

007 GEORGE WASHINGTON 乔治·华盛顿, 美国首任总统

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1. (解说) GEORGE WASHINGTON 乔治·华盛顿, 美国首任总统

A brilliant group of political leaders 谓 **emerged** /during the Revolutionary Era /and the early years of the new nation.

Collectively 集体地, 共同地, they **are called** the FOUNDING FATHERS /and their names are familiar — Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison.

革命时期, 和新国家成立初期, 涌现出一批杰出的政治领导人。他们被统称为"国父", 他们的名字也很熟悉——托马斯·杰斐逊、约翰·亚当斯、本杰明·富兰克林、亚历山大·汉密尔顿, 和詹姆斯·麦迪逊。

Late 18th-century /America still had a relatively small population, yet this group of major figures **looms (v.) larger** /and **appears (v.) more talented than** any similar group /at any other time in the country' s history.

It seems clear that /主 the momentous (a.)关键的; 重要的; 重大的 **events** of the period /and their obvious **significance** (n.) (尤指对将来有影响的) 重要性, 意义, 谓 **encouraged** (v.) many, perhaps most, of these individuals **to step (v.) beyond** the bounds 限制范围; 极限 of ordinary life **to achieve** greatness (n.)伟大; 巨大。

18世纪末的美国人口, 仍然相对较少, 但这群重要人物, 却比该国历史上任何其他时期的任何类似群体, 显得更重大、更有才华。很明显, 这一时期的重大事件, 及其明显的重要意义, 鼓励了许多人, 也许是大多数人, 超越他们原本平凡生活的界限, 而实现伟大。

Perhaps 主 **the most eminent** (尤指在某专业中) 卓越的, 著名的, 显赫的 **of** this group, and almost certainly **the single most important for the success of** the Revolution and **the stability** 稳定(性); 稳固(性) **of** the new nation, 系 was GEORGE WASHINGTON.

As an able (a.)有才智的; 有才能的 delegate from Virginia, he **participated in** the First and Second Continental Congresses.

也许这个群体中, 最杰出的人物, 而且几乎肯定是对革命的成功, 和新国家的稳定最重要的人物, 就是乔治·华盛顿。作为来自"弗吉尼亚州"的一位能干的代表, 他参加了第一届, 和第二届大陆会议。

However, his role in the fight toward independence 谓 became crucial /during the war itself /when he **served** [for its duration 持续时间; 期间] **as** the commander of the Continental Army. After a brief retirement from public service, he once again became a political leader at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, where he was elected the presiding 主持(会议等); 担任(会议)主席; 负责 officer.

Once Washington somewhat 稍微, 有点 reluctantly agreed to be a presidential candidate, his election in 1789 received almost universal support.

Everyone knew that /he was the obvious choice (n.) to be the first president of the United States.

然而, 当他在战争期间担任"大陆军司令"时, 他在争取独立的斗争中所扮演的角色, 变得至关重要。从公共服务部门短暂退休后, 他在 1787 年"制宪会议"上, 再次成为政治领袖, 并当选为"会议主席"。华盛顿虽然有些不情

愿地同意成为"总统候选人", 但他在 1789 年的当选, 几乎得到了普遍的支持。每个人都知道, 他是美国第一任总统的不二人选。

Example 1. title

FOR THE DURATION

(informal) until the end of a particular situation直到...结束; 在整个...期间

George Washington was a serious man.

乔治华盛顿, 是一个严肃的人。

He carried (v.)具有 (某品质或特点) himself with a grave dignity 尊严, 自尊; 庄严 often **described as** aloofness.

Quite the opposite of 完全相反 being an informal joker, Washington **held people at a distance** 与人保持一定距离.

A central part of his personality 个性, 性格 **included** strong self-control /后定 that avoided excessive camaraderie 同事情谊; 友情.

Surely, his long military service **played a significant role** molding (v.) (用模具) 浇铸, 塑造; 将...塑造成 this character.

