

LESSON PLAN
Washington's Cabinet
Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY COMPARATIVE
Michaela Crawford Reaves, Ph.D.

Today we will be investigating the Cabinet of George Washington. As the first president, Washington established many precedents, from etiquette regarding the status of the president to what he would be called, in this case, Mr. President, which was much shorter than another suggestion, "His Highness, the President of the United States, and Protector of the Rights of the Same." One of the important decisions Washington made was to have a group of advisors around him. This idea had a long history beginning before the Romans with the Germanic *comitatus* of warriors committed to their chieftain. In England this group settled into more organized government and became the Privy Council and the Star Chamber by the 15th century. These ideas then were known to Washington and he appointed four men, who had worked with the government of the Articles of Confederation, to fulfill this role as advisors.

The first cabinet consisted of four members with whom Washington often conferred individually. As the young government grew and faced new challenges, Washington began to meet with them as a group. These men were Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, who had been Washington's aide-de-camp during the American Revolution and the founder of the Bank of New York in 1784; Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State, who had spent most of the previous six years as the United States Minister to France working on treaties and foreign policy; Henry Knox, Secretary of War, Washington's successor as commander-in-chief of the army; and Edmund Randolph, Attorney General, a governor, lawyer and law-partner of John Marshall, the future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

In the history of the United States, we often focus on domestic issues, e.g. taxes, elections and the economy. However, an equally important role of the government is managing foreign policy. It is easy to think of Washington and his Cabinet squabbling over the Bank of the United States or the next election, but what about a more global view? The following primary sources will give you a look into the issues the Cabinet faced. Then you will be asked to compare them to the issues another president, Ronald Reagan, and his administration, faced two hundred years later.

Source 1: As you read the letter highlight or circle the names of places on the globe mentioned in the letter.

Letter to Thomas Jefferson from David Humphreys, 14 October 1790. From David Humphreys
London Octr. 14. 1790.

SIR

After a passage of five weeks, the four first of which were very tempestuous, I arrived in the Channel. In order to save time, and slip into London with the less probability of being noticed, I procured a boat from the shore to land me at Dover....

The aspect of affairs on the Continent in general, and the complexion of the Negotiations in Spain, about the middle of Summer, induced the British ... to believe.... Peace would be preserved... Since then considerable changes have taken place. The Spanish Government has gained time to learn where the... Power actually resides in France, and how that Power was disposed towards them. It now scarcely admits of a doubt that the national Assembly will yield its assistance in a defensive War.... The Treaty of Peace between Russia and Sweden... has changed the face of affairs in the North for the worse, with regard to Britain. The English had counted much in their calculations on the exhausted state of the two Empires, and the powerful combination, which was ready to assail them, while they were involved in the war with the Porte. The Empress of Russia, having warded off a part of the Storm from her Dominions, is enabled to turn it on her part with redoubled fury on the Turks. News has been received within a few days of a capital advantage obtained by her fleet over the enemy in the Black Sea.... These circumstances leave the Empress at liberty to afford her naval aid to the Spaniards, with whom it is believed she is strictly allied. It is also judged not improbable that Sweden and Denmark will do the same.... t of the boasted Allies of Britain, the Dutch is <sic> the only one capable of giving them any naval succour. The Dutch are slowly arming, under the influence of the Stadholder... contrary to the wishes of Amsterdam.... Six or eight of their ships have been in the channel... They have twenty in commission. The English have seventy five... From the amazing quantity of supplies contracted for within a few days... it is now thought... that war is inevitable.

Affairs in France remain in much the same situation they have been for some time past. The Duke of Orleans, and many of the considerable Refugees have returned home. A counter revolution has been much spoken of... the national Troops behaved with almost unexampled firmness... [which] gives occasion for a very different belief. The temper and feelings of 3 or 4,000,000, Citizens, who have arms in their hands, will not permit them to go back to their former government.

Leopold, who by consent of the Empress concluded a Truce with the Turks, has managed his policy with such dexterity as to have been unanimously elected Emperor... He has gained... decided advantages over the Patriots of the Austrian Netherlands. But, in the meantime, a spirit of revolt... seems to have been insinuating itself into his hereditary Dominions.... The King of Prussia has indeed a formidable Army on foot, but he can yield no support to his English Allies, where they will, in case of war, have most occasion for it. He is said to be more addicted to women and pleasures than formerly. Poland appears to be still torne <sic> in pieces by internal factions... which... has thwarted the system of the King.

