QUEEN ANNE, in her letter of the 1st July, 1706, to the Scotch Parliament, makes some observations on the importance of the UNION then forming between England and Scotland, which merit our attention. I shall present the public with one or two extracts from it: "An entire and perfect union will be the solid foundation of lasting peace: It will secure your religion, liberty, and property; remove the animosities amongst yourselves, and the jealousies and differences betwixt our two kingdoms. It must increase your strength, riches, and trade; and by this union the whole island, being joined in affection and free from all apprehensions of different interest, will be ENABLED TO RESIST ALL ITS ENEMIES." "We most earnestly recommend to you calmness and unanimity in this great and weighty affair, that the union may be brought to a happy conclusion, being the only EFFECTUAL way to secure our present and future happiness, and disappoint the designs of our and your enemies, who will doubtless, on this occasion, USE THEIR UTMOST ENDEAVORS TO PREVENT OR DELAY THIS UNION."

It was remarked in the preceding paper, that weakness and divisions at home would invite dangers from abroad; and that nothing would tend more to secure us from them than union, strength, and good government within ourselves. This subject is copious and cannot easily be exhausted.

The history of Great Britain is the one with which we are in general the best acquainted, and it gives us many useful lessons. We may profit by their experience without paying the price which it cost them. Although it seems obvious to common sense that the people of such an island should be but one nation, yet we find that they were for ages divided into three, and that those three were almost constantly embroiled in quarrels and wars with one another. Notwithstanding their true interest with respect to the continental nations was really the same, yet by the arts and policy and practices of those nations, their mutual
jealousies were perpetually kept inflamed, and for a long series of years they were far more inconvenient and troublesome than they were useful and assisting to each other.

Should the people of America divide themselves into three or four nations, would not the same thing happen? Would not similar jealousies arise, and be in like manner cherished? Instead of their being "joined in affection" and free from all apprehension of different "interests," envy and jealousy would soon extinguish confidence and affection, and the partial interests of each confederacy, instead of the general interests of all America, would be the only objects of their policy and pursuits. Hence, like most other BORDERING nations, they would always be either involved in disputes and war, or live in the constant apprehension of them.

The most sanguine advocates for three or four confederacies cannot reasonably suppose that they would long remain exactly on an equal footing in point of strength, even if it was possible to form them so at first; but, admitting that to be practicable, yet what human contrivance can secure the continuance of such equality? Independent of those local circumstances which tend to beget and increase power in one part and to impede its progress in another, we must advert to the effects of that superior policy and good management which would probably distinguish the government of one above the rest, and by which their relative equality in strength and consideration would be destroyed. For it cannot be presumed that the same degree of sound policy, prudence, and foresight would uniformly be observed by each of these confederacies for a long succession of years.

Whenever, and from whatever causes, it might happen, and happen it would, that any one of these nations or confederacies should rise on the scale of political importance much above the degree of her neighbors, that moment would those neighbors behold her with envy and with fear. Both those passions would lead them to countenance, if not to promote, whatever might promise to diminish her importance; and would also restrain them from measures calculated to advance or even to secure her prosperity. Much time would not be necessary to enable her to discern these unfriendly dispositions. She would soon begin, not only to lose confidence in her neighbors, but also to feel a disposition equally unfavorable to them. Distrust naturally creates distrust, and by nothing is good-will and kind conduct more speedily changed than by invidious jealousies and uncandid imputations, whether expressed or implied.

The North is generally the region of strength, and many local circumstances render it probable that the most Northern of the proposed confederacies would, at a period not very distant, be unquestionably more formidable than any of the others. No sooner would this become evident than the NORTHERN HIVE would excite the same ideas and sensations in the more southern parts of America which it formerly did in the southern
parts of Europe. Nor does it appear to be a rash conjecture that its young swarms might
often be tempted to gather honey in the more blooming fields and milder air of their
luxurious and more delicate neighbors.

They who well consider the history of similar divisions and confederacies will find
abundant reason to apprehend that those in contemplation would in no other sense be
neighbors than as they would be borderers; that they would neither love nor trust one
another, but on the contrary would be a prey to discord, jealousy, and mutual injuries; in
short, that they would place us exactly in the situations in which some nations doubtless
wish to see us, viz., FORMIDABLE ONLY TO EACH OTHER.

From these considerations it appears that those gentlemen are greatly mistaken who
suppose that alliances offensive and defensive might be formed between these
confederacies, and would produce that combination and union of wills of arms and of
resources, which would be necessary to put and keep them in a formidable state of defense
against foreign enemies.