First as a militia officer on the Virginia frontier **preceding** 在.....之前发生 (或出现) and during the French and Indian War (1754-58) /**and then** again as the commander of the Continental Army (1775-83), Washington **believed that** /familiarity 友好随和; 亲近 **could weaken** the respect /后定 an officer **needed** for effective command 控制; 管辖; 指挥.

他举止庄严, 常被形容为冷漠。华盛顿与一个不拘礼节的开玩笑者恰恰相反, 他与人们保持着一定的距离。他性格的核心部分, 包括强烈的自我控制力, 避免过度的友情。当然, 他长期的军旅生涯, 对塑造这个性格起到了重要作用。华盛顿先是在法印战争 (1754-58 年) 之前和期间, 担任弗吉尼亚边境的民兵军官, 然后又担任大陆军司令 (1775-83 年), 他认为, 熟悉可能会削弱军官所需要的尊重, 及有效的指挥。

Washington' s greatest contribution to the Revolutionary War, however, 系 was **his consistent (a.)一致的; 始终如一的 acknowledgment of** the preeminence (n.)卓越; 杰出 of **civilian 平民; 老百姓; 庶民 leadership** 文职领导.

When other military leaders might **have been tempted** (v.)引诱; 诱惑 /**to seize** (v.) political power /and **rule** (v.) as a more efficient strong man, 主 Washington' s **respect for** the preeminence of CIVIL AUTHORITY **over** MARTIAL 战争的; 军事的 AUTHORITY /谓 **kept** the republican experiment **alive**.

然而, 华盛顿对独立战争的最大贡献是, 他一贯承认"文职领导"的卓越地位(即文官政治)。当其他军事领导人可能试图夺取政治权力, 并以更有效率的"强人"的身份进行统治时, 华盛顿对"文职权力高于军事权力"的尊重, 使共和实验得以继续进行。

Washington happily resigned 辞职; 辞去 (某职务) his military command /at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783.

He **saw** himself living out (以某种方式) 度过余生 his days **as** a farmer /at Mt. Vernon.

But he would **be called on** to lead (v.) the country again — this time **not** in war, **but** peace.

1783 年独立战争结束时, 华盛顿愉快地辞去了军事指挥权。他在弗农山度过了农民的日子。但他将再次被要求领导这个国家——这次不是在战争中, 而是在和平时期。

Example 2. title

live out sth

(1) to actually do what you have only thought about doing before 实践 (以前想要做的事)
- to live out your fantasies 实现梦想

(2) to spend the rest of your life in a particular way (以某种方式) 度过余生
- He lived out his days alone. 他独自度过余生。

During the critical period of the 1780s /Washington **privately feared that** /主 the weak central government 后定 **dictated** (v.) (尤指以令人不快的方式) 指使 , 强行规定 by the Articles of Confederation /谓 **threatened** the long-term health of the nation.
He **supported** the call for a Constitutional Convention /and after some hesitation 犹豫 , 不情愿 /**attended** (v.)出席 ; 参加 **as a delegate** /where he **was elected** the presiding officer.

在 1780 年代的关键时期 , 华盛顿私下担心《邦联条例》规定的软弱的中央政府, 会威胁到国家的长期健康。他支持召开“制宪会议”的呼吁 , 并在犹豫一番后, 作为代表出席 , 并当选为会“议主席”。

He **took a** relatively limited **role**, however, **in** the debate /that created the proposed 被提议的 , 建议的 Constitution.
Nor **did** he **publicly favor** (v.) ratification.
It seems that /主 his sense of personal reserve 谨慎 ; 保留;内向 ; 寡言少语 ; 矜持 谓 **prevented** (v.) him **from** actively campaigning (v.)从事运动.
As he **was likely to become** the first president, he **avoided the appearance of** self-serving motivation /by **not aggressively supporting** the Constitution **in public**.

