

Empire or Liberty: The Antifederalists and Foreign Policy, 1787-1788

by Jonathan Marshall

Inquiry Magazine

Historians increasingly recognize the important role that considerations of foreign policy played in shaping the Constitution.¹ Leading Federalists, many of whom had had experience abroad negotiating treaties or procuring foreign loans, were acutely sensitive to the demands of power politics and were determined to see the states united under a strong, “energetic” government that could command the respect of all potential enemies. The Constitution met that need: It gave Congress the power to regulate commerce and to raise armies and the taxes to supply them, and it established a court system to bring the states into compliance with national foreign policy. The powers of treaty and war-making it put under the central direction of the President. But before these provisions could be enacted, the Constitution had to be ratified by the states. In the ensuing debates, opponents of the Constitution—the “Antifederalists”—bitterly fought its centralizing provisions. Historians have largely ignored the Antifederalists’ contribution to the debate over foreign policy, and have thus lost some of the richness of the confrontation between rival political theories that characterized the ratification controversy. For the Antifederalist world view was profoundly shaped by their abhorrence of “empire”—that is to say, the rule of a vast territory by a strong, consolidated government. In rejecting the Federalist dream of a glorious American empire, they challenged the notion that the confederated states had to mimic European empires to safeguard their independence. Ultimately, the Antifederalists insisted, empire could be achieved only at the expense of their most cherished and hard-won prize: liberty.

I. The Federalist Case

Commercial policy, national security, and the nation’s reputation abroad were interrelated aspects of the Federalist conception of America’s foreign predicament. America’s bolt from the British Empire left it without favored access to lucrative markets in the West Indies and in England itself; nor did America immediately penetrate French and Spanish markets. New England’s traditional carrying trade suffered from European mercantile re-

strictions. Congress had no leverage against those empires because it was powerless to regulate foreign commerce. Britain thus avoided paying high duties simply by playing off the states against one another. Merchants, shippers, seamen, and artisans from allied industries joined the call to shape an effective national commercial policy. That call led to the Annapolis Convention of 1786, and then to the Philadelphia Convention itself, for a more fundamental revision of the Articles of Confederation.

A second basic argument of the Federalists concerned the restrictions on Congress that interfered with its duty to provide for the national defense. For example, although Congress alone had the power to make treaties, the states in practice could and did break them. They regularly violated Indian treaties, ignored provisions of the Anglo-American peace treaty of 1783 (thus giving Britain a claim to the northern forts), and antagonized foreign powers (as when Virginia refused to extradite a French pirate). Above all, however, Congress lacked an independent and steady source of revenue, without which it could not raise and supply an army and navy, pay off the national debt, nor ransom the captives of the Barbary pirates. The Federalists saw foreign predators on all sides ready to take advantage of America's weakness: To the north, the British still occupied strategic forts; to the west, Indian tribes, apparently armed and encouraged by the British and Spanish, menaced frontiersmen; to the south, the Spanish were making trouble, especially on the Mississippi; and to the east, American commerce and fisheries were at the mercy of the French and British fleets. Even the Barbary pirates could raid American shipping with impunity. Many Americans believed that national weakness produced these humiliations that undermined the dignity of their great republican experiment.

In calling for a more energetic government to repel these foreign menaces and reestablish national honor, the Federalists recited lengthy lists of foreign policy problems left unsolved by Congress under the Articles of Confederation. "We are the prey of every nation," cried the *State Gazette of North Carolina*. "We are indulged in such foreign commerce as must be hurtful to us; we are prohibited from that which might be profitable." Without the power to tax, Congress could not pay off the foreign debt, not even that owed to Spain. "It is a circumstance perfectly humiliating, that we should remain under obligations to that nation," the paper continued. Our ministers abroad would soon have to return home for lack of support. Nor could our army command respect: "You have four or five hundred troops scattered along the Ohio to protect the frontier inhabitants, and give some value to your lands; those troops are ill paid, and in a fair way to being disbanded." Above all, America had lost respect in the world. "There is hardly a circumstance remaining — hardly one external mark — by which you can deserve to be called a nation. You are not in a condition to resist the most contemptuous enemy. What is there to prevent an Algerine pirate from landing on your coast, and carrying your citizens into slavery?" The

conclusion was clear to all. "Is there a man in this state, who believes it possible for us to continue under such a government?"²

Other Federalist leaders echoed the *State Gazette's* picture of the sorry state to which the new nation had apparently descended. Oxenbridge Thacher of Massachusetts observed that the "haughty Spaniard" had "deprived us of the navigation of the River Mississippi," while the British were ruining our fishermen, and the Algerian pirates enslaving our sailors. "Thus have we suffered every species of infamy abroad, and poverty at home. Such, in fact, have been our calamities, as are enough to convince the most skeptical among us of the want of a general government, in which energy and vigor could be established, and at the same time, the rights and liberties of the people preserved."³ James Wilson, the Pennsylvania nationalist, could see only "disgrace and distress" since the country had won its independence:

Devoid of *national power*, we could not prohibit the extravagance of our importations, nor could we derive a revenue from their excess. Devoid of *national importance*, we could not procure, for our exports, a tolerable sale at foreign markets. Devoid of *national credit*, we saw our public securities melt in the hands of the holders, like snow before the sun. Devoid of *national dignity*, we could not, in some instances, perform our treaties, on our part; and in other instances, we could neither obtain nor compel the performance of them, on the part of others. Devoid of *national energy*, we could not carry into execution our own resolutions, decisions, or laws.

Only an efficient general government, he concluded, could cure these national distempers.⁴

The Federalist case began with the problem of commercial regulation which, most Americans agreed, demanded a *national* solution. Popular dissatisfaction with the chaos of state regulations, particularly among urban merchants, artisans, and shippers, contributed to the demand throughout the colonies to grant new powers to the Congress. Indeed, as John Marshall recalled in 1827, "It may be doubted whether any of the evils proceeding from the feebleness of the Federal Government contributed more to that Great revolution which introduced the present system, than the deep and general conviction that commerce ought to be regulated by Congress."⁵ Proponents of national commercial regulation at the Annapolis convention were able to use the issue as a lever to call for more sweeping reforms of the national government. As Hamilton reported from that convention in 1786, "the power of regulating trade is of such comprehensive extent that to give it efficacy may require a corresponding adjustment in other parts of the federal system."⁶

James Madison, whose penetrating insights into political philosophy won him the title of "father of the Constitution," became convinced at least as early as 1785 that Congress alone should have the power to control trade:

"It appears to me not to admit of doubt," he wrote James Monroe that August. The states "can no more exercise this power separately, than they could separately carry on war, or separately form treaties of alliance or commerce." If the commercial distress of the nation were not soon remedied, Madison warned, the states would lose respect for a "Government which is too feeble to protect their interest. . . . I tremble at the anti-foederal [*sic*] expedients into which the former may be tempted."⁷

Madison isolated two fundamental reasons for imposing national order over commercial policy. First of all, America had to be able to bargain on equal terms with the mercantile powers; otherwise, letting them run roughshod over America's trade and commerce, without fear of retribution, would only "confirm G. B. [Great Britain] and all the world in the belief that we are not to be respected, nor apprehended as a nation in matters of Commerce." Our credit rating would suffer along with the respect accorded to us by other nations, since continued commercial chaos would "dissipate every prospect of drawing a steady revenue from our imposts either directly into the federal treasury, or indirectly thro' the treasuries of the Continental States." Meanwhile, the continuing imbalance of trade drained specie from the country, giving citizens a pretext for avoiding taxes and for "the pernicious substitution of paper money. . . . In fact," came Madison's classic conclusion, "most of our political evils may be traced up to our commercial ones, as most of our moral may to our political."⁸

Other Federalist spokesmen also hammered away at the paramount importance of bringing foreign trade under the sole purview of the Congress. "The well-being of trade depends on a proper regulation of it," declared Bowdoin in the Massachusetts ratifying convention, and "on the success of trade depends wealth; on wealth the value of lands; the strength, the welfare, and happiness of a country, upon the numbers, the ease, and independence of its yeomenry."⁹ Thus did the nation's problems all lead back to commerce, and the Federalists regarded America's commercial position as gloomy indeed. "Go along the wharves of Philadelphia, and observe the melancholy silence that reigns," said James Wilson.¹⁰ Corbin of Virginia saw signs of "ruin and decay everywhere" for want of an efficient central government.¹¹ And Governor Edmund Randolph of Virginia, having overcome his initial doubts about the Constitution, now pointed despairingly to the loss of national prestige attendant upon America's inadequate credit and "languishing" commerce:

We became contemptible in the eyes of foreign nations; they discarded us as little wanton bees, who had played for liberty, but had no sufficient solidity or wisdom to secure it on a permanent basis, and were therefore unworthy of their regard.¹¹

Commercial regulation was, however, only one element in the larger array of foreign policy problems facing America. The authors of the *Federal-*

ist Papers—Hamilton, Jay, and Madison—in particular identified national security as the fundamental task confronting the union. “Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct,” Hamilton observed. Even the love of liberty would “give way to its dictates.” Disunited, the states would become “prey to European machinations,” repeatedly sucked into wars and forced to support a large military establishment; in consequence, “our liberties would be a prey to the means of defending ourselves against the ambition and jealousy of each other.” Only through unity, paradoxically, could the states thus avoid even further centralization of power and loss of liberty.¹³ Hamilton, as usual, drew the most extreme conclusions from his own argument. The national government, he insisted, should not be deprived of “a single weapon which in any possible contingency might be usefully employed for the general defense and security.”¹⁴

Without the power to raise an army and to levy the taxes to support it, Federalist spokesmen persistently warned, America was doomed to be overrun by foreign armies—all the more quickly because states in the confederation could be divided and then conquered. “Judge candidly what a wretched figure the American empire will exhibit in the eye of other nations, without a power to array and support a military force for its own protection,” wrote Oliver Ellsworth in his influential “Letters from a Landholder.” “Half a dozen regiments from Canada or New-Spain, might lay whole provinces under contribution, while we were disputing who has power to pay and raise an army. . . . A people cannot long retain their freedom, whose government is incapable of protecting them,” he concluded.¹⁵

Madison similarly believed that “the subject of direct taxation is perhaps one of the most important that can possibly engage our attention” because of its bearing on national defense. Foreign powers, knowing “the want of this resource in our government,” might be tempted to “take advantage of our weakness. . . . Suppose it should attack us; what forces would we oppose to it?” he asked. Without the power to levy and support troops, America stood defenseless; it ran “the risk of national annihilation.”

Madison extended his portrayal of these hypothetical dangers by describing, with ironic prescience, the series of events that indeed did lead to war in 1812. The United States, he noted, claimed the rights of neutrals on the high seas, the principle “that free ships shall make free goods, and that vessels and goods shall be both free from condemnation.” France and Britain would likely enough be at war again soon, and “American vessels, if they can do it with advantage, may carry the commerce of the contending nations. It is a source of wealth which we ought not to deny to our citizens.” But if Britain chose to seize our vessels, we should “be obliged to relinquish the advantage of a neutral nation, or be engaged in a war.” America, “in her present impotent situation,” would lose its commercial opportunities and perhaps be dragged into fighting as well, on unequal terms. Fortunately,

Madison saw a way out of this predicament. "If we be in a respectable situation, if it be known that our government can command the whole resources of the Union, we shall be suffered to enjoy the great advantages of carrying on the commerce of the nations at war; for none of them would be willing to add us to the number of their enemies."¹⁶ Twenty-four years later, Madison himself had to call for war against Britain to protect America's neutral rights on the high seas. But back in 1788, he and other Federalist leaders held out the promise that a strong and respected America could live in peace with the Great Powers, pacify the Indians and Algerian pirates, and settle its border claims with the Spanish and British. Liberty would prosper under such an umbrella of calm and security.

From the frequency with which Federalist spokesmen repeated these arguments, both in public debate and in private correspondence, there can be no doubt that they believed them, and thought the public would too. Just as Eastern seaboard mercantile interests clamored for a stronger government to protect their commerce, so frontiersmen prayed for a government that could put down Indian tribes and open up the Mississippi to their products. Foreign policy, then as now, made a powerful case for centralized power, especially as a panacea for domestic ills.

II. The Antifederalist Response

How did the Antifederalists reply? According to most historical accounts, they simply didn't. Historians by and large have assumed that the Antifederalists were consumed with purely domestic, parochial concerns; one can look in vain for any substantial appreciation of the Antifederalist position, except perhaps on the issue of commercial regulation. Frederick Marks, whose *Independence on Trial* is the most comprehensive account of foreign policy and the Constitution, asserts that the "Antifederalists rarely discussed foreign affairs" and when they did, "they accepted Federalist arguments. . . ." He concludes that "few persons anywhere in the country would deny that external forces threatened the Confederacy," and that the Antifederalists therefore had to turn to other issues to make their case.¹⁷

Part of this historical blindness, no doubt, stems from the failure of the Antifederalists to produce a unified body of political thought remotely comparable to the classic *Federalist Papers*. There was no single Antifederalist foreign policy platform, no one doctrine on which all agreed. Nevertheless, the historian can make sense of their mood by synthesizing the many speeches, pamphlets, and newspaper articles that they produced during the debates of 1787-1788 over the ratification of the Constitution. These materials, taken as a whole, reflect a remarkably common perception of America's place in the world. The Antifederalists could accept the principle of national commercial regulation — with safeguards to protect sectional interests. But they painted an optimistic picture of American life, discerned no imminent foreign dangers, and concluded that the threat to liberty from

a strong, consolidated government far outweighed the more remote terrors of a foreign invasion. In the last analysis, they suspected that the Federalists aimed to barter their liberty for an empire. The Antifederalists believed the "millions yet unborn" would be better served by a jealous defense of freedom than by the pursuit of national glory.