Thus are the affairs of nearly all Europe embroiled in an almost inexplicable manner. With sentiments of the highest consideration, & esteem, I have the honor to be Sir Your Most obedient & Most humble Servant,¹

D. HUMPHREYS.

List the countries or groups mentioned. How many are there?

¹ To Thomas Jefferson from David Humphreys, 14 October 1790," *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-17-02-0213>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 17, 6 July–3 November 1790, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965, pp. 593–595.] Available <<https://founders.archives.gov/?q=sweden&s=1111311111&sa=&r=38&sr=JEFFERSON>>

Looking at the dates and the issues described which historical event do you think might have been the catalyst for all of this military activity on the European continent? What clues led you to that decision?

Source 2: Examine the British cartoon below from 1792 by the artist Cruikshank. In what way does it refer to the letter above by Humphreys to Thomas Jefferson? (The labels were added so they can be read.)²



² British Cartoon Prints Collection . Catalogue of prints and drawings in the British Museum. Cruikshank, Isaac, 1756?-1811?, artist | London : Pub. by S.W. Fores, 1792 Dec. 21. |

Source 3: A year after Humphreys' letter (Source 1) another letter suggested that the United States also needed to address activity in the Pacific region.

To Alexander Hamilton from Tench Coxe, [August 1791]. From Tench Coxe

[Philadelphia, August, 1791]

The account of the Chinese trade¹ is in many respects similar to information and conformable to experience I have had. I do not observe anything contrary to what I have heard from authority. The acct. <sic> of the East India trade is minute so far as it goes, and gives some useful information. The increase of the consumption of the finer kinds of Teas deserves notice. The quantity of Specie (at 2 to 3 Millions of Dollars) sent from England is very small considering their Trade.² 17,000 Tons, even as we load our Vessels, would require 7½ Millions of dollars, and the English take little Bohea Tea, & much raw silk and wrought silks, musk, drugs, &c which are valuable. The first cost of their China imports must be 9 or 10, Millions of Dollars. Their exports in European goods to China are not great. Bills must form a great part of their remittances, which bills arise out of the proceeds of the cotton and other articles taken thither by the Country Ships. The cotton Voyage deserves the Attention of our Merchants.

The subject of Ginseng, as usual is not satisfactorily explained. None of our Gentn. appear to understand the various uses to which it is applied, nor the extent of the consumption. I am satisfied an inspection of this article to take place early would be very useful. It ought not to be by a state law as it would only deprive of the trade that port which should be within the enacting State.³

Considering that England closed trade options for the Americans after the American Revolution, what does this letter suggest is the objective of America's interest in China? Who does the author insinuate is the likely biggest competitor for the new Americans?

What products are discussed as possible items for China? Do you recognize all the products?

Source 4: Nearly two centuries later, Reagan sent another trade announcement to Congress. Read it below.

³ "To Alexander Hamilton from Tench Coxe, [August 1791]," *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-09-02-0112>. [Original source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 9, *August 1791 – December 1791*, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, pp. 143–144.] Available <<https://founders.archives.gov/?q=emperor&s=1111311111&sa=&r=928&sr=>>>

Message to the Congress on Trade With Romania, Hungary, and the People's Republic of China

June 2, 1981

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with subsection 402(d)(5) of the Trade Act of 1974, I transmit herewith my recommendation for a further 12-month extension of the authority to waive subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act.

I include as part of my recommendation my determination that further extension of the waiver authority, and continuation of the waivers applicable to the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Hungarian People's Republic, and the People's Republic of China will substantially promote the objectives of section 402.

This recommendation also includes my reasons for recommending the extension of waiver authority and for my determination that continuation of the three waivers currently in effect will substantially promote the objectives of section 402.

Ronald Reagan
The White House,
June 2, 1981.

