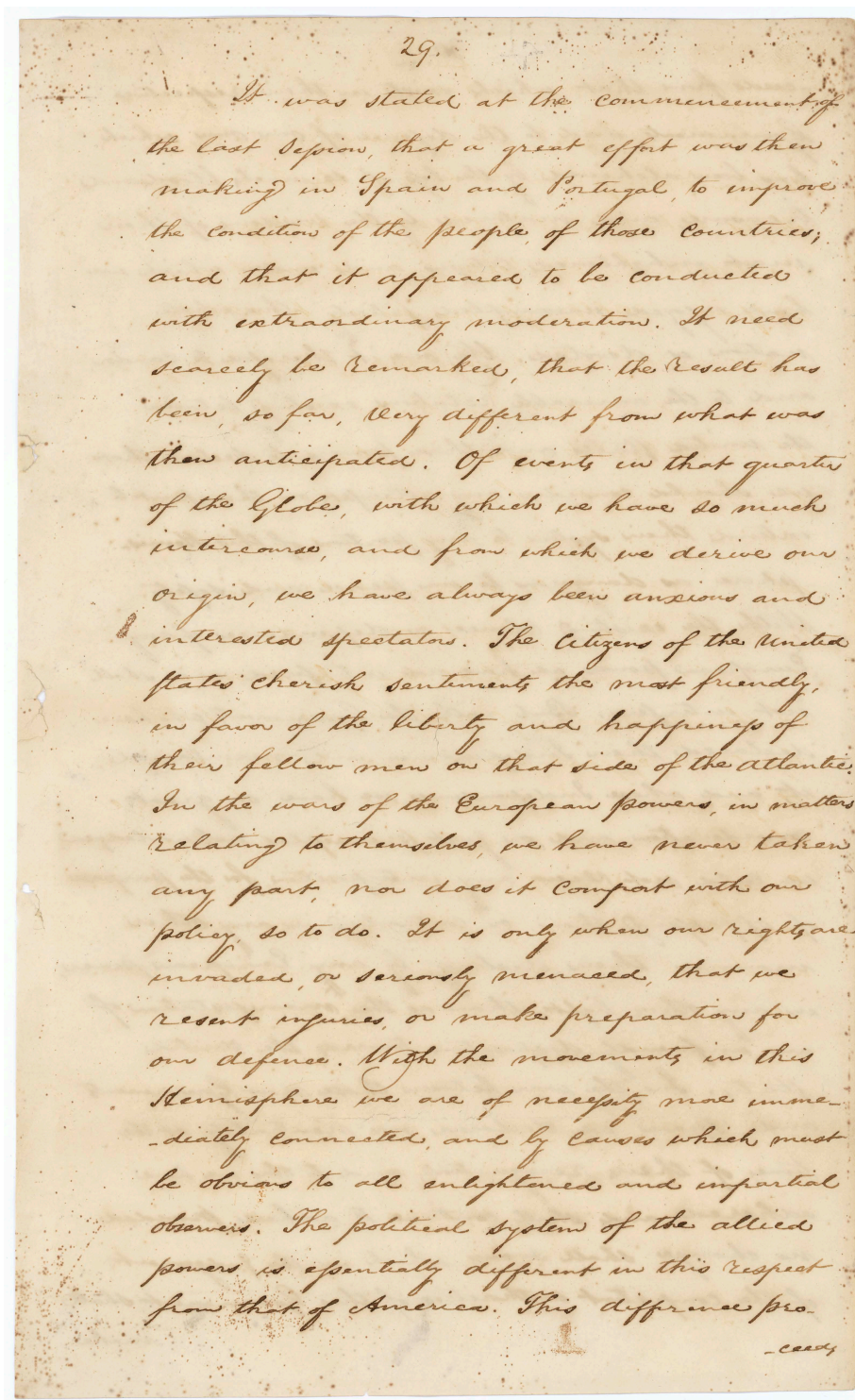


The Monroe Doctrine



Message of President James Monroe at the commencement of the first session of the 18th Congress (The Monroe Doctrine); 12/2/1823; President's Messages during the 18th Congress; Presidential Messages, 1789 - 1875; Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/monroe-doctrine>, April 13, 2022]

30.
-ceeds from that which exists in their respective
Governments, and to the defense of our own, which
has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and
treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their
most enlightened citizens, and under which we
have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole
nation is devoted. May one it therefore to candor,
and to the amicable relations existing between
the United States and those powers, to declare that
we should consider any attempt on their part to
extend their system to any portion of this hemis-
phere, as dangerous to our peace and safety.
With the existing colonies or dependencies of any
European power, we have not interfered, and shall
not interfere. But with the Governments who have
declared their Independence, and maintained
it, and whose Independence we have, on great
consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged,
we could not view any interposition for the purpose
of oppressing them, or controlling in any other
manner, their destiny, by any European power,
in any other light, than as the manifestation of
an unfriendly disposition towards the United
States. In the war between those new Governments
and Spain, we declared our neutrality, at the
time of their recognition, and to this we have
adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided
no change shall occur, which in the judgment
of the competent authorities of this Government shall
wishes

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make a corresponding change, on the part of the United States, indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal, shew that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact, no stronger proof can be adduced, than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force, in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent, such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question, in which all Independent powers, whose Governments differ from theirs, are interested; even those most remote, and surely none more so than the United States. Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the Globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the Government de facto, as the legitimate for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm and manly policy, meeting in all instances, the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But, in regards to those continents, circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It

is

is impossible that the allied powers, should extend their political system, to any portion of either continent, without endangering our peace and happiness, nor can any one believe, that our Southern Brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distances from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States, to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope, that other powers will pursue the same course.

If we compare the present condition of our Union with its actual state, at the close of our Revolution, the history of the world furnishes no example, of a progress, in improvement in all the important circumstances which constitute the happiness of a Nation, which bears any resemblance to it. At the first epoch, our population did not exceed, Three millions. By the last census it amounted to about Ten millions. And what is more extraordinary, it is almost altogether, Native, for the emigration from other countries has been inconsiderable. At the first epoch, half the territory within our acknowledged limits was uninhabited and a wilderness

[Transcription Page 1]

It was stated at the commencement of the last session [session] that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States [States] cherish sentiments the most friendly, in favor of the liberty and happiness [happiness] of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this Hemisphere we are of necessity [necessity] more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially [essentially] different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds

[Transcription Page 2]

-ceeds from that, which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss [loss] of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States [States] and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing [oppressing] them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States [States]. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgement of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make

[Transcription Page 3]

make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal shew [show] that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on any principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the internal concerns of Spain. To what extent such interposition may be carried, on the same principle, is a question in which all independent powers whose governments differ from theirs are interested, even those most remote, and surely none of them more so than the United States. Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless [nevertheless] remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is

[Transcription Page 4]

is impofsible [impossible] that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness [happiness]; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impofsible [impossible], therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course.