Critics of the proposed Constitution, even if their interests were primarily domestic or even local, had to come to grips with Federalist arguments on foreign policy. And they did so repeatedly, even if many historians have chosen to ignore their replies. Sometimes the Antifederalists attempted a point-by-point refutation of the Federalist scenario, but at other times they resorted to parody in order to ridicule dire predictions of the disasters that would befall the country if the Constitution were not adopted.

William Grayson, for example, recalled Governor Randolph's warnings "that we shall have wars and rumors of wars, that every calamity is to attend us, and that we shall be ruined and disunited forever, unless we adopt this Constitution." Randolph had envisioned jealous states feuding among themselves, *only to become prey to foreign armies*. Thus, mocked Grayson,

Pennsylvania and Maryland are to fall upon us from the north, like the *Goths and Vandals of old*; the *Algerines*, whose flat-sided vessels never came farther than Madeira, are to fill the Chesapeake with mighty fleets, and to attack us on our front; the Indians are to invade us with numerous armies on our rear, in order to convert our cleared lands into hunting grounds; and the Carolinians from the south (mounted on alligators, I presume), are to come and destroy our cornfields, and eat up our little children!

At this point, Grayson's conclusion that such dangers were "merely imaginary, and ludicrous in the extreme" seemed almost redundant. More to the point was his observation that "if the existence of those dangers cannot be proved," then all the world could see "that there cannot be any reason for adopting measures which we apprehend to be ruinous and destructive."¹⁸

Other Antifederalists ridiculed the promises of a utopia to follow adoption of the new Constitution. In the heat of the debate, some Federalist polemicists had, of course, exaggerated their case, and the Antifederalists were quick to pounce. "John De Witt," writing to the citizens of Massachusetts, highlighted the implausibility of Federalist claims in his caricature of their position. "Our foreign and domestic debts will be as a feather," he wrote; "our ports will be crowded with the ships of all the world, soliciting our commerce and our produce; Our manufactures will increase and multiply; and, in short, if we STAND STILL, our country, notwithstanding, will be like the blessed Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey." Then he brought his readers rudely back to reality: "Let us not deceive ourselves. Idleness and luxury will be as much a bane as ever; our passions will be equally at war with us then as now; and if we have men among us trying

with all their ability to undermine our present Constitution, these very persons will direct their force to sap the vital of the new one."¹⁹ Melancthon Smith, a leading New York Antifederalist, similarly complained of reckless promises of the rich to come from centralization of government. "It is a vain delusion to expect anything like what is promised. The truth is, this country buys more than it sells; It imports more than it exports. There are too many merchants in proportion to the farmers and manufacturers. Until these defects are remedied, no government can relieve us."²⁰

The Antifederalists sensed they were on the defensive; hard-headed realism and even pessimism would, after years of economic chaos and depression, hardly prove as popular as visions of a bright new future. Indeed, one Antifederalist, writing as "Montezuma," accused the Federalists of stampeding the public into accepting the Constitution on the basis of false claims. "Our friends we find have been assiduous in representing our federal calamities," he observed, "until at length the people at large, frightened by the gloomy picture on one side, and allured by the prophesies of some of our fanciful and visionary adherents on the other, are ready to accept and confirm our proposed government without the delay or forms of examination."²¹ There was one obvious solution: beat the Federalists at their own game.

Thus Antifederalist spokesmen lost no time reassuring their countrymen that all would soon be well—indeed that all *was* well already, appearances to the contrary. As far as Patrick Henry could see, "everything has been calm and tranquil."²² "The country is in profound peace, and we are not threatened by invasions from any quarter," observed "Brutus Junior" in the *New York Journal*, a leading Antifederalist organ.²³ James Winthrop, writing as "Agrippa," was in his own way as expansive and optimistic as any Federalist: No problems loomed on the horizon that the genius of the American people could not solve within a framework of limited government.

There cannot, from the history of mankind, be produced an instance of rapid growth in extent, in art, and in trade, that will bear any comparison with our country. This is owing to what friends of the new system, and the enemies of the revolution, for I take them to be nearly the same, would term *our extreme liberty*. . . . Two-thirds of the continental debt has been paid since the war, and we are in alliance with some of the most respectable powers of Europe. The western lands, won from Britain by the sword, are an ample fund for the principal of all our public debts; and every new sale excites that manly pride which is essential to national virtue. All this happiness arises from the freedom of our institutions and the limited nature of our government.²⁴

Modern scholarship supports the view that by the late 1780's, the Confederation had achieved levels of prosperity well surpassing those of the pre-revolutionary years. Indeed, as Merrill Jensen observes, "There is nothing

in the knowable facts to support the ancient myth of idle ships, stagnant commerce, and bankrupt commerce in the new nation."²⁵ Nevertheless, some merchants, seamen, and farmers continued to suffer in the aftermath of the postwar depression. The Antifederalists asked these groups not to blame the Confederation for their woes. The country was, after all, "just recovering from the losses and embarrassment sustained by the late war," "Brutus Junior" reminded them.²⁶ Richard Henry Lee admitted that some Americans were indeed suffering "disappointments and several inconveniences under the present system, but urged his readers to "distinguish those which are merely the consequence of a severe and tedious war, from those which arise from defects in the federal system. . . . It was the war that disturbed the course of commerce, introduced floods of paper money, the stagnation of credit, and threw many valuable men out of steady business. From these sources our greatest evils arise." He concluded that the defects of the Confederation were "but as a feather in the balance against a mountain, compared with those which would infallibly be the result of the loss of general liberty, and the happiness men enjoy under a frugal, free, and mild government."²⁷

Demands for commercial regulation, however, were too widespread to be ignored, and most Antifederalists could concede this point—without accepting that the Articles of Confederation had to be scrapped in their entirety. James Monroe, despite his criticisms of the Constitution, thus found the Articles inadequate. To make the Confederation into "a proper federal government," he declared, "I would add to it one great power—I would give it an absolute control over commerce." Given the right to impose an impost, Congress would have no further need for direct taxation—which Monroe and other Antifederalists saw as a threat to states' rights.²⁸ Richard Henry Lee agreed that the federal impost would fully meet the "present demands of the union" for funds.²⁹ "Centinel," from the commercial state of Pennsylvania, stated that giving Congress unlimited power to regulate trade would make "America as prosperous as it is in the power of any form of government to render her." Indeed, he recalled that the Constitutional Convention had its roots in the impotence of Congress to retaliate against Britain, "whose hostile regulations gave such a stab to our navigation as to threaten annihilation." This, he concluded, "is the source to which may be traced every evil we experience, that can be relieved by a more energetic government."³⁰ A Federalist spokesman could hardly have put it better.