然而 , 他在制定宪法提案的辩论中, 发挥的作用相对有限。他也没有公开支持批准。看来他个人的矜持意识, 阻碍了他积极竞选。由于他很可能成为第一任总统 , 因此他没有在公开场合积极支持宪法 , 以避免出现自私动机。

主 The significance of the FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION under the Constitution /系 **is hard to overstate** ((v.)夸大 ; 夸张 ; 言过其实) **怎么强调都不过分**.
The Constitution **provided** a bare 仅够的 ; 最基本的 ; 最简单的 structural outline **for** the federal government, but 主 how it would actually **come together** 合成一体 ; 结合 ; 联合 /系 was unclear.
The precedent 先前出现的事例 ; 前例 ; 先例 /后定 established by the first president /谓 would be enormous.
Washington **generally proceeded** (v.)继续做 (或从事、进行) [**with great caution** 小心 , 谨慎].
For the most part 在极大程度上 , 多半 /he **continued** precedents (n.)前例 ; 先例 /后定 that **had been established** under the Articles of Confederation.
For instance, he **carried over** (在不同情况下) 继续存在 , 保持下去 the three departments of the government 后定 that had existed before the Constitution.

宪法规定的第一任总统政府的重要性, 怎么强调都不为过。宪法为联邦政府提供了一个简单的结构纲要 , 但它实际上该如何运作整合, 还尚不清楚。那么由第一任总统开创的先例, 就将是影响巨大的。 华盛顿总体上非常谨慎地行事。在很大程度上 , 他延续了根据《邦联条例》确立的先例。例如 , 他继承了宪法之前存在的三个政府部门。

Example 3. title

CARRY OVER

to continue to exist in a different situation (在不同情况下) 继续存在 , 保持下去
- Attitudes learned at home **carry over** into the playground. 家里养成的作风会表现在学校的运动场上。

But the nationalist Washington **favored** a stronger central government /and **made sure that** 主 executive authority 系 was independent from total legislative control.
For instance, Washington **appointed** his own head 领导 ; 主管 **to** each department of government /whom the legislature **could only accept or reject**.
Furthermore, Washington **identified** the three leaders (Thomas Jefferson **as** secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton **of the treasury**, and Henry Knox **of war**) **as** his personal "cabinet" 内阁 of advisers, thus 以此方式 ; 如此 ; 这样;因此 ; 从而 ; 所以 **underscoring** (v.)在.....下面划线 ; 强调 **the executive' s domain**.
Particularly **in his first term as president** from 1789-1792, Washington' s enormous personal

popularity and stature **enhanced** the legitimacy 合法性，合理性 of the modest new national government.

但民族主义的华盛顿, 主张建立更强大的中央政府, 并确保"行政权力"独立于完全的"立法"控制。例如, 华盛顿任命了自己的政府各部门负责人, "立法机关"只能接受或拒绝。此外, 华盛顿还指定三位领导人 (托马斯·杰斐逊担任"国务卿"、亚历山大·汉密尔顿担任"财政部长", 亨利·诺克斯担任"战争顾问") 作为他的个人顾问 "内阁", 从而强调了行政部门的职权范围。特别是在 1789 年至 1792 年的第一个总统任期内, 华盛顿巨大的个人声望和地位, 增强了温和的新国家政府的合法性。

Unfortunately for Washington, 主 events in his second term 谓 somewhat clouded (v.)布满云; 给.....蒙上阴影 his extraordinary success.
For one, 主 his own cabinet 谓 **split (v.)**分裂，使分裂（成不同的派别）**apart** /as Thomas Jefferson increasingly **dissented (v.)**（对官方意见）不同意，持异议 **from** the economic policies 后定 proposed by Alexander Hamilton, most of which Washington **supported**.

对于华盛顿来说, 不幸的是, 他第二个任期内发生的事件, 在一定程度上给他非凡的成功蒙上了阴影。其一, 由于托马斯·杰斐逊越来越反对亚历山大·汉密尔顿提出的经济政策, 而华盛顿支持其中大部分政策, 他自己的内阁分裂了。

Example 4. 案例

dissent

[V] ~ **(from sth)** : (formal) to have or express opinions that are different from those that are officially accepted (对官方意见) 不同意，持异议

主 Even more **disturbing** 打扰，妨碍；使焦虑，使烦恼 **to** Washington 系 was **the emergence of** a new form of political activity /where the public **divided into** opposing parties.
Although now **a fundamental** 基础的；基本的 **feature** of modern democracy, Washington and many others **perceived** (v.)将...理解为；将...视为；认为 organized opposition to the government **as** treasonous 叛逆的；谋反的；犯叛国罪的!

