FEDERALIST 10

The Same Subject Continued
The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection
From the New York Packet. Friday, November 23, 1787.
MADISON

To the People of the State of New York:

AMONG the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, therefore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public councils, have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished; as they continue to be the favorite and fruitful topics from which the adversaries to liberty derive their most specious declamations. The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. However anxiously we may wish that these complaints had no foundation, the evidence, of known facts will not permit us to deny that they are in some degree true. It will be found, indeed, on a candid review of our situation, that some of the distresses under which we labor have been erroneously charged on the operation of our governments; but it will be found, at the same time, that other causes will not alone account for many of our heaviest misfortunes; and, particularly, for that prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements, and alarm for private rights, which are echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be chiefly, if not wholly, effects of the unsteadiness and injustice with which a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations.

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.

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There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.

No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity. With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation, but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? And what are the
different classes of legislators but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or, in other words, the most powerful faction must be expected to prevail. Shall domestic manufactures be encouraged, and in what degree, by restrictions on foreign manufactures? are questions which would be differently decided by the landed and the manufacturing classes, and probably by neither with a sole regard to justice and the public good. The apportionment of taxes on the various descriptions of property is an act which seems to require the most exact impartiality; yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act in which greater opportunity and temptation are given to a predominant party to trample on the rules of justice. Every shilling with which they overburden the inferior number, is a shilling saved to their own pockets.

It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is, that the CAUSES of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its EFFECTS.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed. Let me add that it is the great desideratum by which this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has so long labored, and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind.

By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together, that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful.

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from
the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrage, and then betray the interests, of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are more favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations:

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the two constituents, and being proportionally greater in the small republic, it follows that, if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to centre in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.
It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representatives too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures.

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic,—is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. Does the advantage consist in the substitution of representatives whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices and schemes of injustice? It will not be denied that the representation of the Union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties comprised within the Union, increase this security. Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the Union gives it the most palpable advantage.

The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it; in the same proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district, than an entire State.

In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and
pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.

PUBLIUS.
DISSENT—Religion

The Virginia Act For Establishing Religious Freedom

Thomas Jefferson, 1786

Well aware that Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time; that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporal rewards, which proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labors for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that, therefore, the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to the offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which in common with his fellow citizens he has a natural right; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honors and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, on the supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government, for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no powers equal to our own and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law, yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

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DISSENT—The Democratic Republican Societies and the Whiskey Rebellion

“Self-Created Societies”3

George Washington Message to the Third Congress 19 November 1794

Fellow-citizens of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives:

When we call to mind the gracious indulgence of Heaven, by which the American people became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness to which it seems destined; with the deepest regret do I announce to you that, during your recess, some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of an insurrection. It is due, however, to the character of our government, and to its stability, which cannot be shaken by the enemies of order, freely to unfold the course of this event.

During the session of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, it was expedient to exercise the legislative power granted by the Constitution of the United States “to lay and collect excises.” In a majority of the states, scarcely an objection was heard to this mode of taxation. In some, indeed, alarms were at first conceived, until they were banished by reason and patriotism. In the four western counties of Pennsylvania, a prejudice, fostered and embittered by the artifice of men who labored for an ascendency over the will of others, by the guidance of their passions, produced symptoms of riot and violence. It is well known that Congress did not hesitate to examine the complaints which were presented; and to relieve them, as far as justice dictated or general convenience would permit. But the impression which this moderation made on the discontented did not correspond with what it deserved. The arts of delusion were no longer confined to the efforts of designing individuals. The very forbearance to press prosecutions was misinterpreted into a fear of urging the execution of the laws; and associations of men [177] began to denounce threats against the officers employed. From a belief that, by a more formal concert, their operation might be defeated, certain self-created societies assumed the tone of condemnation. Hence, while the greater part of Pennsylvania itself were conforming themselves to the acts of excise, a few counties were resolved to frustrate them. It was now perceived that every expectation from the tenderness which had been hitherto pursued was unavailing, and that further delay could only create an opinion of impotency or irresolution in the Government. Legal process was therefore delivered to the marshal against the rioters and delinquent distillers.

No sooner was he understood to be engaged in this duty than the vengeance of armed men was aimed at his person, and the person and property of the Inspector of the Revenue. They fired upon the marshal, arrested him, and detained him, for some time, as a prisoner. He was obliged, by the jeopardy of his life, to renounce the service of other process on the west side of the Allegany mountain; and a deputation was afterwards sent to him to demand a surrender of that which he had served. A numerous body repeatedly attacked the house of the Inspector, seized his papers of office, and finally destroyed by fire his buildings and whatsoever they contained. Both of these officers, from a just regard to their safety, fled to the Seat of Government, it being avowed that the motives to such outrages were to compel the resignation of the Inspector, to withstand by force of arms the authority of the United States, and thereby to extort a repeal of the laws of excise and an alteration in the conduct of Government.

