

George Washington's Advice to the Nation

1) Read the passages and explain George Washington's advice in your own words.

a) The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States not being far distant...it appears to me proper...that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed to decline being considered.

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b) "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."

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c) "Let me...warn you...against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy...It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with illfounded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection."

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d) "Of all the...habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle...Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government...Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?"

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e) "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation...It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

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2- Which points do you agree with? Which points do you disagree with? Why?