更令华盛顿不安的是, 一种新形式的政治活动的出现, 公众分裂成对立的政党。虽然现在是现代民主的基本特征, 但当时华盛顿和许多其他人却认为, 有组织地反对政府, 是叛国行为！

Example 5. 案例

perceive

[VNVN to inf] ~ **sb/sth (as sth)** : to understand or think of sb/sth in a particular way将...理解为；将...视为；认为
- She did not **perceive herself as** disabled.她没有把自己看成残疾人。

These clouds at the end of Washington' s **public career** 生涯；职业, like the difficulties of his first military command in the 1750s, **remind** (v.)提醒，使想起 us **that** /主 even this most stellar (a.)优秀的；精彩的；杰出的;星的；恒星的 of the Founding Fathers /谓 **hardly glided (v.)**滑翔;滑行；滑动；掠过 **through** public life **without controversy**（公开的）争论，辩论，论战.
As impressive **and even as** indispensable 不可或缺的；必不可少的 **as** Washington had been to the creation of the new nation, he remained 仍然是；保持不变 **a leader with qualities** /that **could not appeal to** all of the people **all of the time**.
Most interestingly perhaps, is that some of the personal qualities that made him extraordinarily effective are also ones that might make him extremely unpopular today.

华盛顿公共生涯末期的这些乌云, 就像他在 1750 年代首次担任军事指挥时遇到的困难一样, 提醒我们, **即使是这位最杰出的开国元勋, 在公共生活中, 也很难没有争议。** 尽管华盛顿对这个新国家的创建, 起到了令人印象深刻, 甚至不可或缺的作用, 但他仍然是一位领导人, 其品质无法始终吸引所有人。也许最有趣的是, 一些使他异常高效的个人品质, 也可能使他在今天极不受欢迎。

Washington consciously 有意识地，清楚地；有意地，故意地 **cultivated** 耕；耕作;逐渐形成（某种态度、谈话或举止方式等）① **a distance** from the public / ② and 主 **a personal reserve** (n.)谨慎；

保留;内向;寡言少语;矜持 /后定 that made him aloof (a.)冷漠;冷淡.

He was a **curious** 稀奇古怪;奇特;不寻常 **combination** 结合体;联合体;混合体 of late-18th century qualities 品质;特性 — a regal 帝王的;王室的;豪华的 republican 共和主义者 /后定 whose **disdain** (n.)鄙视;蔑视;鄙弃 for **democratic excess** 谓 helped **give** life, power, and respectability 体面;名望;得体 to what **would soon become** the world' s first modern democracy.

华盛顿有意识地与公众保持距离,并保持个人的矜持,这使他显得冷漠。他是 18 世纪晚期品质的奇妙结合体——一位富丽堂皇的共和主义者,他对"过度民主"的蔑视,为很快成为世界上第一个现代民主国家的国家,赋予了生命、权力和尊重。

Example 6. 案例

disdain

(n.)~ (**for sb/sth**) : the feeling that sb/sth is not good enough to deserve your respect or attention 鄙视;蔑视;鄙弃

→ dis-, 不, 非, 使相反。-dain, 同-dign, 尊贵, 词源同 dignity, decent.即使不尊贵, 蔑视。

Washington **departed** (v.)离开;离去;起程;出发;离职 ① **the presidency** 主席的职位(或任期等);总统的职位(或任期等) /② and **the nation' s then capital city** of Philadelphia in September 1796 /方式状 **with a characteristic** (a.)典型的;独特的;特有的 **sense of how to take dramatic advantage of** the moment.