Upon the testimony of these facts, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States notified to me that “in the counties of Washington and Allegany, in Pennsylvania, laws of the United States were opposed and the execution thereof obstructed by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the marshal of that district.” On this call, momentous in the extreme, I sought and weighed what might best subdue the crisis. On the one hand, the judiciary was pronounced to be stripped of its capacity to enforce the laws; crimes which reached the very existence of social order were perpetuated without control; the friends of Government were insulted, abused, and overawed into silence, or an apparent acquiescence; and, to yield to the treasonable fury of so small a portion of the United States would be to violate the fundamental principle of our Constitution, which enjoins that the will of the majority shall prevail. On the other, to array citizen against citizen, to publish the dishonor of such excesses, to encounter the expense and other embarrassments of so distant an expedition, were steps too delicate, too closely interwoven with many affecting considerations, to be lightly adopted. I postponed, therefore, the summoning the militia immediately into the field; but I required them to be held in readiness, that, if my anxious endeavors to reclaim the deluded and to convince the malignant of their danger, should be fruitless, military force might be prepared to act before the season should be too far advanced.

My proclamation of the 7th of August last was accordingly issued, and accompanied by the appointment of commissioners, who were charged to repair to the scene of insurrection. They were authorized to confer with any bodies of men or individuals. They were instructed to be candid and explicit in stating the sensations which had been excited in the Executive and his earnest wish to avoid a resort to coercion; to represent, however, that, without submission, coercion must be the resort; but to invite them, at the same time, to return to the demeanor of faithful citizens by such accommodations as lay within the sphere of Executive power. Pardon, too, was tendered to them by the Government of the United States and that of Pennsylvania, upon no other condition than a satisfactory assurance of obedience to the laws.

Although the report of the commissioners marks their firmness and abilities, and must unite all virtuous men, by showing that the means of conciliation have been exhausted, all of those who had committed or abetted the tumults did not subscribe the mild form which was proposed as the atonement; and the indications of a peaceable temper were neither sufficiently general nor conclusive to recommend or warrant the further suspension of the march of the militia.
Thus, the painful alternative could not be discarded. I ordered the militia to march—after once more admonishing the insurgents, in my Proclamation of the 25th of September last.

It was a task too difficult to ascertain with precision the lowest degree of force competent to the quelling of the insurrection. From a respect, indeed, to economy and the case of my fellow-citizens belonging to the militia, it would have gratified me to accomplish such an estimate. [178] My very reluctance to ascribe too much importance to the opposition, had its extent been accurately seen, would have been a decided inducement to the smallest efficient numbers. In this uncertainty, therefore, I put into motion fifteen thousand men, as being an army which, according to all human calculation, would be prompt and adequate in every view and might, perhaps, by rendering resistance desperate, prevent the effusion of blood. Quotas had been assigned to the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the Governor of Pennsylvania having declared, on this occasion, an opinion which justified a requisition to the other States.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Militia, when called into the actual service of the United States, I have visited the places of general rendezvous, to obtain more exact information and to direct a plan for ulterior movements. Had there been room for a persuasion that the laws were secure from obstruction; that the civil magistrate was able to bring to justice such of the most culpable as have not embraced the proffered terms of amnesty, and may be deemed fit objects of example; that the friends to peace and good government were not in need of that aid and countenance which they ought always to receive and, I trust, ever will receive, against the vicious and turbulent; I should have caught with avidity the opportunity of restoring the militia to their families and home. But succeeding intelligence has tended to manifest the necessity of what has been done; it being now confessed by those who were not inclined to exaggerate the ill conduct of the insurgents that their malevolence was not pointed merely to a particular law; but that a spirit, inimical to all order, has actuated many of the offenders. If the state of things had afforded reason for the continuance of my presence with the army, it would not have been withholden. But every appearance assuring such an issue as will redound to the reputation and strength of the United States, I have judged it most proper to resume my duties at the Seat of Government, leaving the chief command with the Governor of Virginia.

