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George Washington's Administration

When George Washington took his inaugural oath in 1789, he became the first President of the newly-formed United States. As the first President, every action, decision, and appearance Washington would make would become a precedent for future presidents to follow. In his administration from 1789 to 1797, Washington took it upon himself to set into action the new government as outlined in the Constitution of 1789. As a popular and respected individual, Washington was elected unanimously for both of his four year terms in office. He was the most prominent General in the Revolutionary War and the presiding official of the Constitutional Convention (1787). Washington fought bravely for independence. He witnessed the drafting of the ingeniously constructed Constitution which could guarantee happiness to the American citizens if the government ran smoothly and effectively. If implemented properly from the beginning, the Constitution could mend the wounds the country suffered under the Articles of Confederation. Under the Articles of Confederation, the United States risked becoming disunited because too much power was in the hands of the state governments. The Constitution vested more power in the federal government which was to be led by the President. To correctly employ the express powers vested in the federal government by the Constitution, Washington needed every bit of his understanding of the Constitution, background knowledge, and decision-making capabilities. Since decision-making requires the most difficult kind of thinking and Washington was his own worst critic, Washington found that being President presented him with many challenges. Although he did not really want to be President, Washington proudly took it upon himself to demand respect from the states and abroad for the new federal government. The president would represent the new federal government. According to Clinton Rossiter, the president's main purpose is to make wise decisions. Mr. Rossiter wrote that the president makes decisions in nine major roles. For example, the president has to make decisions as a Chief Executive, Chief Administrator, Manager of Economic Well-being, and the Voice of Public Opinion. During his two terms in office, old and new problems faced Washington and demanded him to act in different roles. For example in domestic affairs, the Whiskey Rebellion (1794) demanded Washington to decide how to act as Chief Executive. Would he forcibly enforce the Whiskey tax? Would he be too compassionate to rebellion and not enforce the law? Also in domestic affairs as Chief Administrator, Washington had to select his cabinet of advisors. In foreign affairs, two of the most important roles Washington had to take were Manager of Economic Well-being, and the Voice of Public Opinion. As Manager of Economic Well-being, he signed the Pinckney Treaty. Washington signed the Jay Treaty sacrificing his role as the Voice of Public Opinion. Washington's decisions in the four aforementioned problems set precedents in the new government and helped the country grow.

*definitely
but an
excellent presentation*

*A +
At excellent writing skills and style!*

1. As leader of the Executive branch of government, the President had to act as a Chief Executive. As Chief Executive, Washington enforced and carried out the laws made by the legislature or already stated in the Constitution. Washington's most valiant display of authority in his role as Chief Executive was his swift, decisive, and effective calming of the Whiskey Rebellion. The Whiskey Rebellion was the indirect result of the lack of economic stimulation in the states under the Articles of Confederation. Many backcountry farmers suffered great debts after the war because of the drop in business at the war's end. Consequently, the discomfited farmers rebelled in Shay's Rebellion (1786-87) against taxes on land. Only seven years later, the Whiskey Rebellion was staged by angry farmers in Pennsylvania. The Whiskey Tax (1791) taxed all liquor made and sold in the U.S. Many farmers grew corn which was bulky and difficult to haul over backcountry roads (no railroads then). The corn would rot if it was not transported immediately after being harvested. Therefore, the farmers fermented their corn (and other grains) and made whiskey. Whiskey would not spoil, was easily stored and transported in barrels, and sold for a much higher profit than corn. The Whiskey Tax threatened the farmers' whiskey market. When the tax collectors came around, the farmers rebelled in a violent fashion. The news of the Whiskey Rebellion traveled quickly. Washington answered the rebellion assertively by calling up several state militias. The state militias showed their respect for Washington's power by sending their ^{15,000} militias. Washington showed his own dedication to carrying out the law because he actually went with the militiamen into Pennsylvania. The rebels scattered when they heard the troops were coming. The rebellion was disbanded without a shot being fired. Washington proved that the new government could act firmly and successfully in the case of crisis. Washington's actions bolstered faith in the new government and faith in his role as an enforcer of the laws. When the offenders in the rebellion came to trial, Washington pardoned them, showing his merciful nature. Washington's actions showed the American citizens that he was to be taken seriously, but he would not be oppressive or merciless. Washington enforced the laws in an excellent manner as seen in the Whiskey Rebellion.