1796年9月, 华盛顿离开总统职位, 离开当时的美国首都费城, 他对如何利用这一时刻有着独特的认识。

WASHINGTON' S FAREWELL (n.)告别;辞行 ADDRESS /谓 ① **has long been recognized as** a towering (a.)高大的;高耸的;屹立的;卓越的;杰出的;出色的 statement of American political purpose 政治目的 / ② and **has been read annually** in the U.S. Congress /as part of **the national recognition** 承认;认可;赞誉;赏识;奖赏 of the first President' s birthday /for over 100 years.

Although 主 **the celebration of that day and the Farewell Address** /谓 no longer **receives** such strenuous 劲头十足的;奋力的;顽强的 attention, 主 Washington' s final public performance 谓 still **deserves** close attention.

华盛顿的告别演说, 长期以来一直被认为是美国政治目的的崇高宣言, 一百多年来, 美国国会每年都会宣读《华盛顿告别演说》, 作为全国庆祝首任总统生日的一部分。尽管这一天的庆祝活动和告别演说不再受到如此强烈的关注, 但华盛顿最后的公开表现仍然值得密切关注。

Example 7. 案例

strenuous

(a.) needing great effort and energy 费力的;繁重的;艰苦的

(a.) showing great energy and determination 劲头十足的;奋力的;顽强的

- The ship went down /although **strenuous efforts** were made to save it. 尽管人们为营救这条船做了很大的努力, 它还是沉了。

Washington feared that /local factors **might be** the source of petty 小的;琐碎的;次要的 differences /that would destroy the nation.

His defense (n.) of national unity 团结一致;联合;统一 /谓 **lay** (v.) **not just in** abstract ideals, **but also in** the pragmatic 实用的;讲求实效的;务实的 reality /that union **brought clear advantages to** every region.

Union **promised** "greater strength, greater resource, [and] proportionately 相称地, 成比例地 greater security from danger" **than** any state or region **could enjoy [alone]**.

He emphasized, "your UNION **ought to be considered as** a main prop 支柱;支撑物;后盾 of your liberty."

华盛顿担心, "地方因素"可能会成为"导致国家毁灭"的微小分歧的根源。他对"民族团结"的捍卫, 不仅存在于抽象的理想中, 而且还存在于务实的现实中, 即联盟给每个地区带来了明显的优势。联盟承诺比任何州或地区的各自为政, 能享有 "更强大的力量、更多的资源, 以及相应的更大的"免受危险"的安全作用"。他强调, "你们的联合, 应该被视为你们能获得'自由保障'的主要支柱。"

主 **The remainder** of the Address, delivered (v.)发表; 宣布; 发布 at CONGRESS HALL 国会厅 in Philadelphia, 谓 **examined** (仔细地) 检查, 检验; 考察 what Washington **saw as** the two major threats to the nation, one domestic 国内的, 本国的 and the other foreign (a.)外国的, which in the mid-1790s **increasingly seemed** likely to combine.

First, Washington **warned of** "the baneful 邪恶的; 引起灾祸的 effects of the SPIRIT OF PARTY." To Washington /POLITICAL PARTIES **were** a deep threat to the health of the nation /原因状 **for** they **allowed** "a small but artful 精巧的; 巧妙的 and enterprising (a.)有事业心的; 有进取心的; 有创业精神的 minority" 少数派; 少数人 /to "put [in the place of the delegated 授权; 委托 will (n.) 意志; 意愿 of the Nation], the will of a party."

演讲的其余部分, 在费城国会大厅发表, 探讨了华盛顿所认为的, 国家面临的两大威胁, 一个是国内威胁, 另一个是外国威胁。

在 1790 年代中期, 这两个威胁似乎越来越有可能结合在一起。首先, 华盛顿警告“政党精神的有害影响”。对华盛顿来说, 政党对国家的健康, 构成了严重威胁, 因为他们允许“一小部分但狡猾且有进取心的少数派”, “用政党的意志, 代替国家的委托意志”。

Example 8. 案例



注意区别: in place of 和 in the place of 的区别

in place of sb/sth | in sb' s/sth' s place

instead of sb/sth 代替; 顶替

- You can use milk **in place of** cream /in this recipe. 这道食谱可以用牛奶代替奶油。

in the place of : 在某地方

- Nobody can replace him **in the place of my heart**. 没有人可以取代他在我心目中的地位。

Yet, it was **the dangerous influence** of foreign powers, **judging** (v.)判断 **from** the amount 数量; 数额 of the Address /后定 that Washington **devoted** 献身; 致力; 专心 **to** it, where he predicted 预测, 预言 the greatest threat to the young United States.