Still, however, as it is probable that, in a commotion like the present, whatsoever may be the pretence, the purposes of mischief and revenge may not be laid aside, the stationing of a small force, for a certain period in the four western counties of Pennsylvania will be indispensable, whether we contemplate the situation of those who are connected with the execution of the laws or of others who may have exposed themselves by an honorable attachment to them. Thirty days from the commencement of this session being the legal limitation of the employment of the militia, Congress cannot be too early occupied with this subject…

While there is cause to lament that occurrences of this nature should have disgraced the name or interrupted the tranquility of any part of our community, or should have diverted to a new application any portion of the public resources, there are not wanting in real and substantial consolations for the misfortune. It has demonstrated that our prosperity rests on solid foundations; by furnishing an additional proof that my fellow-citizens understand the true principles of government and liberty; that they feel their inseparable union; that, notwithstanding all the devices which have been used to sway them from their interest and duty, they are now as
ready to maintain the authority of the laws against licentious invasions as they were to defend their rights against usurpation. It has been a spectacle displaying to the highest advantage the value of Republican government to behold the most and the least wealthy of our citizens standing in the same ranks, as private soldiers, pre-eminently distinguished by being the army of the Constitution; undeterred by a march of three hundred miles over rugged mountains, by the approach of an inclement season, or by any other discouragement. Nor ought I to omit to acknowledge the efficacious and patriotic co-operation which I have experienced from the Chief Magistrates of the States to which my requisitions have been addressed.

To every description of citizens, indeed, let praise be given. But let them persevere in their affectionate vigilance over that precious depository of American happiness, the Constitution of the United States. Let them cherish it, too, for the sake of those who, from every clime, are daily seeking a dwelling in our land. And when, in the calm moments of reflection, they shall have retraced the origin and progress of the insurrection, let them determine whether it has not been fomented by combinations of men who, careless of consequences and disregarding the unerring truth that those who rouse cannot always appease a civil convulsion, have disseminated, from an ignorance or perversion of facts, suspicions, jealousies, and accusations, of the whole Government.

Having thus fulfilled the engagement which I took when I entered into office, “to the best of my ability [179] to preserve, protect, and defend, the Constitution of the United States,” on you, gentlemen, and the people by whom you are deputed, I rely for support… .
Proceedings in the House of Representatives on the
President’s Speech 24–27 November 1794

Monday, 24 November

… Mr. Fitzsimons then rose and said that it would seem somewhat incongruous for the House to present an Address to the President which omitted all notice of so very important an article in his speech as that referring to the self-created societies. Mr. F. then read an amendment, which gave rise to a very interesting debate. The amendment was in these words:

“As part of this subject, we cannot withhold our reprobation of the self-created societies, which have risen up in some parts of the Union, misrepresenting the conduct of the Government, and disturbing the operation of the laws, and which, by deceiving and inflaming the ignorant and the weak, may naturally be supposed to have stimulated and urged the insurrection.”

These are “institutions, not strictly unlawful, yet not less fatal to good order and true liberty; and reprehensible in the degree that our system of government approaches to perfect political freedom.” …

Mr. Giles … began by declaring that, when he saw, or thought he saw, the House of Representatives about to erect itself into an office of censorship, he could not sit silent. He did not rise with the hope of making proselytes, but he trusted that the fiat of no person in America should ever be taken for truth, implicitly and without evidence.

Mr. Giles next entered into an encomium of some length on the public services and personal character of the President. He vindicated himself from any want of respect or esteem towards him. He then entered into an examination of the propriety of the expression employed by the President with regard to self-created societies. Mr. G. said that there was not an individual in America who might not come under the charge of being a member of some one or other self-created society. Associations of this kind, religious, political, and philosophical, were to be found in every quarter of the Continent. The Baptists and Methodists, for example, might be termed self-created societies. The people called the Friends were of the same kind. Every pulpit in the United States might be included in this vote of censure, since, from every one of them, upon occasion, instructions had been delivered, not only for the eternal welfare, but likewise for the temporal happiness of the people. There had been other societies in Pennsylvania for several purposes. The venerable Franklin had been at the head of one, entitled a society for political information. They had criminated the conduct of the Governor of this State and of the Governors of other States, yet they were not prosecuted or disturbed. There was, if he mistook not, once a society in this State for the purpose of opposing or subverting the existing Constitution. They also were unmolested. If the House are to censure the Democratic societies, they might do the same by the Cincinnati Society. It is out of the way of the legislature to attempt checking or restraining public opinion. If the self-created societies act contrary to law, they are unprotected, and let the law pursue them. That a man is a member of one of these societies will not protect
him from an accusation for treason, if the charge is well founded. If the charge is not well
founded, if the societies, in their proceedings, keep within the verge of the law, Mr. G. would be
glad to learn what was to be the sequel? If the House undertake to censure particular classes of
men, who can tell where they will stop? Perhaps it may be advisable to commence moral
philosophers and compose a new system of ethics for the citizens of America. In that case, there
would be many other subjects for censure, as well as the self-created societies. Land-jobbing, for
example, has been in various instances brought to such a pass that it might be defined swindling
on a broad scale. Paper money, also, would be a subject of very tolerable fertility for the censure
of a moralist. Mr. G. proceeded to enumerate other particulars on this head, and again insisted on
the sufficiency of the existing laws for the punishment of every existing abuse. He observed that
gentlemen were sent to this House, not for the purpose of passing indiscriminate votes of
censure, but to legislate only. By adopting the [180] amendment of Mr. Fitzsimons, the House
would only produce recrimination on the part of the societies and raise them into much more
importance than they possibly could have acquired if they had not been distinguished by a vote
of censure from that House. Gentlemen were interfering with a delicate right, and they would be
much wiser to let the democratic societies alone. Did the House imagine that their censure, like
the wand of a magician, would lay a spell on these people? It would be quite the contrary, and
the recrimination of the societies would develop the propriety of having meddled with them at
all. One thing ought never to be forgotten, that if these people acted wrong, the law was open to
punish them; and if they did not, they would care very little for a vote of that House. Why all this
particular deviation from the common line of business to pass random votes of censure? The
American mind was too enlightened to bear the interposition of this House, to assist either in
their contemplations or conclusions on this subject. Members are not sent here to deal out
applauses or censures in this way. Mr. G. rejected all aiming at a restraint on the opinions of
private persons. As to the societies themselves, Mr. G. personally had nothing to do with them,
nor was he acquainted with any of the persons concerned in their original organization.… .