The general waiver authority conferred by section 402(c) of the Act is an important means for the strengthening of mutually beneficial relations between the United States and certain countries of Eastern Europe and the People's Republic of China. The waiver authority has permitted us to conclude and maintain in force bilateral trade agreements with Romania, Hungary, and the People's Republic of China. These agreements continue to be fundamental elements in our political and economic relations with those countries, including our important productive exchanges on human rights and emigration matters. Moreover, continuation of the waiver authority might permit future expansion of our bilateral relations with other countries now subject to subsections 402 (a) and (b) of the Act, should circumstances permit. I believe that these considerations clearly warrant this recommendation for renewal of the general waiver authority.⁴

What similarities are there in the two documents? What differences do you see? How might they be explained?

Source 5: Below are two letters from concerned Americans to their respective presidents concerning revolutions in allied nations. The first concerned the 1789 French Revolution and the second referred to the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines. Although

⁴ Text available <<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/60281b>>

both revolutions were at a great distance from the presidents, as allied nations they had a responsibility to respond.

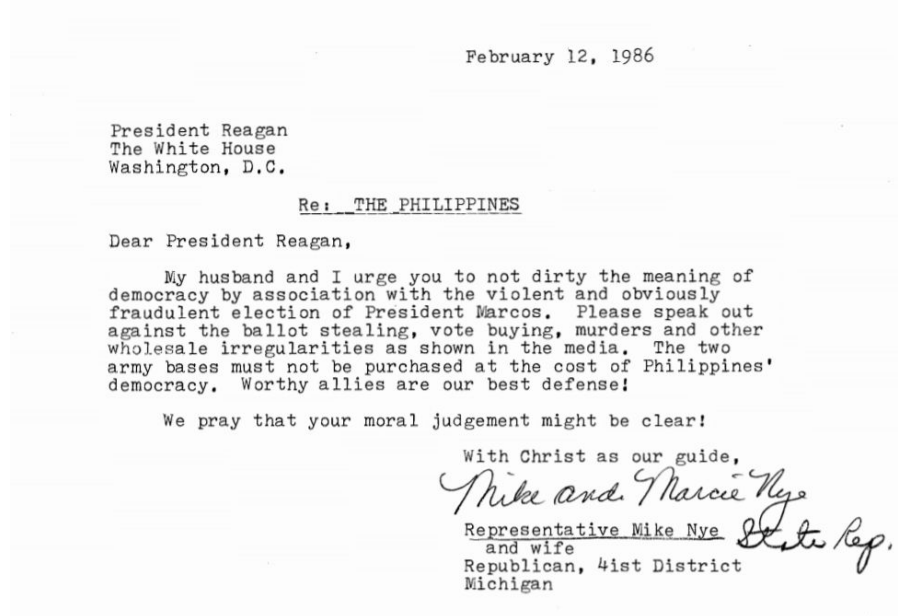
To George Washington from Gouverneur Morris, 29 April 1789. From Gouverneur Morris

Paris 29 April 1789

The Materials for a Revolution in this Country [France] are very indifferent. Every Body agrees that there is an utter Prostration of Morals; but this general Position can never convey to an American Mind the Degree of Depravity. It is not by any Figure of Rhetoric or Force of Language that the Idea can be communicated. A hundred Anecdotes and an hundred thousand Examples are required to shew the extreme Rottenness of every Member. . . . The great Mass of the common People have no Religion but their Priests, no Law but their Superiors, no Moral but their Interest. Those are the Creatures who led by drunken Curates are now in the high Road *a la Liberté*. And the first Use they make of it is to form Insurrections everywhere for the Want of Bread. We have had a little Riot here Yesterday and the Day before, and I am told that some Men have been killed, but the Affair was so distant from the Quarter in which I reside that I know Nothing of the Particulars.

Judging from Morris's description of the French revolution, does he support it? Disparage it? If Washington followed this report is he likely to support the French Revolution or reject it? His decision would impact his party of Federalists.

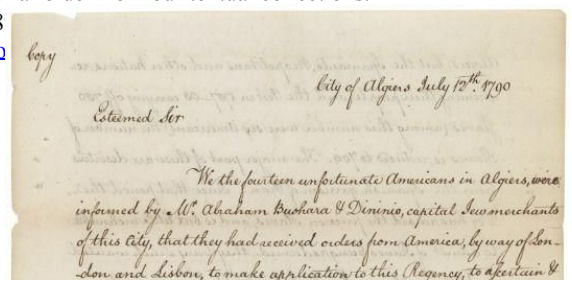
Source 6: Similarly, Reagan received a report from a Congressional representative regarding the Filipino Revolution.⁵



Nye's letter contains some similarities to the letter from 1789, but there are significant differences. In your opinion, what is the biggest difference? If Reagan followed his advice, how would he respond to the Filipino Revolution?