Nevertheless, many Antifederalists, particularly those with strong sectional loyalties, vigorously fought any move to give a simple majority in Congress the right to regulate trade. Southerners, in particular, feared that the mercantile states of the Northeast would use that power to strangle the southern economy. Thus as early as 1785, Richard Henry Lee told Madison that it would be "dangerous in the extreme" to put the commerce of the southern states "at the Mercy of our East & North" where it would come

under the sway of "a most pernicious and destructive Monopoly."³¹ George Mason predicted that "the five southern states (whose produce and circumstances are totally different from those of the eight northern and eastern states) will be ruined; for such rigid and premature regulations may be made, as will enable the merchants of the northern and eastern states not only to demand an exorbitant freight, but to monopolize the purchase of commodities, at their own price, for many years, to the great injury of the landed interest."³² William Grayson gloomily observed that if the carrying states united against the South, "our situation will then be wretched indeed."³³ Most apocalyptic of all was Rawlins Lowndes, leader of the South Carolina Antifederalists. "When this new Constitution should be adopted," he declared, "the sun of the Southern States would set, never to rise again." The Eastern states, he had no doubt, would conspire to "fritter away the value of our produce to a little or nothing, by compelling payment of exorbitant freightage."³⁴

Southerners were not alone in jealously guarding their commercial prerogatives. James Winthrop of Massachusetts naturally favored a system of customs duties to raise funds and encourage manufactures. He warned his fellow Bostonians:

But if we surrender the unlimited right to regulate trade, and levy taxes, imposts will oppress our foreign trade for the benefit of other states, while excises and taxes will discourage our internal industry. The right to regulate trade, without any limitations, will, as certainly as it is granted, transfer the trade of this state to Pennsylvania.

Turning the fears of Virginians upside down, he predicted that "the landed states at the southward will all be interested in draining our resources" to finance their aristocratic and profligate style of life.³⁵ In the face of such sectional jealousies, some Federalists must have despaired of ever convincing the states to trust their powers to a national government.³⁶

Even those Antifederalists who accepted the need to amend the Articles of Confederation to provide for national regulation of commerce, objected bitterly to the allegedly underhanded way in which the delegates at Philadelphia had exceeded their mandate and produced an entirely new framework of government. In reviewing the history of the Annapolis and Philadelphia conventions, "A Federal Republican" argued that the delegates were licensed only to extend Congressional control over trade. But "instead of confining themselves to the powers with which they were entrusted, they pronounced all amendments to the Articles of Confederation wholly impracticable; and . . . proceeded to form a government entirely new and totally different in its principles and organization."³⁷ Richard Henry Lee insisted that the unsuspecting states were "not aware that they were passing the Rubicon" when they sent delegates to Philadelphia.³⁸ "Centinel" compared the issue of commercial regulation to the Trojan Horse, an enticement that would bring the death of liberty within our borders. In

clamoring for a strong government to rectify the country's commercial ills, the people had created a monster.

Allowing for a moment that it would be possible for trade to flourish under a despotic government, of what avail would be a prosperous state of commerce, when the produce of it would be at the absolute disposal of an arbitrary unchecked general government, who may levy at pleasure the most oppressive taxes; who may destroy every principle of freedom; who may even destroy the privilege of complaining.³⁹

"Centinel" and other leading Antifederalists who supported a Congressional impost, believed that Constitutional provisions for direct taxes were unnecessary and a pernicious blow at states' rights. The Federalists, of course, never ceased warning that Congress could not rely on requisitions from the states for money to raise armies or — just as important — to pay off the foreign debt. If America defaulted on its loans, the Federalists maintained, the European powers would have a *casus belli*, and the country might be plunged back into war. At the very least, America would have no moral leverage with which to demand British withdrawal from the northern forts.

Here again, the Antifederalists emphasized that America's financial difficulties were only temporary, the product of a natural shortage of funds in the aftermath of war. "That we have to encounter embarrassments and are distressed for want of money, is undoubted," admitted John Lansing of New York, "but causes which could not be controlled by any system of government, have contributed to embarrass and distress us." Relieved at the termination of war, people had indulged in "every species of extravagance" and had imported European goods "to an amount far beyond our ability to pay." The resulting shortage of specie was then quite unfairly attributed to the government's "want of energy."⁴⁰

William Grayson blamed the country's financial difficulties on the failure of Congress to sell off the Western lands at an earlier period — a failure he traced back to the alleged abhorrence for speculation among northeasterners. No matter; the solution lay at hand. Simply throw the unpopular debts onto the Western lands, and resort to requisitions to pay off the interest on foreign loans.⁴¹ Nor did James Monroe foresee any problems: "When we view the western extensive territory, and contemplate the fertility of the soil, the noble rivers which penetrate it . . . may we not depend on this as a very substantial resource?" If need be, the United States could even resort to further borrowing to pay off the foreign debt, relying on its good credit.⁴²

Replying to Madison's argument for direct taxation, William Grayson asked, "Are we to be terrified into a belief of its necessity?"⁴³ Grayson and other Antifederalists emphatically replied to the contrary. "France has made no pressing demand" against us, Monroe noted; indeed, said Grayson, she was "devising new regulations of commerce for our advantage," eager to keep our friendship after losing her best ally, the Dutch. Thus,

Grayson concluded, "dangers from that quarter were absolutely imaginary."⁴⁴

Nor were the Dutch any threat, Federalist warnings to the contrary. "Again we are told that Congress has no credit with foreigners, because they have no power to fulfill their engagements," observed "A Newport Man" in the spring of 1788. "And this we are told, with a boldness exceeded by nothing but its falsehood, perhaps in the same paper that announces to the world the loan of a million of Holland gilders . . . and all this done by the procurement of that very Congress whose insignificance and want of power had been constantly proclaimed for two or three years before." That loan was the highest possible vote of confidence in the Confederation, for no one could doubt that the Dutch were "the most cautious people on earth."⁴⁵ Grayson added that the French had not yet managed even to pay back the Dutch for loans drawn under Henry IV—so why should America panic?