Mr. W. Smith then rose and entered at large into the subject. He said that if the Committee
withheld an expression of their sentiments in regard to the societies pointed out by the President,
their silence would be an avowed desertion of the Executive. He had no scruple to declare that
the conduct of these people had tended to blow up the insurrection. Adverting to Mr. Giles, he
thought the assertion of that gentleman too broad, when he spoke of not meddling with the
opinions of other than political societies.

He considered the dissemination of improper sentiments as a suitable object for the public
reprobation of that House. Suppose an agricultural society were to establish itself, and under that
title to disseminate opinions subversive of good order; the difference of a name should not make
Mr. S. think them exempted from becoming objects of justice. Would any man say that the sole
object of self-created societies has been the publication of political doctrines? The whole of their
proceedings has been a chain of censures on the conduct of Government. If we do not support the
President, the silence of the House will be interpreted into an implied disapprobation of that part
of his speech. He will be left in a dilemma. It will be said that he has committed himself.

Mr. S. declared that he was a friend to the freedom of the press; but would any one compare a
regular town meeting where deliberations were cool and unruffled to these societies, to the
nocturnal meetings of individuals, after they have dined, where they shut their doors, pass votes
in secret, and admit no members into their societies but those of their own choosing? … In objection to this amendment it had been stated that the self-created societies would acquire importance from a vote of censure passed on them. They were, for his part, welcome to the whole importance that such a vote could give them. He complained in strong terms of the calumnies and slanders which they had propagated against Government. Every gentleman who thought that these clubs had done mischief was by this amendment called upon to avow his opinion. This was the whole. Mr. S. begged the House to take notice, and he repeated his words once or twice, that he did not mean to go into the constitution of these societies or to say that they were illegal. The question before the House was not whether these societies were illegal or not, but whether they have been mischievous in their consequences… .

Mr. Tracy … declared that if the President had not spoke of the matter, he should have been willing to let it alone, because whenever a subject of that kind was touched, there were certain gentlemen in that House who shook their backs, like a sore-backed horse, and cried out The Liberties of the people! Mr. T. wished only that the House, if their opinion of these societies corresponded with that of the President, should declare that they had such an opinion. This was quite different from attempting to legislate on the subject. Has not the Legislature done so before? Is there any impropriety in paying this mark of respect to a man to whom all America owes such indelible obligations? He thought that this declaration from the House of Representatives would tend to discourage Democratic societies, by uniting all men of sense against them… .

Mr. Nicholas—When we see an attempt made in this House to reprobate whole societies, on account of the conduct of individuals, it may truly be suspected that some of the members of this House have sore backs… .

[181]

He had always thought them the very worst advocates for the cause which they espoused; but he had come two hundred miles to legislate, and not to reprobate private societies. He was not paid by his constituents for doing business of that sort. The President knew the business of the House better than to call for any such votes of censure. It was wrong to condemn societies for particular acts. That there never should be a Democratical society in America, said Mr. N., I would give my most hearty consent; but I cannot agree to persecution for the sake of opinions. With respect either to the propriety or the power of suppressing them. Mr. N. was in both cases equally of opinion that it was much better to let them alone. They must stand or fall by the general sentiments of the people of America. Is it possible that these societies can exist, for any length of time, when they are of no real use to the country? No. But this amendment will make the people at large imagine that they are of consequence… .