As European powers **embarked** 上船; 装船; 从事, 着手, 开始 (新的或艰难的事情) **on** a long war, each **hoping** (v.) **to draw** the U.S. **to** its side, Washington **admonished** (v.)劝告, 告诫 the country "**to steer** (v.)驾驶 (船、汽车等); 掌控方向盘; 行驶 **clear** (ad.)离开; 不靠近; 不接触 **of** permanent Alliances 联盟, 同盟."

Foreign nations, he explained, **could not be trusted to do anything more than** pursue (v.) **their own interests** /when **entering international treaties**.

Rather than **expect** (v.) "real favors **from** Nation to Nation," Washington **called for** extending (v.) foreign "commercial relations" /后定 that **could be** mutually beneficial 有利的; 有裨益的; 有用的, while **maintaining** "**as little** political connection **as possible**."

主 Washington' s commitment (n.) to NEUTRALITY /系 **was**, in effect, an anti-French position /

因为 since **it overrode (v.)推翻 a 1778 treaty /后定 promising** mutual support between France and the United States.

然而，从华盛顿发表的演说中, 所涉及的内容来看，他认为外国势力的危险影响, 才是对年轻的美国最大的威胁。当欧洲列强开始了一场长期战争，每个国家都希望把美国拉到自己一边时，华盛顿告诫美国“避开永久联盟”。他解释说，不要相信外国在加入国际条约时, 除了追求自己的利益之外还会做任何事情。华盛顿呼吁, 在保持“尽可能少的政治联系”的同时，要扩大可能互惠互利的对外“商业关系”，而不是期待“国与国之间的真正恩惠”。华盛顿对中立的承诺, 实际上是一种反法立场，因为它推翻了1778年法国和美国之间承诺会相互支持的条约。

Example 9. 案例

EMBARK ON/UPON STH

to start to do sth new or difficult从事，着手，开始（新的或艰难的事情）
- She is about **to embark on** a diplomatic career.她即将开始外交生涯。

clear

(ad.) ~ **(of sth)** : away from sth; not near or touching sth离开；不靠近；不接触
- Stand (v.) **clear (ad.) of** the train doors.不要靠近火车门站立。

George Washington, like most powerful Virginians of the 18th century, **derived (v.)** (从...中) 得到，获得;从...衍生出；起源于；来自 most of his wealth and status **from** the labor of African and African American slaves.

乔治·华盛顿和 18 世纪最有权势的弗吉尼亚人一样，他的大部分财富和地位, 都来自非洲和非裔美国奴隶的劳动。

When Washington **arrived in** Massachusetts in 1775 **/to take command of** the patriot militia / 后定 that **was surrounding** the British in Boston, he **was surprised (a.) to discover that** /New Englanders **had begun to allow** free African Americans **as well as** slaves **/to join** their ranks 队伍;普通成员 (尤指军队的普通士兵) **as soldiers**.

1775 年，当华盛顿抵达马萨诸塞州，指挥爱国民兵来包围波士顿英国人时，他惊讶地发现, 新英格兰人已经开始允许自由的非裔美国人和奴隶, 加入他们的军队。

the British Army in Virginia **declared that** /主 any **slave** of a patriot master 后定 who **fled (v.)/to fight** the patriots /谓 **would gain** his freedom.

弗吉尼亚州的英国军队宣布，任何一个爱国者(即美国人)主人的奴隶，如果逃跑, 并转而去与爱国者作战，都将获得自由。

Washington **immediately grasped** 抓紧；抓牢;理解；领会；领悟；明白 the strategic crisis 战略危机 /后定 **posed by** this British promise of freedom in a country /where **one in every five people** was black.