Spain, Grayson assured the Virginia ratifying convention, was "friendly in a high degree." Had it not been Charles III who intervened at the Barbary court to procure for America a treaty with the Moroccan pirates? In any case, no one could possibly fear Spain: "Her strength is so scattered, that she never can be dangerous to us either in peace or war."⁴⁶ Patrick Henry went further: The Spanish monarch, he claimed, trembled for the fate of his New World colonies with "every advance the people make to the westward;" while his "feeble colonies" stood exposed to our power, he could not afford to risk a contest with America.⁴⁷

In any case, Grayson shrewdly observed, national loans could not be compared to private loans; nations granted assistance not for pecuniary reasons, but "from views of national interest." France came to our aid not to fill its own treasury, but "to pluck the fairest feather out of the British crown." Indeed, Congress had been wise enough to see that "while we remained their debtor in so considerable a degree, they would not be inattentive to our interest."⁴⁸ Patrick Henry, on the other hand, concluded not very flatteringly that America was too insignificant in European eyes to be worth a war merely over some old debts.⁴⁹

Were there then no foreign threats which the states, as a confederation, could not handle? Most Antifederalists were not willing to admit of any. James Monroe was most impressed by the 3,000 miles of ocean that lay between America and the European powers, a formidable barrier indeed. "If there be any danger to these states to be apprehended from any of those countries," he asserted, "it must be Great Britain and Spain, whose colonies are contiguous to our country." Spain, of course, constituted no threat at all; as for Britain, "certain it is" that she desired only peace, and that "her true interest" lay "in friendship with us."⁵⁰

On the other hand, it could not be denied that Britain continued to occupy forts on the northern frontiers, forts that in American hands could be used to control trade routes and unruly Indian tribes. Was that not proof

of hostile intent? Did that not argue for a stronger government to pay off debts to Britain, thus removing the legal excuse for continued occupation of the forts? The Antifederalists, needless to say, remained unconvinced. Paying off the debt would not change the situation, "A Newport Man" argued: the British had "no other reason for holding the posts, after the time named in the treaty for their evacuation, than the last reason of Kings, that is, their guns." Why give up our treasure to the British, when only force would remove them?⁵¹

But a consolidated government was no panacea on that score either. No matter how "organized our general government might be," John Lansing could not envision America exposing its coast to attack and depredations simply to regain some forts. Without a navy—and no government could provide one in the near future—war was out of the question.⁵² Melancthon Smith agreed: the American people were too exhausted from the last war to contemplate a new one.⁵³ William Grayson went further, and insisted that any thoughts of building a navy were misguided from the start. The profits from commerce "could not compensate for the expenses of rendering ourselves formidable at sea," and a concerted naval building program would merely alarm the powers of Europe, inviting them to "crush us in our infancy." As a good Virginian, Grayson pleaded that Americans must attend first to the land, consolidate the western frontier, and then "come forward with a fleet" only when our population and agriculture could support it.⁵⁴ His vision was a far cry from Madison's dream of a mercantile empire based on naval protection for the carrying trade.

Quite apart from such specific cases, most Antifederalists were convinced that a peaceful and virtuous republic need attract no enemies. If even the "little Republic of St. Marino" could keep its independence for thirteen hundred years, surrounded by powerful and ambitious states, then it was "reasonable to suppose that the same good sense and love of freedom, on this side of the Atlantic, will secure us from all attempt within and without," wrote "A Newport Man."⁵⁵ "A Farmer" from Maryland expected no one to attack the Confederation, because the wealth of America would "not be collected into any one overgrown, luxurious and effeminate capital, to become a lure to the enterprising ambitious." A consolidated empire would simply attract enemies, keeping its citizens on a permanent war footing.⁵⁶

Indeed, America would certainly become more susceptible to foreign corruption under a centralized system, some Antifederalists maintained. James Winthrop, for one, thought it no coincidence that some of the Federalist leaders had "formed pretty strong attachments to foreign nations," since their policies would soon sell out the republic. Foreign powers assumed that every man has his price, but would never attempt to purchase an assembly whose members faced frequent elections by the people. "But give those members a right to sit six, or even two years, with such extensive

powers as the new system proposes, and their friendship will be well worth a purchase." And with the seat of government so far from the electors, members of Congress would be all the more able to cloak their treason. "We shall see ourselves bought at a publick market, in order to be sold again to the highest bidder. We must be involved in all the quarrels of European powers, and oppressed with expense, merely for the sake of being like the nations round about us."⁵⁷ Needless to say, Winthrop was not impressed by the argument that some way had to be found to make America more respectable in the eyes of foreigners, if that meant only bringing our government down to the level of a corrupt European court.

But the Antifederalists were, above all, unconvinced that perfect national security should be purchased at the expense of liberty. American freedoms were "not about to fall before the tyranny of foreign conquest," asserted Elbridge Gerry; "it is native usurpation that is shaking the foundations of peace, and spreading the sable curtain of despotism over the United States."⁵⁸ Or as John Lansing put it, foreign conquest at the very worst could "subject us to be ruled by persons in whose appointment we have no agency"; and since the Constitution "will unavoidably terminate in the depriving us of that invaluable privilege, I am content to risk a . . . mere possible evil, to avoid a certain one." Above all, Americans should not permit fearful scenarios or apprehensions of war and invasion to rationalize the loss of civil liberties; that would be to give up the battle before it had begun.⁵⁹

The most obvious and direct threat to American liberties came not from British or Spanish invaders, but from a standing army at home, to be supported by direct taxes on the people. Had not the colonists' own experience of the Boston Massacre and then the Revolution itself fully borne out the warnings against standing armies that radical Whig polemicists had long been sounding? Federalists like James Wilson were quick to drop their former principles in order to assert the dignity of America through military power; "yet," according to Elbridge Gerry, "freedom revolts at the idea . . . Standing armies have been the nursery of vice and the bane of liberty . . . from the ruin of the Cortes of Spain to the planting of the British cohorts in the capitals of America."⁶⁰ Robert Yates of New York, alias "Brutus," must have had a sense of *déjà vu* when he recited the well-worn lessons of how Julius Caesar and Oliver Cromwell had subverted their respective republics, turning free men into subjects of despots. America was fortunate indeed to have a great patriot at the head of its army, Yates said. "But are we to expect, that this will always be the case? Are we so much better than the people of other ages and of other countries, that the same allurements of power and greatness, which led them aside from their duty, will have no influence upon men in our country?" The very idea was "wild and extravagant."⁶¹ Men everywhere, even in a virtuous republic, were weak and easily tempted by power. That, after all, had been the lesson of Trenchard and

Gordon, whose message burned itself into the consciousness of so many revolutionary leaders; Yates and his followers were simply their ideological inheritors. Certainly they did not expect to leave America defenseless. State militias could handle routine threats to order, such as Indian raids or agrarian rebel outbreaks, and larger armies would be specially raised in time of war.⁶² Whether they were simply "men of little faith," or men of great realism, is a matter of judgment.