**Tuesday, 25 November**

… The House went again into Committee of the Whole on the Address of the President and the amendment of Mr. Fitzsimons… .
Mr. Fitzsimons had no violent predilection for any performance of his own. He had, therefore, to prevent so much disputing, prepared to withdraw his motion, provided the Committee be willing that he should do so, and, in the room of this motion, he would read another, for which he was indebted to a gentleman at his right hand [Mr. B. Bourne].

The Committee consented. The former motion was withdrawn, and the other was read. This was an echo of that part of the Speech of the President which mentions self-created societies… .

Mr. Nicholas—Gentlemen have brought us into a discussion and then say we must decide as they please, in deference to the President. This is the real ground and foundation of their arguments. But who started this question? If the gentlemen have brought themselves into a difficulty with regard to the President by their participation in proposing votes of censure which they cannot carry through, they have only to blame themselves. Is it expected, said Mr. N., that I am to abandon my independence for the sake of the President? He never intended that we should take any such notice of his reference to these societies; but if the popularity of the President has, in the present case, been committed, let those who have hatched this thing, and who have brought it forward, answer for the consequences… .

Mr. Sedgwick thought that the President would have been defective in his duty had he omitted to mention what he religiously believed to be true, viz: that the Democratic societies had in a great measure originated the late disturbances. It was the indispensable duty of the President to speak as he had spoken. The present amendment [of Mr. Fitzsimons] would have a tendency to plunge these societies into contempt and to sink them still farther into abhorrence and detestation. He pronounced them to be illicit combinations. One gentleman [Mr. Nicholas] tells you that he despises them most heartily. Another [Mr. Lyman] says that they begin to repent. Will the American people perversely propose to shoulder and bolster up these despised and repenting societies, which are now tumbling into dust and contempt? Their conduct differed as far from a fair and honorable investigation, as Christ and Belial. They were men prowling in the dark. God is my judge, said Mr. S., that I would not wish to check a fair discussion.

One gentleman [Mr. McDowell] had told the Committee, that the assumption and Funding transactions were a cause of public discontent. It has been the trick of these people to make this assertion. They have said that the Funding System is mass of favoritism, for the purpose of erecting an oppressive aristocracy and a paper nobility. There is not a man among them who is able to write and who does not know that these assertions are false. As to the assumption of individual States, it has been said that this measure was undertaken for the purpose of making up a large debt. There was no such thing. Before the adoption of the new Constitution, of which Mr. S., considered the Funding and Assumption Systems to be essential preliminaries, the credit and commerce of America were declining or gone. The States were disagreeing at home, and the American name was disgraced abroad. It was not to be supposed that every one of the measures of the new Government could please every body. Among the rest, excise was objected to in both Houses of Congress; but at last the good sense of the people acquiesced. At this crisis, a foreign agent (Genet) landed at Charleston. On his way to this city he was attended by the hosannas of all the disaffected. He did the utmost mischief that was in his power; and in consequence of his efforts, Democratic societies sprung up… .
He said that it was to be noticed, and he proclaimed it here, that antecedent to the Democratic societies making their appearance, the flame of discontent seemed smothered. But these men told the people that they would be slaves. Was not this wrong? They should have told what was well done as well as ill done. From Portland, in Maine, to the other end of the Continent, have they ever approved of one single act? They have scrutinized with eagle eyes into every fault. Whom are we to trust them or the man that more than any other human man ever did, possesses the affection of a whole people? The question is, shall we support the Constitution or not? …

Wednesday, 26 November

… Mr. Ames stated that it was the duty of the President, by the Constitution, to inform Congress of the state of the Union. That he had accordingly in his speech stated the insurrection and the causes which (he thought) had brought it on. Among them, he explicitly reckons the self-created societies and combinations of men to be one. … He said further that an amendment was now offered to the House, expressed, as nearly as may be in the very words of the President; an objection is urged against this amendment that the proposition contained in it is not true in fact. It is also said that although it were true, it would be dangerous to liberty to assent to it in our Answer to the Speech. It is moreover, say they, improper, unnecessary, and indecent to mention the self-created societies. The amendment now urged upon the House has been put to vote in the Committee of the Whole House, and rejected. What will the world say, and that too from the evidence of our own records, if we reject it again in the House? …

The right to form political clubs has been urged as if it had been denied. It is not, however, the right to meet, it is the abuse of the right after they have met, that is charged upon them. Town meetings are authorized by law, yet they may be called for seditious or treasonable purposes. The legal right of the voters in that case would be an aggravation, not an excuse, for the offence. But if persons meet in a club with an intent to obstruct the laws, their meeting is no longer innocent or legal; it is a crime.