Source 7: After signing the Treaty of Paris in October 1783, the fledgling United States lost the protection of the British Navy, leaving it open to predation from pirates. Since the days of Henry the Navigator in the 15th century, pirates from the North African states of Tripoli, Algiers, Morocco, and Tunisia both raided European countries and captured ships entering the Mediterranean Sea in order to imprison and/or enslave their crews. In order to free these "hostages, countries were forced to pay a ransom to the local *beys* or leaders. Abuse, degradation and death awaited many of these captives so the United States Confederation Congress was dismayed to receive word that successful pirate attacks against Americans had begun October 1784. It took until September 5, 1795, a long ten years, to come to an agreement with the Algerian pirates. The letter below is from one such captive, Richard

⁵ Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections. Collection: WHORM Subject Files Folder Title:CO 125 (Philippines) 386200-38 <<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/digitallibrary/whormsubject/co>>



O'Bryen, the captain of the *Dauphin*, captured off Portugal in 1785. He remained a captive for eleven years.

Here is a copy of first page of the letter.

To Thomas Jefferson from Richard O'Bryen, 12 July 1790. From Richard O'Bryen

City of Algiers July 12th. 1790

ESTEEMED SIR

We the fourteen unfortunate Americans in Algiers, were informed by Mr. Abraham Bushara and Dininio, capital Jew(ish) merchants of this City, that they had received orders from America, by way of London and Lisbon, to make application to this Regency, to ascertain and fix the ransom of the American captives, after their surmounting many difficulties, at last on the 7th. instant prevailed on the Dey and Ministry to agree and fix the price of the said fourteen Americans at Seventeen thousand two hundred and twenty five Algerine Sequins.⁶ I have often explained relative to the purport of Mr. Lamb's audiences when in Algiers; at present I shall only mention to you that Mr. Lamb had five audiences with the Dey and Ministry, and he agreed for the ransom or release of the American captives agreeable to the price then asked. The ransom of the fourteen Americans at present in Algiers, amounted to 17.500 Algerine Sequins.

At that period there were nearly 3,000 Slaves in Algiers; but the Spaniards, Neapolitans and other Nations redeeming their people, and the Pest in 1787–88 carrying off 780 slaves (among this number were six Americans) the number of Slaves is reduced to 700. The major part of these are deserters from the Spanish garrison of Oran. Since that period the Dey has raised the price on Slaves, and is but little inclinable to admit of Slaves being redeemed, they being much wanted to do the public work, which be assured, Sir, is very laborious. The price asked for the Americans is by no means exorbitant, considering the present want of Slaves, and the terms of release of captives of other Nations...

The Dey and Ministry signified that the ransom of the Americans was fixed and agreed on with Mr. Lamb, the American Ambassador, in 1786; and that he promised to return with the Money in four months, but that he broke his word and agreement. The Ministry observed, that if the Americans did not keep their word on so small an affair as the sum asked for our release, that there was no dependence to be put in them in Affairs of more importance. Indeed, Sir, I hope for the honor and interests of the United States of America, that the price now fixed for our release will be immediately agreed to: and be assured, Sir, if this opportunity in our behalf is not embraced, that we shall be the most miserable slaves in the World, for we shall be doomed to perpetual Slavery....

You will please to consider, Sir, what our sufferings must have been in this country, during the trying period of five years captivity, twice surrounded with the pest and other contagious distempers, far distant from our country, families, friends and connections.

Depend upon it, Sir, that it is prejudicial to any nation that leaves it's Subjects in slavery; for in no respect can it answer any public benefit, or be any advantage to the Country they belong to. The longer the time they are in slavery, the greater the difficulty is there in releasing them: and it

⁶ N.B. a sequin is equal to 8s. Sterling. A duty of 15 or 18 per Cent to be added, being fees on the redemption of slaves. The letter is available < <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/resources/topics/gw-and-the-barbary-coast-pirates/>>

is well known that the price of the slaves is rising on every application, owing to the decrease of slaves, as the Algerines <sic> find they cannot carry on the public work without slaves.