For many Antifederalists, moreover, standing armies were only symptomatic of a larger problem: how to ward off despotism in a great nation. Classical political theorists—most notably Montesquieu, whose *Spirit of the Laws* was the Antifederalist political bible—asserted that republics were suited only to small territories, where a commonality of interests could overcome the centrifugal force of factionalism. Larger territories posed an entirely new problem of governance: They required either the strong, centralized rule of the monarch, or a loose confederation of smaller republics. But a single government could not rule a large empire and still be responsive to the people.

"Empire" in the sense in which Americans used it in the late 18th century referred to any large territory governed by a strong, centralized government. Many Antifederalists believed that their opponents' real goal was to achieve not simply a more effective republic, but a constantly growing, glorious empire. They believed that the thirteen colonies alone were far too vast to govern under one consolidated government—unless all freedoms be sacrificed. The military and political exigencies of such an empire would snuff out the flame of liberty, and substitute glory and might for the republican ideals of the revolution. In the last analysis, they saw the ratification debate as a contest between liberty and empire.

Few Federalists harbored any doubts as to America's future greatness under a centralized, energetic regime. As early as 1775 John Adams was calling for a second Continental Congress to write "a constitution to form for a great empire." Benjamin Franklin, too, had abandoned the ideal of the small Spartan republic, as he began to sense the awesome implications of "our growing Strength, both in Numbers and Wealth." Robert Morris foresaw the establishment of an American empire of "power, consequence, and grandeur." Some were more ardent still. "The Almighty . . . has made choice of the present generation to erect the American Empire," William Henry Drayton of South Carolina exulted. It "bids fair, by the blessings of God, to be the most glorious of any upon Record."⁶³

John Jay, who had as much foreign experience as any framer of the Constitution, was no less an expansionist. Indeed, his case for "the best possible state of defense" under a strong central government rested on the assumption of an expanding empire. The European powers, he observed, were jealous of their status and would try to hem in the United States, to prevent it from reaching its full commercial and territorial potential. "Spain

thinks it convenient to shut the Mississippi against us on the one side, and Britain excludes us from the Saint Lawrence on the other." Naturally, we could not "expect that they should regard our advancement in union, in power and consequence by land and sea, with an eye of indifference and composure." Only a united America could work its will on the continent. This was an argument not for national security, but rather for national destiny.⁶⁴

Madison counseled that as transportation and communication improved, Americans should "extend the sphere" to promote domestic tranquility and dissipate the malign influence of faction in government. Other Federalists, however, appealed to less sophisticated motives and aspirations. The staunch nationalist James Wilson, arguing for a "strong binding force" to keep the republic together, laid before his fellow Pennsylvania delegates a grand vision of a continental empire:

It is a maxim of every government, and it ought to be a maxim with us, that the increase of numbers increases the dignity and security, and the respectability, of all governments. It is the first command given by the Deity to man, Increase and multiply. This applies with peculiar force to this country, the smaller part of whose territory is yet inhabited. We are representatives, sir, not merely of the present age, but of future times; not merely of the territory along the sea-coast, but of regions immensely extended westward. We should fill, as fast as possible, this extensive country, with men who shall live happy, free, and secure. To accomplish this great end ought to be the leading view of all our patriots and statesmen.⁶⁵

Here was the antithesis of the Antifederalist position. Wilson and other fervent nationalists, the Antifederalists believed, had entirely missed the point of the Revolution if they sought merely to replace the British Empire with an American copy. To the Antifederalists, national power and prestige could never be "great ends" because they were the aims of kings and emperors, not of virtuous republicans. "I had rather be a free citizen of the small republic of Massachusetts than an oppressed subject of the great American empire," declared one Boston polemicist.⁶⁶ "You are not to inquire how your trade may be increased, nor how you are to become a great and powerful people," Patrick Henry rang out, "but how your liberties can be secured; for liberty ought to be the direct end of your government." Henry, perhaps more powerfully than any other critic of the Constitution, insisted on the irreconcilability of freedom and empire:

Shall we imitate the example of those nations who have gone from a simple to a splendid government? Are those nations more worthy of our imitation? What can make an adequate satisfaction to them for the loss they have suffered in attaining such a government—for the loss of their liberty? If we admit this consolidated government, it will be because we like a great, splendid one. Some way or other we must be a great and mighty empire; we must have an army, and a navy, and a number of

things. When the American spirit was in its youth, the language of America was different: liberty, sir, was then the primary object. . . . by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty. But now, sir, the American spirit, assisted by the ropes and chains of consolidation, is about to convert this country into a powerful and mighty empire. If you make the citizens of this country agree to become the subjects of one great consolidated empire of America, your government will not have sufficient energy to keep them together. Such a government is incompatible with the genius of republicanism.⁶⁷

Or, as one advocate of states' rights claimed, a consolidated government would suck the states into a "*grand continental vortex*" and leave their legislatures with "power over little else than *yoking hogs* or determining the width of *cart wheels*."⁶⁸

Many Antifederalists were not against expansion *per se*. They took it for granted that as population grew, pioneer farmers would move west in search of virgin lands. Patrick Henry himself had refused to attend the Philadelphia Convention in protest against the Jay-Gardoqui treaty, which he saw as a northeastern conspiracy to limit settlement of the Mississippi basin. But the Antifederalists envisioned a succession of new states joining a confederation, rather than being swallowed up into an empire.

The Antifederalists agreed that even the territory encompassed by the original thirteen colonies—quite apart from additional lands to the west—was too large to be governed by a single republic, as opposed to a confederation of smaller republics. The "most celebrated writers on government," and all human experience, confirmed that "so extensive a territory could not be governed, connected and preserved, but by the *supremacy of despotic power*," according to the dissenters at the Pennsylvania ratifying convention.⁶⁹ James Monroe remarked that the Federalists hoped to consolidate a territory larger than "ever was under any one free government. It is too extensive to be governed but by a despotic monarchy."⁷⁰ James Winthrop considered the idea of a republic ruling an area one thousand miles long and eight hundred wide "an absurdity, and contrary to the whole experience of mankind."⁷¹ And George Clinton, after paying homage to Montesquieu, dredged up the mandatory historical proofs: "The duration of the republic of Sparta was owing to its having continued with the same extent of territory after all its wars; and that the ambition of Athens and Lacedemon to command and direct the union, lost them their liberties, and gave them a monarchy."⁷² Americans took such lessons seriously. Federalists and Antifederalists alike, aware of their inexperience with republican government, searched ancient history for parallels to their own situation. Colonial era revolutionary propaganda had etched into their minds the distinction between affluent, corrupt Athens and virtuous Sparta. The growth of empire, in the ancient as in the modern world, had always meant the death of republican virtue, the loss of vigilance over liberties, and the inevitable decline into despotism.