The necessity for forming clubs has been alleged with some plausibility in favor of all the states except New England, because town meetings are little known and not practicable in a thinly settled country. But if people have grievances are they to be brought to a knowledge of them only by clubs? Clubs may find out more complaints against the laws than the sufferers themselves had dreamed of. The number of those which a man will learn from his own and his neighbor’s experience will be quite sufficient for every salutary purpose of reform in the laws or of relief to the citizens. He may petition Congress, his own Representatives will not fail to advocate or, at least, to present and explain his memorial. As a juror, he applies the law; as an elector, he effectually controls the legislators. A really aggrieved man will be sure of sympathy and assistance within this body and with the public. The most zealous advocate of clubs may think them useful, but he will not insist on their being indispensably so.

The plea for their usefulness seems to rest on their advantage of meeting for political information. The absurdity of this pretence could be exposed in a variety of views. I shall decline (said Mr. A.) a detailed consideration of the topic. I would just ask, however, whether the most
inflamed party men, who usually lead the clubs, are the best organs of authentic information? Whether they meet in darkness; whether they hide their names, their numbers, and their doings; whether they shut their doors to admit information?

A laudable zeal for inquiry need not shun those who could satisfy it; it need not blush in the daylight. With open doors and an unlimited freedom of debate, political knowledge might be introduced even among the intruders.

But, instead of exposing their affected pursuit of information, it will be enough to show hereafter what they actually spread among the people—whether it is information or, in the words of the President, “jealousies, suspicions and accusations of the Government;” whether, disregarding the truth, they have not fomented the daring outrages against the social order and the authority of the laws. (Vide the President’s speech.)

They have arrogantly pretended sometimes to be the people and sometimes the guardians, the champions of the people. They affect to feel more zeal for a popular government, and to enforce more respect for republican principles, than the real Representatives are admitted to entertain. Let us see whether they are set up for the people or in opposition to them and their institutions.

Will any reflecting person suppose, for a moment, that this great people, so widely extended, so actively employed, could form a common will and make that will law in their individual capacity, and without representation? They [183] could not. Will clubs avail them as a substitute for representation? A few hundred persons only are members of clubs, and if they should act for the others, it would be an usurpation, and the power of the few over the many, in every view infinitely worse than sedition itself, will represent this Government… .

We are asked, with some pathos, will you punish clubs with your censure, unheard, untried, confounding the innocent with the guilty? Censure is not punishment, unless it is merited, for we merely allude to certain self-created societies, which have disregarded the truth and fomented the outrages against the laws. Those which have been innocent will remain uncensured. It is said, worthy men belong to those clubs. They may be as men not wanting in merit, but when they join societies which are employed to foment outrages against the laws, they are no longer innocent. They become bad citizens. If innocence happens to stray into such company, it is lost. The men really good will quit such connexions, and it is a fact that the most respected of those who were said to belong to them have long ago renounced them. Honest, credulous men may be drawn in to favor very bad designs, but so far as they do it, they deserve the reproach which this vote contains, that of being unworthy citizens.

If the worst men in society have led the most credulous and inconsiderate astray, the latter will undoubtedly come to reflection the sooner for an appeal to their sense of duty. This appeal is made in terms which truth justifies and which apply only to those who have been criminal… .

In the course of his remarks, Mr. A. strongly insisted that the vote was not indefinite in its terms. Societies were not reprobated because they were self-made, nor because they were political societies. Everybody has readily admitted that they might be innocent as they have been
generally imprudent. It is such societies as have been regardless of the truth and have fomented the outrages against the law, c.

Nor is the intention of this amendment to flatter the President, as it has been intimated. He surely has little need of our praise on any personal account. This late signal act of duty is already with his grateful country, with faithful history: nor is it in our power, or in those of any offended self-created societies, to impair that tribute which will be offered to him. As little ground is there for saying that it is intended to stifle the freedom of speech and of the press. The question is, simply, will you support your Chief Magistrate? Our vote does not go merely to one man and to his feelings, it goes to the trust. When clubs are arrayed against your Government, and your Chief Magistrate decidedly arrays the militia to suppress their insurrection, will you countenance or discountenance the officer? Will you ever suffer this House, the country, or even one seditious man in it, to question for an instant whether your approbation and co-operation will be less prompt and cordial than his efforts to support the laws? Is it safe, is it honorable, to make a precedent, and that no less solemn than humiliating, which will authorize, which will compel every future President to doubt whether you will approve him or the clubs? The President now in office would doubtless do his duty promptly and with decision in such a case. But can you expect it of human nature? and if you could, would you put it at risk whether in future a President shall balance between his duty and his fear of your censure. The danger is that a Chief Magistrate, elective as ours is, will temporize, will delay, will put the laws into treaty with offenders, and will even insure a civil war, perhaps the loss of our free Government, by the want of proper energy to quench the first sparks. You ought, therefore, on every occasion, to show the most cordial support to the Executive in support of the laws.

This is the occasion. If it is dangerous to liberty, against right and justice, against truth and decency, to adopt the amendment, as it has been argued, then the President and Senate have done all this….