My brother sufferers and I, Sir, return you our sincere thanks for befriending us so much in the cause of liberty, being convinced that you have done all in your power with the Congress, to redeem this unfortunate and faithful remnant of Americans; and we make not the least doubt, that our Country will immediately see the necessity of agreeing to pay the sum for our release, as has been ascertained. Our dependence is on a generous and humane Country, whom that God may prosper is the sincere wish of, Esteemed Sir Your most obt. most h'ble. Servt.,

RICHARD OBRYEN in behalf of myself and brother Captives.

Source 8: After the Israeli victory in the 1967 Six Days War militancy in the Middle East became more prominent, including the attack on the Israeli Olympic team at Munich in 1972 and then encouraged by the Iranian Revolution in 1979.⁷ The tactics were often hijacking planes and killing passengers or taken hostages and holding them for ransom. In November 1979 fifty-two Americans were taken hostage for 444 days in Iran. From 1982-1986 659 people died in Lebanon in 36 suicide attacks and another 104 were taken hostage. Some like David Jacobsen were held for eighteen months, while others like Terry Anderson were held for almost six years. Below is a piece of Jacobsen's story...

"My hostage life in Beirut was waiting and praying." By David P. Jacobsen and Ray Perez

March 8, 1987

OUR FIRST ROOM was about the size of the living room of a two-bedroom apartment. I was kept blindfolded, but I could tell there were other hostages. I could hear them being asked, "Are you hungry?" When I was taken to the toilet, I had to step over their bedding.

I was chained and put to the floor and told to remain silent. My clothes had been taken from me during interrogation, so I just had my underwear and a cotton tablecloth that served as a blanket. I was able to turn and to do push-ups and even leg lifts. I couldn't do sit-ups, but sometimes after I was taken to the toilet, I'd say, "Hey, I need some exercise," and would jog in place for a couple of minutes....Our third room brought us all together. We were moved there in July 1985, when the shelling in Beirut got too close....So the five of us were finally together, and each of us had a chaise-longue pad. The room was just big enough to fit four pads abreast, with one at the foot. Each day, we were allowed to go to the toilet one by one. We had 15 minutes to take a shower, wash our clothes, empty our urinals, get fresh water and clean our plastic bowls, spoons and cups. The guards got very unhappy if it was 16 minutes, because there were five of us, and the whole procedure took up at least an hour and 15 minutes of their time.

We were not permitted to see our captors. We had instructions to put on our blindfolds whenever they came in the room. But they weren't pulling out our fingernails. They weren't breaking our

⁷ "Terrorist Attacks on Americans," *CBS Frontline*, copyright 1995-2014 WGBH educational foundation Available <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/cron.html>>

bones. They weren't torturing us. We were just kept like rabbits in a cage. We lost all of our freedoms except

We came to rely on one another for emotional and psychological support as the days stretched into weeks, and then months. Like all of us, I suppose, I never thought I'd be in as long as I was. In fact, I thought I'd be getting out within the first month, in time to return to Huntington Beach for my son Paul's wedding. As it turned out, I spent that day chained to the floor....

They honestly didn't realize the harm they were doing to our lives. "We've been good to you. We've taken good care of you. We haven't hurt you," they told us. They were just four young Muslim kids

Haj came back again after we had been moved to the third room. "You know, we're going to let one of you go," he said. "You decide who it should be." We did, but Haj rejected our recommendation. (Until the others are released, I don't want to say who that was.) Instead, he spoke to Ben Weir in Arabic. Weir got very upset and kept saying, "Oh, no, no. Oh, no, no...."

One night, we heard former secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger on the radio. He said: "Well, there are several things I could advise the president to secure the release of the American hostages, but in the last resort they are going to have to use their own resources to get out."

I was sitting in my underwear on a pad. The room had no windows. There was a double lock on the door. An armed guard was outside the door, and another armed guard was watching him down the hall. I said: "My God, Henry, what resources do I have? What resources do you think I have?"⁸ The others reacted the same way. Other than the day I was kidnaped, that was the low point.....

Ray Perez, a *Los Angeles Times* staff writer, covered David Jacobsen's family during his captivity. This article was distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

In what ways are the experiences of these two captives similar? In what ways are they different? Although separated by centuries both sets of captors wanted a ransom and, one way or another, they secured it. The US policy today is not to negotiate with terrorists. After reading the letters do you agree or disagree? What other choices did these presidents have?

