

# **THE ORIGIN, MEANING AND APPLICATION OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE**

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The origin, meaning and application of the Monroe doctrine by John Bach McMaster

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THE MONROE  
DOCTRINE

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Philadelphia  
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In the course of the discussion of the Monroe Doctrine provoked by the recent letter of Lord Salisbury and the message of President Cleveland, there have been developed three views now very current among our countrymen. Some agree with the statements of the noble lord in his letter, and, without giving much thought to the matter, declare that the doctrine perished with the occasion that called it forth. Some admit that it still exists, but incline to the belief that it should not apply to a territorial project that does not involve colonization or the erection of a monarchy where a republic once stood. Others have no hesitation in declaring that what goes on in Venezuela is of no consequence to us, and that the matter at stake is not of enough importance to make it worth while to risk a war.

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As the crisis is certainly a serious one, an examination of these views is not untimely. The hour has come for the people of the United States to decide once for all whether there is or is not a Monroe Doctrine. If there is, it should be stated as clearly and precisely as possible. If there is not, then it becomes us to say so frankly and at once.

The doctrine was originally announced by James Monroe in a message to Congress on December second, 1823, and was made necessary by certain things done by Russia and the Holy Allies. Russia still exists. But who the Holy Allies were, and what they did that so alarmed Monroe, requires a little explanation.

#### THE HOLY ALLIANCE.

As all the world knows, the overthrow of the French at Waterloo was followed by a second abdication of Napoleon, by a second restoration of Louis XVIII. to the throne of France, and by a gathering of the allied Kings or their representatives at Paris. On one of the sovereigns there assembled these events seem to have made a deep impression.

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To Alexander of Russia the second fall of the man of destiny was but another illustration of the way in which God, in his own good time, confounds the councils of the wicked and lifts up those who put their trust in Him, and, grateful for this signal lesson, Alexander determined henceforth to rule, and, if possible, induce his fellow-monarchs to rule, in accordance with the principles of the Christian religion.

To accomplish this end the more easily he persuaded Frederick William of Prussia and Francis of Austria to join with him in a league which he called "The Holy Alliance," and to sign a treaty which is commonly supposed to have bound the Holy Allies to pull down constitutional government and stamp out liberal ideas. It was, in truth, a meaningless pledge, framed in a moment of religious excitement, and well described in its own words, which assert "that the present act has no other aim than to manifest to the world their unchangeable determination to adopt no other rule of conduct either in the government of their respective countries or in their political re-

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lations with other governments than the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts of justice, charity and peace."

That this little society of Christian monarchs should have any interest for us of to-day is due solely to the fact that their treaty contains the words "Holy Alliance," and that to it have wrongfully been attributed results which sprang from the quadruple treaty signed two months later by Russia, Prussia, Austria and Great Britain; a new alliance which bound the four powers to do four things—exclude Napoleon forever from power; maintain the Government they had just set up in France; resist with all their might any attack on the army of occupation, and meet in 1818 to consult concerning their common interests, and to take such measures as should then seem to be best fitted to serve the peace and happiness of Europe. Each pledge was faithfully kept, and in the Autumn of 1818 the four powers met at Aix-la-Chapelle, and reviewed the events of the past three years. Monarchy was so firmly established in France that the army of occupation was withdrawn and Louis XVIII. was suffered to have a voice