Thursday, 27 November

Mr. Madison—said he entirely agreed with those gentlemen who had observed that the house should not have advanced into this discussion, if it could have been avoided—but having proceeded thus far it was indispensably necessary to finish it.

Much delicacy had been thrown into the discussion in consequence of the chief magistrate; he always regretted the circumstance when this was the case.

This, he observed, was not the first instance of difference in opinion between the President and this House. It may be recollected that the President dissented both from the Senate and this House on a particular law (he referred to that apportioning the representatives)—on that occasion he thought the President right. On the present question, supposing the President really to entertain the opinion ascribed to him, it affords no conclusive reason for the House to sacrifice its own judgment….
Members seem to think that in cases not cognizable by law there is room for the interposition of the House. He conceived it to be a sound principle that an action innocent in the eye of the law could not be the object of censure to a legislative body. When the people have formed a constitution, they retain those rights which they have not expressly delegated. It is a question whether what is thus retained can be legislated upon. Opinions are not the objects of legislation. You animadvert on the abuse of reserved rights—how far will this go? It may extend to the liberty of speech and of the press.

It is in vain to say that this indiscriminate censure is no punishment. If it falls on classes or individuals it will be a severe punishment. He wished it to be considered how extremely guarded the Constitution was in respect to cases not within its limits. Murder or treason cannot be noticed by the legislature. Is not this proposition, if voted, a vote of attainder? To consider a principle, we must try its nature and see how far it will go; in the present case he considered the effects of the principle contended for would be pernicious. If we advert to the nature of republican government, we shall find that the censorial power is in the people over the government, and not in the government over the people.

As he had confidence in the good sense and patriotism of the people, he did not anticipate any lasting evil to result from the publications of these societies; they will stand or fall by the public opinion; no line can be drawn in this case. The law is the only rule of right; what is consistent with that is not punishable; what is not contrary to that, is innocent, or at least not censurable by the legislative body.

With respect to the body of the people, (whether the outrages have proceeded from weakness or wickedness) what has been done and will be done by the Legislature will have a due effect. If the proceedings of the government should not have an effect, will this declaration produce it? The people at large are possessed of proper sentiments on the subject of the insurrection—the whole continent reprobrates the conduct of the insurgents, it is not therefore necessary to take the extra step. The press he believed would not be able to shake the confidence of the people in the government. In a republic, light will prevail over darkness, truth over error—he had undoubted confidence in this principle. If it be admitted that the law cannot animadvert on a particular case, neither can we do it. Governments are administered by men—the same degree of purity does not always exist. Honesty of motives may at present prevail—but this affords no assurance that it will always be the case—at a future period a Legislature may exist of a very different complexion from the present; in this view, we ought not by any vote of ours to give support to measures which now we do not hesitate to reprobate. The gentleman from Georgia had anticipated him in several remarks—no such inference can fairly be drawn as that we abandon the President should we pass over the whole business. The vote passed this morning for raising a force to complete the good work of peace, order, and tranquility begun by the executive, speaks quite a different language from that which has been used to induce an adoption of the principle contended for.

Mr. Madison adverted to precedents—none parallel to the subject before us existed. The inquiry into the failure of the expedition under St. Clair was not in point. In that case the house appointed a committee of enquiry into the conduct of an individual in the public service—the democratic
societies are not. He knew of nothing in the proceedings of the Legislature which warrants the house in saying that institutions confessedly not illegal were subjects of legislative censure… .

The question was then put, Shall the words “self-created societies, and” be replaced in the amendment of Mr. Fitzsimons? This was carried by a majority of forty-seven against forty-five… .

Friday, 28 November

The Address, as amended, was then read throughout at the Clerk’s table, as follows:

Sir: The House of Representatives, calling to mind the blessings enjoyed by the people of the United States, and especially the happiness of living under constitutions and laws which rest on their authority alone, could not learn with other emotions than those you have expressed that any part of our fellow citizens should have shown themselves capable of an insurrection. And we learn, with the greatest concern, that any misrepresentations whatever of the Government and its proceedings, either by individuals or combinations of men, should have been made and so far credited as to foment the flagrant outrage which has been committed on the laws. We feel, with you, the deepest regret at so painful an occurrence in the annals of our country. As men regardful of the tender interests of humanity, we look with grief at scenes which might have stained our land with civil blood. As lovers of public order, we lament that it has suffered so flagrant a violation: as zealous friends of Republican Government, we deplore every occasion which, in the hands of its enemies, may be turned into a calumny against it.

