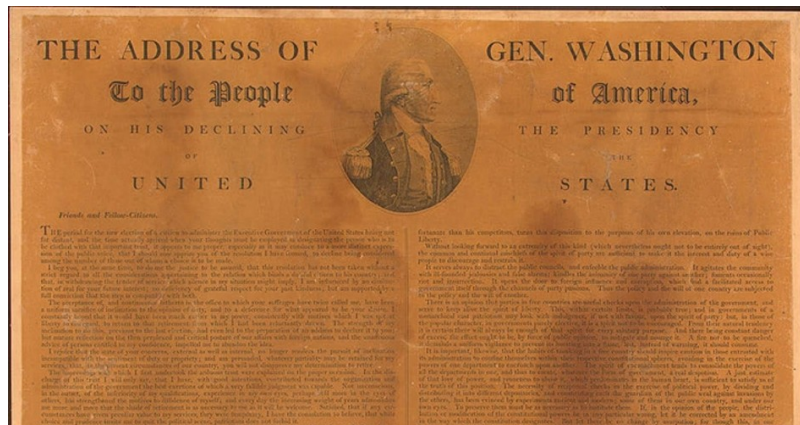




Washington’s Farewell Address: Beware of “Tools and Dupes”

As he prepared to leave office, President George Washington was concerned about the increasingly partisan and militaristic path the young Republic he helped found was heading down.

Even the “Father of His Country” was not above criticism, and the military-industrial complex of the time pilloried him in the press. Although the recently retired general whom the Indians believed could not be killed suffered from the shots taken at him by these “infamous newspapers,” he refused to make any response that would deny his countrymen of “the infinite blessings resulting from a free press.”



This nobility contrasts sharply with the arrogance and paranoia of his successor, John Adams. Adams signed the [Alien and Sedition Acts](#) into law in an attempt to criminalize criticism of the president. The spirit of those unconstitutional acts is alive and well today as hundreds of congressmen and the president enact similar provisions and the usurped authority granted under the [National Defense Authorization Act](#) to indefinitely detain persons the president suspects of posing a threat to the security of the homeland.

In so many ways, Washington was in fact “the indispensable man” and an example to politicians in his own time and ours.

When the time came for Washington to return to Martha and to Mount Vernon, he gave one last and lasting message to his “friends and fellow citizens.” This now-famous speech, drafted principally by James Madison, is known as the Farewell Address.

September 19, 2013 marked the 217th anniversary of [Washington’s Farewell Address](#). Deservedly so, this speech has become renowned for its prose and principles — including national unity, tolerance of political differences, and neutrality in the endless foreign conflicts.

To ensure that his remarks would strike the appropriate tone, Washington informed Madison that the speech should declare “in plain and modest terms ... that we are all children of the same country.... That our interest, however diversified in local and small matters, is the same in all the great and essential concerns of the nation.”

Although he penned a version of the address in his own words, he ultimately approved and delivered the version written by Madison.

After rehearsing his own record of political and military service and expressing his “love of liberty,” Washington urged the states to remain united and to “avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be



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regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty.”

Obviously, the United States has failed to follow President Washington’s wise recommendations.

Our own massive military-industrial complex counts profits in the billions derived from supplying our armed forces currently deployed around the globe. Defense contractors sign billion-dollar contracts with the government, and funnel millions into the campaign coffers of key congressmen whom they can count on to keep the money flowing and the troops fighting.

To avoid the plague of perpetual war, Washington warned against “foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues.”

Sadly, our modern proclivity is to surrender sovereignty to international bodies whose members are not elected and thus not accountable to the American people, and to send monetary and military support to “freedom fighters” in the Middle East. As the [murder of the U.S. ambassador to Libya](#) demonstrates, however, all this patronage has failed to purchase peace.

Unmoved, though, the president stonewalls the Congress and keeps the victims of the Benghazi attack from testifying.

Then, in open defiance of several laws, Obama and his congressional collaborators send millions of taxpayer dollars to known agents of al-Qaeda working within the so-called Syrian resistance, with the promise of armed intervention urging them to continue the civil war.

Peace, the president assures us, is only possible as a product of widening the “War on Terror.”

George Washington, on the other hand, declared that a lasting peace comes only from avoiding meddling in foreign armed conflicts and from promoting virtue in the citizenry. A peaceful country, he said, can be maintained only by peaceful people. Washington explained:

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it — It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

Defiance of this good advice is apparent by the federal government’s efforts to portray Muslims as radicals and enemies worthy of hate and suspicion; as well as by its codified [disregard for due process as evidenced by the compilation by President Obama of a kill list](#) composed of people (including some Americans) targeted for summary execution.

In light of our disregard for General Washington’s timeless warnings, it is little wonder that we find ourselves trillions of dollars in debt due in part to the constant demand for funding multiple military operations. As the United States marches into one after another unconstitutional and unwise foreign military entanglement, the Constitution, the rule of law, and virtue are counted among the collateral damage.

The history of the past 217 years reveals that most of Washington’s successors have ignored the counsel of caution given in his Farewell Address. Instead, they have bade farewell to the “fundamental



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maxims of true liberty” Washington recognized in the Constitution.

If we are to avoid “running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations,” perhaps President Obama, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), and the other members of Congress banging the war drums will take a moment and refresh their memories of our first president’s parting words.

If they can be convinced to do so, perhaps they should start by studying the following admonition:

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (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. 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 of another cause those whom they actuate 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, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

Let’s stop sitting idle while this Republic is ruined by those “tools and dupes.” Let’s get jealous of our freedoms and become “real patriots” who demand that our elected officials stop destroying this nation that once enjoyed the influence of “good laws under a free government.”

Image: broadside of Washington’s Farewell Address from the Library of Congress

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