2. The first administration of the new government also demonstrated Washington's deft decision-making capabilities. As Chief Administrator, Washington had to appoint officials, like judges and cabinet members. Washington would be held accountable for his appointments; therefore, he sought politicians who were politically able, intelligent, and experienced. Washington wanted his administration to be successful in pleasing the people and gaining respect for the office of President. Under the Articles of Confederation, the domestic policy of the President had not existed because there was no President. There were no officials to be appointed because most of the important decision-making was done in the state governments. The problems arose when states had conflicting interests. For example, the North wanted protective tariffs on imports from England to protect the growing manufacturing business. However, the South did not want to pay extra high prices for manufactured goods they needed from England. Who could decide which interests were more important? The creation of the executive branch in the Constitution vested some of that power (through vetoing or signing bills) in the President. Washington wisely decided to ^{create} departments which would advise him. He appointed Alexander Hamilton as the Secretary of Treasury, Thomas Jefferson as the

Add experience?

Secretary of State, Henry Knox as the Secretary of War, Edmund Randolph as the Attorney General, and Samuel Osgood as the Postmaster General. Washington purposely appointed men from different backgrounds and political views. For example, Hamilton was an aristocratic Federalist from New York, and Jefferson was a Democratic-Republican from Virginia. Randolph, also a Virginian, proposed the Virginia Plan which became the model for the Constitution and therefore understood the details of the Constitution. Henry Knox was from Massachusetts which showed Washington's consideration for differing interests in the small and large states. Washington wanted different points of view from his advisors so his legislative decisions would not favor anyone. Washington listened to his cabinet members in legislative decisions and rarely revealed his own opinions. He did not meddle with Congress because he felt his responsibility was concentrated in the making of executive decisions. He set a precedent of not directly participating in the Congress. Yet, legislative decisions were still in his hands. Washington preferred to work with his cabinet than with Congress. As Chief Administrator, Washington demonstrated excellent decision-making abilities when he appointed able politicians from diverse backgrounds to head his departments. The range of advice enabled Washington to make just decisions. Washington's cabinet helped him greatly make wise decisions in foreign affairs.

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In foreign policy, Washington had to contend with the fever of revolution that the United States seemingly gave to Europe. Two years after the American Revolution, France plunged into its own revolution. The French people wanted a democratic government; they were disgusted with their monarch, Louis XVI. Unequal taxation caused the middle and lower classes to call for a guarantee of rights like the American Constitution. Afraid that the revolution might spread throughout Europe, Britain, Austria, Prussia, the Netherlands, and Spain sent armies to subdue the revolutionaries in France. Since both France and England were close economic and political partners with the U.S., the U.S. was almost pulled into the war between them. Washington declared that the U.S. would remain neutral; however, American ships continued trade with the French in the West Indies. The angered British attacked American ships and captured American ships and sailors. The British impressment of American merchants angered the American public. In 1793, Chief Justice John Jay went to England to work out a treaty. The original plan of withholding American neutrality and pressuring England by making treaties with Sweden, Denmark, and Russia fell through when Denmark and Sweden offered the U.S. membership in an alliance of neutrals. Washington rejected the offer. The British did not feel pressured by the threat of a U.S. alliance with France, and they offered Jay little. The Jay Treaty restated the Treaty of Paris in two ways. First, it stated that the British would surrender Northwest trading posts for the continuance of the fur trade. Second, the British also agreed to pay for the stolen U.S. ships in exchange for Revolutionary War debts owed to British creditors. The British refused to compensate for slaves captured during the war. Most importantly, the British also refused to guarantee the termination of impressment of American merchants. The terms of the treaty fostered discontent in Congress which reflected the outraged voice of the public. Americans rightly believed they were giving up more than England in the treaty. Already 9,000 American merchants had been

Sailors
out yet
(by 1812)
probably 1,500 or 2,000 at the time