Antifederalist spokesmen offered several reasons for supposing that republican institutions could not effectively govern so large a territory as America. The prime reason, of course, was that the interests of the various states were simply too divergent; either the government would be rent by faction, or the interests of weaker states would be brutally stepped upon. James Winthrop, for example, noted that while "large and consolidated empires may indeed dazzle the eyes of a distant spectator with their splendour," when examined more closely they "nearly are always found to be full of misery. The reason is obvious. In large states the same principles of legislation will not apply to all the parts. . . . We accordingly find that the very great empires have always been despotick." Or as Winthrop put it more concretely, "It is impossible for one code of laws to suit Georgia and Massachusetts."⁷³ Winthrop proposed instead to bind the territory together on another, less rigid principle: commerce. This principle encouraged equity and friendship, and respected the diversity of interests and conditions among the states. Many others (such as Tom Paine) applied the same idea to the international system; Winthrop was one of the few to seriously propose it for the states.⁷⁴

George Clinton similarly posed the problem of governance in an extended territory. The centrifugal forces generated by conflicting interests at the periphery would require ever greater government exertions to crush rebel movements, until the mildness of government would be lost. In the specific American context, Clinton believed that the South's "passion for aristocratic distinction" and for slave-holding meant that it could never "be as tenacious of the liberties and interests of the more northern states, where freedom, independence, industry, equality and frugality are natural to the climate and soil, as men who are your own citizens, legislating in your own state, under your inspection, and whose manners and fortunes bear a more equal resemblance to your own."⁷⁵ It would take three-quarters of a century for this cultural antagonism to finally rend the American empire, but Clinton was already able to foresee that sectional conflicts could not always be contained within a liberal, republican system.

Many Antifederalists believed that, under the law of self-interest, the governors of an empire would quickly lose sight of the people and conspire to heap money, power, and honors upon themselves. Both the people and the states would be trampled under foot as the rulers of empire consolidated power under their own wing and eliminated rivals. State governments would be the first to go. Thus "John De Witt" predicted that a consolidated regime would "degenerate to a compleat Aristocracy, armed with powers unnecessary in anycase to bestow, and which in its vortex swallows up every other Government upon the Continent. In short, my fellow citizens, it can be said to be nothing less than a hasty stride to Universal Empire in this Western World, flattering, very flattering to young ambitious minds, but fatal to the liberties of the people."⁷⁶

Once the state governments had been subdued, nothing could protect the people from the highest rulers, who would grind them into submission. Separated from the people by an enormous gulf in both distance and power, the rulers could not help but pursue their own interests. Luther Martin wrote bitterly of the framers of the Constitution:

I most sacredly believe their object is the total abolition and destruction of all state governments, and the erection on their ruins of one great and extensive empire, calculated to aggrandize and elevate its rulers and chief officers far above the common herd of mankind, to enrich them with wealth, and to encircle them with honours and glory, and which . . . must inevitably be attended with the most humiliating and abject slavery of their fellow citizens, by the sweat of whose brows, and by the toil of whose bodies, it can only be effected.⁷⁷

Or, as "A Farmer" put it more succinctly, "The same government pervading a vast extent of territory, terrifies the minds of individuals into meanness and submission." Awed by the grandeur of the regime, and with no place to escape or hide, people could not resist. The Neros and Caligulas were all powerful within their extensive sphere, but in "small independent States contiguous to each other, the people run away and leave despotism to reek its vengeance on itself; and thus it is that moderation becomes with them, the law of self-preservation." In effect, he was proposing a market in governments, in which the citizen-consumer's greatest enemy was the emperor-monopolist.⁷⁸

The Antifederalists, suspicious by tradition of executive (or monarchical) power, assumed that the President would become the emperor of the American system. Benjamin Workman, writing as "Philadelphensis," branded the President a "*military king*," a "tyrant" elected to "command a standing army." In league with a mere quorum of senators and representatives, he could rule over "the *lives*, the *liberties*, and *property* of every citizen of America" with "uncontrolled power."⁷⁹

George Clinton could see no meaningful difference between the powers and prerogatives of the President and those of the King of England. "He has the power of receiving ambassadors from, and a great influence on their appointments to foreign courts; as also to make treaties, leagues, and alliances with foreign states." The President, like the King, could make war with the consent of the legislature, "and therefore these powers, in both president and king, are substantially the same. He is the generalissimo of the nation, and of course has the command and control of the army, navy, and militia. . . . Will not the exercise of these powers therefore tend either to the establishment of a vile and arbitrary aristocracy or monarchy?"⁸⁰ Clinton thus once again displayed his remarkable powers of foresight. The very laxness of the Constitution's definition of presidential powers, combined with his role as leader and symbol of the nation in war, foreign affairs, and "national security," would indeed promote the rise of the "imperial" president.

The Antifederalist critique of the Constitution embraced a multitude of objections, warnings, and fears, but they all boiled down to a conviction that liberties must be swallowed up by the demands of empire. In pushing for an energetic government to build a powerful and respected nation, the Federalists seemed to have lost sight of the goals of the Revolution, to have fallen sway to the tastes of Europe, and to have contemplated sacrificing liberty for national glory. The Antifederalists, too, looked forward to the expansion of the American *people* across the Continent, but they abhorred the notion that they could all be governed under a single regime instead of a loose confederation. Empires were better left to decadent Europe. War and glory, wrote "Brutus" in response to Hamilton's pleas for a more energetic government, should not be the final ends of government; Americans ought instead "to furnish the world with an example of a great people, who in their civil institutions hold chiefly in view the attainment of virtue, and happiness among ourselves. Let the monarchs in Europe share among them the glory of depopulating countries, and butchering thousands of their innocent citizens."⁸¹ If America were to be as a city upon a hill, the Antifederalists seemed to say, then let it be a city renowned for liberty and virtue rather than might and extent. But it was Patrick Henry who perhaps best summed up the core of the debate with a simple question. "Cannot people be as happy under a mild as under an energetic government?"⁸²

