

## Washington's Farewell Address 1796

### [segments warning against political parties Part II]

The alternate domination of one faction over another (here he means the switching of a majority in government back and forth from one party to another), sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party disagreement, is itself a frightful despotism (an exercise of absolute power). But this leads...to a more...permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result (from the constant fighting) [prompt] the minds of men to seek security...in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the [leader] of some prevailing faction (party), turns this [prompting] to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

***Question 1: Why would one party wish for revenge against another? Could this create a cycle of revenge?***

***Question 2: Do you believe that Washington is correct when he states that a single individual could take advantage and rise to power in a party system?***

[Party factions] agitate the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity (strong hostility or dislike) of one part against another, stirs up occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which finds an access to the government itself through...party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another. (Here he is suggesting that foreign governments could eventually influence a party).

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective (where members are voted into office), it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From [the people's] natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit [of liberty] for every beneficial purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion, to mitigate it (the formation of parties).

***Question 3: After reading Washington's address do you agree with him about political parties? Explain your position.***