Washington’s Farewell:

Then and now

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When presidents leave...
Where do these norms come from?
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: 1796

- Anxieties about future of the republic, about who could fill the president's shoes, about the impact of political ambition on the electoral process
- Burgeoning civil religion
- Government was full of “grand orators” using “sentimental style,” especially in White House (vs Congress)
Washington’s Response: Three Warnings

- Do not let geographic divisions threaten national unity.
- Do not let political parties grow or become too powerful.
- Do not create "entanglements" with other nations.
Washington’s Farewell, now...
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