NOTES

1. The most comprehensive account is Frederick Marks III, *Independence on Trial* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).
2. *State Gazette of North Carolina* (n.d.), reprinted in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *Essays on the Constitution of the United States, 1787-1788* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Historical Printing Club, 1892), pp. 402-403.
3. Jonathan Elliot, ed., *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, 2nd ed., 5 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1896), 2:143.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 430-31.
5. Quoted in Marks, *Independence*, p. 52.
6. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 93.
7. Madison to Monroe, 7 August 1785, in Richard A. Rutland, et al., eds., *The Papers of James Madison* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), 8:334-35.
8. Madison to Jefferson, 18 March 1786, *ibid.*, p. 502.
9. Elliot, *Debates*, 2:129-30. This accorded well with Jefferson's view that Shays' rebellion was caused by the impact of declining trade on taxes and land values.
10. *Ibid.*, 2:524.
11. *Ibid.*, 3:105.
12. *Ibid.*, 3:27.
13. Federalist no. 8, from Benjamin F. Wright, ed., *The Federalist* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1961), pp. 120, 123-24.
14. Federalist no. 36, in *ibid.*
15. "Landholder," V, *Connecticut Courant*, 3 December 1787, in Ford, *Essays*, p. 157.
16. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:248-50.
17. Marks, *Independence*, pp. 196-97, 200-201. Other works also ignore or pass over lightly the Antifederalist position on foreign policy. These include Cecilia M. Kenyon, ed., *The Antifederalists* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Jackson T. Main, *The Anti-*

- federalists: Critics of the Constitution* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1961); and Alpheus T. Mason, *The States Rights Debate: Antifederalists and the Constitution* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964).
18. Grayson speech to Virginia ratifying convention, reprinted in Morton Borden, ed., *The Antifederalist Papers* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1965), pp. 3-5.
 19. "John De Witt," letter to *The American Herald* (Boston), October-December 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 95.
 20. Melancthon Smith, "An Address to the People of the State of New York," 1788, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States* (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Historical Printing Club, 1888), p. 107.
 21. "Montezuma," letter in *Independent Gazeteer* (Philadelphia), 17 October 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 66.
 22. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:23.
 23. Brutus Junior in *New York Journal*, 8 November 1787, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, pp. 102-103.
 24. *Massachusetts Gazette* (Boston), 14 January 1788, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 140.
 25. Merrill Jensen, *The New Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 218.
 26. See note 23.
 27. R. H. Lee, "An Additional Number of Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican," (1788), in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 113.
 28. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:214.
 29. "An Additional Number . . .," in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 116.
 30. Centinel in *The Freeman's Journal* (Philadelphia), in *ibid.*, p. 53.
 31. R.H. Lee to Madison, 11 August 1785, in Rutland, *Madison Papers*, 8:340.
 32. "The Objections of the Hon. George Mason to the Federal Constitution," in Ford, *Pamphlets*, p. 331.
 33. Grayson speech in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 286.
 34. Elliot, *Debates*, 4:272.
 35. Agrippa, 14 January 1788, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 143.
 36. Cf. Madison to Jefferson, 20 August 1785, in Rutland, *Madison Papers*, 8:344.
 37. Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 19.
 38. "Letters from the Federal Farmer," 8 October 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 204.
 39. *The Freeman's Journal*, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, pp. 53-54.
 40. Elliot, *Debates*, 2:218.
 41. *Ibid.*, 3:278.
 42. *Ibid.*, 3:215.
 43. *Ibid.*, 3:291.
 44. *Ibid.*, 3:213, 275.
 45. *Newport Mercury*, 17 March 1788, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 48.
 46. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:276.
 47. *Ibid.*, 3:153.
 48. *Ibid.*, 3:275.
 49. *Ibid.*, 3:153.
 50. *Ibid.*, 3:212-13.
 51. *Newport Mercury*, 17 March 1788, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 48.
 52. Elliot, *Debates*, 2:218.
 53. "An Address to the People of the State of New York," Ford, *Pamphlets*, p. 112.
 54. Grayson speech in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, pp. 294-95.
 55. *Newport Mercury*, 17 March 1788, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 49.
 56. *Maryland Gazette and Baltimore Advertiser*, 7 March 1788, in *ibid.*, p. 8.
 57. Agrippa, XI, *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 January 1788, and XIV, 18 January 1788, in Ford, *Essays*, p. 88-89, 104. For the same argument, see "A Farmer," in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 49, fn. 56.
 58. "Observations on the New Constitution and on the Federal and State Conventions" (1788) in Ford, *Pamphlets*, p. 16.
 59. Elliot, *Debates*, 2:219.

60. *Ibid.*, 2:10-11.
61. *New York Journal*, 24 January 1788, in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, pp. 66-67.
62. See for example Patrick Henry's discussion of Indian troubles, in Elliot, *Debates*, 3:155.
63. William Appleman Williams, *Contours of American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966), p. 116 (Adams); Franklin to Cushing, 5 January 1773, in Albert Henry Smyth, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Macmillan, 1905-1907), 6:3-4; Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 190 (Morris); R. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 1 (Drayton).
64. Federalist no. 4, in Wright, *Federalist*, pp. 102-104.
65. Elliot, *Debates*, 2:462.
66. "A Federalist," *Boston Gazette and the Country Journal* 26 (November 1787), in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 2.
67. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:30, 53.
68. "Montezuma," in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 63.
69. "The Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of the State of Pennsylvania to their Constituents," (18 December 1787), in *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
70. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:215.
71. Agrippa, IV, *Massachusetts Gazette*, 3 December 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 134. Madison's Federalist no. 51 responds to this argument.
72. *New York Journal*, 25 October 1787, in Ford, *Essays*, p. 256.
73. Agrippa, IV, *Massachusetts Gazette*, 3 December 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, p. 133. Cf. George Mason speech in Elliot, *Debates*, 3:30; and Monroe in *ibid.*, 3:216.
74. Agrippa, VIII, 25 December 1787, in Ford, *Essays*, p. 76.
75. *New York Journal*, 24 January 1788, in *ibid.*, p. 258.
76. *The American Herald*, 5 November 1787, in Kenyon, *Antifederalists*, pp. 104-105.
77. *Maryland Journal*, 21 March 1788, in Ford, *Essays*, p. 366.
78. "A Farmer," in Borden, *Antifederalist Papers*, p. 8.
79. *The Freeman's Journal*, 6 February 1788, in *ibid.*, p. 212.
80. *New York Journal*, 8 November 1787, in *ibid.*, p. 198-99.
81. *New York Journal*, 3 and 10 January 1788, in *ibid.*, p. 59.
82. Elliot, *Debates*, 3:157.