**Monroe Doctrine Project**

**Learning Objectives:** Students will be able to…

• List events in early American diplomatic history that contributed to the formulation of the

Monroe Doctrine.

• Discuss the reasons President Monroe used when recommending that Congress recognize the revolutionary governments of Spanish America.

• Paraphrase the central points of the Monroe Doctrine.

• Decide whether the Doctrine was intended to provide peace and safety for the United

States, protect the newly independent Latin American states, and/or promote expansionist goals of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

**Project Rationale:**

The Monroe Doctrine Project provides a framework within which one may examine the establishment of the Unites States as a world power at the middle school level. The evolution of the Monroe Doctrine from its British enabled phase to the Roosevelt Corollary serves as an appropriate example of the twin development of U.S. power and foreign policy. It allows many opportunities to narrow and deepen the study of U.S. foreign policy while giving you the student a useful context for understanding U.S. relations with the developing world.

**Explanation and Overview of the Monroe Doctrine and its long term impact:**

**The Monroe Doctrine Background**

**James Monroe’s Background**

James Monroe spent most of his life in public office devoting a significant portion of his career to foreign affairs. In the winter of 1823, President Monroe gave a speech to Congress where he outlined his foreign policy objectives. His speech, soon after known as the Monroe Doctrine, was successful in raising nationalism in the country as well as setting the framework upon which future Presidents would follow. The Monroe Doctrine was built upon the idea of keeping Europe and the New World as separate as possible. President Monroe stressed that Europe was not to colonize the Americas and that any attempt from Europe to do so would endanger our peace and safety.

**World Affairs (1823 – 1904)**

Spain’s Latin American colonies’ struggle for independence provided the opportunity for the United States to create our first real international policy. By the early 1820s, monarchical elements were in control in continental Europe and there were rumors about the restoration of the Spanish empire in the New World. In particular, we feared that Spain and France might reassert colonialism over the Latin American peoples who had just overthrown European rule. Signs that Russia was expanding its presence southward from Alaska toward the Oregon Territory also were disconcerting. This was not good news for the United States, which resented European involvement in its backyard. Nor was it met with approval by Britain, which profited richly from Latin American trade.

British foreign minister George Canning proposed to the American government that a joint warning be issued to continental Europe. President Monroe considered the British proposal, but eventually accepted Secretary of State John Quincy Adams’ view that the United States creates its own independent statement (www.u-s-history.com/pages).

While Americans generally objected to European colonies in the New World, we also wanted to increase U.S. influence and trading ties throughout the region to our south. European mercantilism posed the greatest obstacle to desired economic expansion. If a bilateral statement (Great Britain and the U.S.) was issued, it could limit U.S. expansion in the future. He also argued that the British were not committed to recognizing the Latin American republics and may have imperial motivations themselves.

In December 1823, in a message to Congress, Monroe set forth the following principles, which would later become known as the Monroe Doctrine:

• The Western Hemisphere was no longer open for colonization.

• The United States would regard any interference in Western Hemisphere affairs as a threat to its security.

• The United States would refrain from participation in European wars and would not disturb existing colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

The impact of the Monroe Doctrine was mixed. It was successful to the extent that the continental powers did not immediately attempt to revive the Spanish empire, but this was on account of the strength of the British Navy, not American military might. It was not until the 1880s that the newly built steel navy provided the United States with the clout to enforce the Monroe Doctrine (www.u-s-history.com/pages). The Doctrine also was successful in that it kept France, Spain and other powers out of the region, but Britain would long remain the dominant trade power in Latin America for decades. The Doctrine would become a failure from the standpoint that the Latin American nations would come to resent the “Big Brother” behavior of the United States.

By the mid-1800s Monroe's declaration combined with ideas of Manifest Destiny provided precedent and support for U.S. expansion on the American continent. In the late 1800s, U.S. economic and military power enabled it to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. The doctrine's greatest extension came with Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary, which inverted the original meaning of the doctrine and came to justify unilateral U.S. broadened involvement in Latin America.

**Directions for Project**

**Part 1**

Create your own 1823 map

For this activity you will need to have your chart and notes from the Google Earth

Mapping Exercise. Using this chart, you will create an 1823 map. You will need seven (7) colored pencils or highlighters and a black fine tip pen to label your map.

1. Identify and clearly label -- using blue color/highlight -- the major water features on this map: Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Hudson Bay, Mediterranean Sea,

North Sea, Pacific Ocean, and the Great Lakes.

2. Using your chart from the mapping activity, identify the following countries and their colonies (that existed in 1823). Assign a color to each country and their colonial holdings and then color them in with the appropriate color.

\* **British**

Great Britain – Oregon Country, British North America, Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, Guiana, Jamaica, Falkland Islands, Belize

\* **Spanish**

Spain – Oregon Country, Cuba, Bolivia, Puerto Rico

\* **French**

France – French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique

\* **Danish**

Denmark – Greenland

\***Russian**

Russia – Alaska

\***United States**

United States of America – Independent Nation

\***Independent Nations**

 Republic of Haiti, Santo Domingo, Paraguay, United Provinces of

Central America, Uruguay, United Provinces of La Plata/Argentina,

Chile, Republic of Gran Colombia, Peru, Republic of Mexico, and the

Empire of Brazil

Upon completion of this map, answer the following questions.

1. What European country in 1823 had the greatest colonial holdings in the Americas?

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2. Based on prior knowledge of European colonization of the Americas (1783), what European country had lost the most territory by 1823?

**Part 2**

Monroe’s Speech to Congress, December 2, 1823

The occasion has been judged proper for asserting as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers... 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….

In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport (fit) with our policy to do so…. Our policy in regard to Europe…nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers, to consider the de facto [existing] Government as the legitimate Government for us, to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm... policy, meeting, in all instances, the just claims of every power; submitting to injuries from none.

1. What position did Monroe take regarding the internal problems of European countries?

2. Under this Doctrine, what is the possibility for future European colonization in the Americas?

Summarize three major points of the Monroe Doctrine:

A.

B.

C.

1. The main point of Monroe Doctrine is to prevent:

2. What position did Monroe take regarding the internal problems of European Countries?

3. Under this Doctrine, what would happen to current European colonies in the western hemisphere?

4. What was America's position towards the South American countries that had declared their independence from Europe?

5. Imagine you are a leader in the British Parliament, how would you react to such a Doctrine?

6. Imagine you are a poor farmer from Peru, which is still under Spanish rule. How would you react to the Doctrine?

7. In your opinion why did Monroe think he could get away with making these statements considering the United States’ weak position in comparison to the European powers?