主 Pragmatic concerns 谓 **quickly led** Washington **to reverse (v.)**颠倒；彻底转变；使完全相反 **his policy** /and by December 1775 主 the Continental Army, in the North at least, 谓 **included** black soldiers.

华盛顿立即意识到, 英国对黑人的自由承诺, 给这个五分之一人口都是黑人的国家(即美国大地), 带来了战略危机。出于务实的考虑，华盛顿很快改变了他的政策，到 1775 年 12 月，大陆军（至少在北方）包括了黑人士兵。

Washington **hoped to act as** a humane (a.)善良的；仁慈的；人道的 master /by **keeping** slave families **together**.

However, he **soon discovered that** /slavery **was only profitable** (a.)有利润的；赢利的 /when **operated** in a brutal fashion 以...方式.

Mt. Vernon **became increasingly inefficient** in Washington’ s final two decades.

华盛顿希望通过让奴隶家庭团结在一起充当人道的主人。然而，他很快发现奴隶制只有在残酷的情况下才能有利可图。在华盛顿的最后二十年里，他的弗农山变得越来越低效。

Example 10. 案例

in (a)... 'fashion

(formal) in a particular way以...方式

- How could they behave **in such a fashion**? 他们的态度怎么会这样呢 ?

2. pure

A brilliant group of political leaders emerged during the Revolutionary Era and the early years of the new nation. Collectively, they are called the FOUNDING FATHERS and their names are familiar — Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison.

Late 18th-century America still had a relatively small population, yet this group of major figures looms larger and appears more talented than any similar group at any other time in the country's history. It seems clear that the momentous events of the period and their obvious significance, encouraged many, perhaps most, of these individuals to step beyond the bounds of ordinary life to achieve greatness.

Perhaps the most eminent of this group, and almost certainly the single most important for the success of the Revolution and the stability of the new nation, was GEORGE WASHINGTON. As an able delegate from Virginia, he participated in the First and Second Continental Congresses.

However, his role in the fight toward independence became crucial during the war itself when he served for its duration as the commander of the Continental Army. After a brief retirement from public service, he once again became a political leader at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, where he was elected the presiding officer. Once Washington somewhat reluctantly agreed to be a presidential candidate, his election in 1789 received almost universal support. Everyone knew that he was the obvious choice to be the first president of the United States.

George Washington was a serious man.

He carried himself with a grave dignity often described as aloofness. Quite the opposite of being an informal joker, Washington held people at a distance. A central part of his personality included strong self-control that avoided excessive camaraderie. Surely, his long military service played a significant role molding this character. First as a militia officer on the Virginia frontier preceding and during the French and Indian War (1754-58) and then again as the commander of the Continental Army (1775-83), Washington believed that familiarity could weaken the respect an officer needed for effective command.

Washington's greatest contribution to the Revolutionary War, however, was his consistent acknowledgment of the preeminence of civilian leadership. When other military leaders might have been tempted to seize political power and rule as a more efficient strong man, Washington's respect for the preeminence of CIVIL AUTHORITY over MARTIAL AUTHORITY kept the republican experiment alive.

Washington happily resigned his military command at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. He saw himself living out his days as a farmer at Mt. Vernon. But he would be called on to lead the country again — this time not in war, but peace.

During the critical period of the 1780s Washington privately feared that the weak central government dictated by the Articles of Confederation threatened the long-term health of the

nation. He supported the call for a Constitutional Convention and after some hesitation attended as a delegate where he was elected the presiding officer.

He took a relatively limited role, however, in the debate that created the proposed Constitution. Nor did he publicly favor ratification. It seems that his sense of personal reserve prevented him from actively campaigning. As he was likely to become the first president, he avoided the appearance of self-serving motivation by not aggressively supporting the Constitution in public.