This aspect of the crisis, however, is happily not the only one which it presents. There is another, which yields all the consolations which you have drawn from it. It has demonstrated to the candid world, as well as to the American People themselves, that the great body of them, everywhere, are equally attached to the luminous and vital principle of our Constitution which enjoins that the will of the majority shall prevail; that they understand the indissoluble union between true liberty and regular government; that they feel their duties no less than they are watchful over their rights; that they will be as ready, at all times, to crush licentiousness as they have been to defeat usurpation: in a word, that they are capable of carrying into execution that noble plan of self-government which they have chosen as the guarantee of their own happiness and the asylum for that of all, from every clime, who may wish to unite their destiny with ours… .

James Madison to James Monroe 4 December 1794

… You will learn from the newspapers and official communications the unfortunate scene in the Western parts of Pennsylvania which unfolded itself during the recess. The history of its remote immediate causes, the measures produced by it, and the manner in which it has been closed, does not fall within the compass of a letter. It is probable also that many explanatory circumstances are yet but imperfectly known. I can only refer to the printed accounts which you will receive from the Department of State and the comments which your memory will assist you in making on them. The event was in several respects a critical one for the cause of liberty, and the real
authors of it, if not in the service, were in the most effectual manner, doing the business of
despotism. You well know the general tendency of insurrections to increase the momentum of
power. You will recollect the particular effect of what happened some years ago in
Massachusetts. Precisely the same calamity was to be dreaded on a larger scale in this case.
There were enough as you may well suppose ready to give the same turn to the crisis, and to
propagate the same impressions from it. It happened most auspiciously, however, that with a
spirit truly republican, the people everywhere and of every description condemned the resistance
to the will of the majority and obeyed with alacrity the call to vindicate the authority of the laws.
You will see in the answer of the House of Representatives to the President’s speech that the
most was made of this circumstance as an antidote to the poisonous influence to which
Republicanism was exposed. If the insurrection had not been crushed in the manner it was I have
no doubt that a formidable attempt would have been made to establish the principle that a
standing army was necessary for enforcing the laws. When I first came to this City about the
middle of October, this was the fashionable language. Nor am I sure that the attempt would not
have been made if the President could have been embarked in it, and particularly if the temper of
N. England had not been dreaded on this point. I hope we are over that danger for the present.
You will readily understand the business detailed in the newspapers relating to the denunciation
of the “self created societies.” The introduction of it by the President was perhaps the greatest
error of his political life. For his sake, as well as for a variety of obvious reasons, I wish’d it
might be passed over in silence by the House of Representatives. The answer was penned with
that view; and so reported. This moderate course would not satisfy those who hoped to draw a
party-advantage out of the President’s popularity. The game was to connect the democratic
societies with the odium of the insurrection—to connect the Republicans in Congress with those
Societies—to put the President ostensibly at the head of the other party, in opposition to both,
and by these means prolong the illusions in the North—try a new experiment on the South. To
favor the project, the answer of the Senate was accelerated so framed as to draw the President
into the most pointed reply on the subject of the Societies. At the same time, the answer of the
House of Representatives was procrastinated till the example of the Senate the commitment of
the President could have their full operation. You will see how nicely the House was divided,
and how the matter went off. As yet the discussion has not been revived by the newspaper
combatants. If it should and equal talents be opposed, the result can not fail to wound the
President’s popularity more than anything that has yet happened. It must be seen that no two
principles can be [186] either more indefensible in reason or more dangerous in practice—than
that 1. arbitrary denunciations may punish what the law permits what the Legislature has no
right, by law, to prohibit—and that 2. the Government may stifle all censures whatever on its
misdoings; for if it be itself the judge it will never allow any censures to be just, and if it can
suppress censures flowing from one lawful source it may those flowing from any other—from
the press and from individuals as well as from Societies, c… .
DISSENT—DANGERS OF PARTY

Washington's Farewell Address 1796

Friends and Citizens:

The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness, but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety, and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has

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strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously)
directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and, while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications by land and water, will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionally greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rival
ships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations, Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expediens of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head; they have seen, in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain, and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliance, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of government better calculated than your former for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in
its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.
This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which finds a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true; and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be
corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit, which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it, avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties), ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue, which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it - It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to
mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations, has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils. Such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided,
instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of
another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even
second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the
favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause
and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial
relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already
formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a
set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be
engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns.
Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary
vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or
enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we
remain one people under an efficient government. the period is not far off when we may defy
material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the
neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent
nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving
us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall
counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign
ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace
and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so
far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of
patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than
to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those
engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would
be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive
posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and
interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither
seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things;
 diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing;
establishing (with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights
of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them) conventional rules of
intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary,
and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall
dictate; constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors
from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the twenty-second of April, 1793, is the index of my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your representatives in both houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it, with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.
Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government, the ever-favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.