Source 9: The next two sources deal with similar presidential duties made after discussion with the Cabinet and then forwarded to Congress. The 1796 treaty is often called the Treaty of San Lorenzo or Pinckney's Treaty. Among its talking points was free transit up and down the Mississippi, which Pinkney's Treaty provided. Washington badly needed the success of this treaty since during the previous year, the Jay Treaty with England had led some Americans to call for Washington to be impeached.⁹

From George Washington to the U.S. Senate, 26 February 1796

To the United States Senate

United States February 26th 1796

Gentlemen of the Senate

I send herewith the Treaty concluded on the 27th of October last between the United States and Spain, by their respective Plenipotentiaries.

The communications to the Senate referred to in my message of the 16th of December 1793, contain the instructions to the Commissioners of the United States, Messrs Carmichael & Short, and various details relative to the negotiations <sic>with Spain. Herewith I transmit copies of the documents authorizing Mr Pinckney, the Envoy Extraordinary from the United States to the Court of Spain, to conclude the Negotiation <sic>, agreeably to the original instructions above mentioned; and to adjust the claims of the United States for the Spoliations committed by the armed vessels of his Catholic Majesty on the commerce of our Citizens.

The numerous papers exhibiting the progress of the negotiation, under the conduct of Mr Pinckney, being in the French and Spanish languages, will be communicated to the Senate as soon as the translations which appear necessary shall be completed.¹⁰

Go: Washington

Source 10: 191 years later.....

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Pacific Island States-United States Fisheries Treaty

June 18, 1987 To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America, with annexes and agreed statement, which has been signed by the United States and twelve Pacific Island states....

For the last several years, the United States has been involved in a fisheries dispute with several Pacific Island states as a result of conflicting laws regarding jurisdiction over highly migratory

⁹ For more on the discussion about impeaching George Washington over the Jay Treaty see Beschloss, Michael, "Impeach President Washington!" *American Heritage*, Fall 2017, Volume 62, Issue 5, Available <<https://www.americanheritage.com/impeach-president-washington>>

¹⁰ "From George Washington to the U.S. Senate, 26 February 1796," *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-19-02-0404>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 19, 1 October 1795–31 March 1796, ed. David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016, p. 502.] Available < <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=treaty%20of%20san%20lorenzo&s=1111311111&sa=&r=8&sr>>

tuna. The Pacific Island nations claim jurisdiction over tuna within their 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zones. The United States neither recognizes nor claims jurisdiction over tuna beyond 12 nautical miles. As mandated by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the United States Government has prohibited imports of tuna from several countries as a result of seizures of U.S. tuna boats by nations exercising jurisdictional claims. This dispute has resulted in a cycle of tuna vessel seizures and consequential U.S.-imposed trade embargoes that has resulted in serious erosion of our good relations with the countries of the region and has provided the Soviet Union with an opportunity to exploit these differences through fisheries agreements....

United States policy under the Magnuson Act has been to negotiate international agreements to ensure the effective conservation and management of tuna and to secure access for U.S. fishermen to the stocks wherever they migrate beyond a narrow belt of coastal waters. The Treaty provides for the issuance of regional licenses for tuna fishing in some ten million square miles of the South Pacific Ocean. ...

I recommend that the Senate give early consideration to the Treaty, with annexes and agreed statement, and give its advice and consent to ratification at an early date.

Ronald Reagan

Treaties are a way to find a compromise to end a confrontation between peoples or nations. After reading the selections ask yourself who the other treaty members were under discussion. Who were the other parties? The treaty process highlights the balance of power between the branches of the United States government. Although the president and his advisors may endorse a treaty, the United States Congress has the final approval. Do you feel that this is another example of precedents set by Washington and his Cabinet?

Conclusion: Write a paragraph summarizing your conclusions. Here are some questions to keep in mind: 1) Were Washington and his Cabinet dealing with global issues? Cite some examples. 2) Both Presidents Washington and Reagan navigated very complicated world conflicts during their presidencies. Considering a span of two centuries would you say their roles were different or similar? Why? 3) What surprised you the most about the selections you have just read?