The significance of the FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION under the Constitution is hard to overstate. The Constitution provided a bare structural outline for the federal government, but how it would actually come together was unclear. The precedent established by the first president would be enormous. Washington generally proceeded with great caution. For the most part he continued precedents that had been established under the Articles of Confederation. For instance, he carried over the three departments of the government that had existed before the Constitution.

But the nationalist Washington favored a stronger central government and made sure that executive authority was independent from total legislative control. For instance, Washington appointed his own head to each department of government whom the legislature could only accept or reject. Furthermore, Washington identified the three leaders (Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton of the treasury, and Henry Knox of war) as his personal "cabinet" of advisers, thus underscoring the executive's domain. Particularly in his first term as president from 1789-1792, Washington's enormous personal popularity and stature enhanced the legitimacy of the modest new national government.

Unfortunately for Washington, events in his second term somewhat clouded his extraordinary success. For one, his own cabinet split apart as Thomas Jefferson increasingly dissented from the economic policies proposed by Alexander Hamilton, most of which Washington supported.

Even more disturbing to Washington was the emergence of a new form of political activity where the public divided into opposing parties. Although now a fundamental feature of modern democracy, Washington and many others perceived organized opposition to the government as treasonous!

These clouds at the end of Washington's public career, like the difficulties of his first military command in the 1750s, remind us that even this most stellar of the Founding Fathers hardly glided through public life without controversy. As impressive and even as indispensable as Washington had been to the creation of the new nation, he remained a leader with qualities that could not appeal to all of the people all of the time. Most interestingly perhaps, is that some of the personal qualities that made him extraordinarily effective are also ones that might make him extremely unpopular today.

Washington consciously cultivated a distance from the public and a personal reserve that made him aloof. He was a curious combination of late-18th century qualities — a regal republican whose disdain for democratic excess helped give life, power, and respectability to what would soon become the world's first modern democracy.

Washington departed the presidency and the nation's then capital city of Philadelphia in September 1796 with a characteristic sense of how to take dramatic advantage of the moment.

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS has long been recognized as a towering statement of American political purpose and has been read annually in the U.S. Congress as part of the national recognition of the first President's birthday for over 100 years. Although the

celebration of that day and the Farewell Address no longer receives such strenuous attention, Washington's final public performance still deserves close attention.

Washington feared that local factors might be the source of petty differences that would destroy the nation. His defense of national unity lay not just in abstract ideals, but also in the pragmatic reality that union brought clear advantages to every region. Union promised "greater strength, greater resource, [and] proportionately greater security from danger" than any state or region could enjoy alone. He emphasized, "your UNION ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty."

The remainder of the Address, delivered at CONGRESS HALL in Philadelphia, examined what Washington saw as the two major threats to the nation, one domestic and the other foreign, which in the mid-1790s increasingly seemed likely to combine. First, Washington warned of "the baneful effects of the SPIRIT OF PARTY." To Washington POLITICAL PARTIES were a deep threat to the health of the nation for they allowed "a small but artful and enterprising minority" to "put in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party."

Yet, it was the dangerous influence of foreign powers, judging from the amount of the Address that Washington devoted to it, where he predicted the greatest threat to the young United States. As European powers embarked on a long war, each hoping to draw the U.S. to its side, Washington admonished the country "to steer clear of permanent Alliances." Foreign nations, he explained, could not be trusted to do anything more than pursue their own interests when entering international treaties. Rather than expect "real favors from Nation to Nation," Washington called for extending foreign "commercial relations" that could be mutually beneficial, while maintaining "as little political connection as possible." Washington's commitment to NEUTRALITY was, in effect, an anti-French position since it overrode a 1778 treaty promising mutual support between France and the United States.

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Washington immediately grasped the strategic crisis posed by this British promise of freedom in a country where one in every five people was black. Pragmatic concerns quickly led Washington to reverse his policy and by December 1775 the Continental Army, in the North at least, included black soldiers.

Washington hoped to act as a humane master by keeping slave families together. However, he soon discovered that slavery was only profitable when operated in a brutal fashion. Mt. Vernon became increasingly inefficient in Washington's final two decades.