When did the independent states, into which Britain and Spain were formerly divided,
combine in such alliance, or unite their forces against a foreign enemy? The proposed
confederacies will be DISTINCT NATIONS. Each of them would have its commerce
with foreigners to regulate by distinct treaties; and as their productions and commodities
are different and proper for different markets, so would those treaties be essentially
different. Different commercial concerns must create different interests, and of course
different degrees of political attachment to and connection with different foreign nations.
Hence it might and probably would happen that the foreign nation with whom the
SOUTHERN confederacy might be at war would be the one with whom the
NORTHERN confederacy would be the most desirous of preserving peace and friendship.
An alliance so contrary to their immediate interest would not therefore be easy to form,
nor, if formed, would it be observed and fulfilled with perfect good faith.

Nay, it is far more probable that in America, as in Europe, neighboring nations, acting
under the impulse of opposite interests and unfriendly passions, would frequently be found
taking different sides. Considering our distance from Europe, it would be more natural for
these confederacies to apprehend danger from one another than from distant nations, and
therefore that each of them should be more desirous to guard against the others by the aid
of foreign alliances, than to guard against foreign dangers by alliances between themselves.
And here let us not forget how much more easy it is to receive foreign fleets into our ports,
and foreign armies into our country, than it is to persuade or compel them to depart. How
many conquests did the Romans and others make in the characters of allies, and what
innovations did they under the same character introduce into the governments of those whom they pretended to protect.

Let candid men judge, then, whether the division of America into any given number of independent sovereignties would tend to secure us against the hostilities and improper interference of foreign nations.

PUBLIUS
FEDERALIST No. 6. Concerning
Dangers from Dissensions Between
the States

For the Independent Journal. Wednesday,
November 14, 1787

HAMILTON

To the People of the State of New York:

THE three last numbers of this paper have been dedicated to an enumeration of the
dangers to which we should be exposed, in a state of disunion, from the arms and arts of
foreign nations. I shall now proceed to delineate dangers of a different and, perhaps, still
more alarming kind—those which will in all probability flow from dissensions between the
States themselves, and from domestic factions and convulsions. These have been already
in some instances slightly anticipated; but they deserve a more particular and more full
investigation.

A man must be far gone in Utopian speculations who can seriously doubt that, if these
States should either be wholly disunited, or only united in partial confederacies, the
subdivisions into which they might be thrown would have frequent and violent contests
with each other. To presume a want of motives for such contests as an argument against
their existence, would be to forget that men are ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious. To
look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent, unconnected
sovereignties in the same neighborhood, would be to disregard the uniform course of
human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages.

The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable. There are some which have a
general and almost constant operation upon the collective bodies of society. Of this
description are the love of power or the desire of pre-eminence and dominion—the
jealousy of power, or the desire of equality and safety. There are others which have a more
circumscribed though an equally operative influence within their spheres. Such are the
rivalships and competitions of commerce between commercial nations. And there are
others, not less numerous than either of the former, which take their origin entirely in
private passions; in the attachments, enmities, interests, hopes, and fears of leading
individuals in the communities of which they are members. Men of this class, whether the
favorites of a king or of a people, have in too many instances abused the confidence they
possessed; and assuming the pretext of some public motive, have not scrupled to sacrifice
the national tranquillity to personal advantage or personal gratification.

The celebrated Pericles, in compliance with the resentment of a prostitute,(1) at the
expense of much of the blood and treasure of his countrymen, attacked, vanquished, and
destroyed the city of the SAMMIANS. The same man, stimulated by private pique against
the MEGARENSIANS,(2) another nation of Greece, or to avoid a prosecution with which
he was threatened as an accomplice of a supposed theft of the statuary Phidias,(3) or to get
rid of the accusations prepared to be brought against him for dissipating the funds of the
state in the purchase of popularity,(4) or from a combination of all these causes, was the
primitive author of that famous and fatal war, distinguished in the Grecian annals by the
name of the PELOPONNESIAN war; which, after various vicissitudes, intermissions, and
renewals, terminated in the ruin of the Athenian commonwealth.

The ambitious cardinal, who was prime minister to Henry VIII., permitting his vanity to
aspire to the triple crown,(5) entertained hopes of succeeding in the acquisition of that
splendid prize by the influence of the Emperor Charles V. To secure the favor and interest
of this enterprising and powerful monarch, he precipitated England into a war with France,
contrary to the plainest dictates of policy, and at the hazard of the safety and independence,
as well of the kingdom over which he presided by his counsels, as of Europe in general.
For if there ever was a sovereign who bid fair to realize the project of universal monarchy,
it was the Emperor Charles V., of whose intrigues Wolsey was at once the instrument and
the dupe.

The influence which the bigotry of one female,(6) the petulance of another,(7) and the
cabals of a third,(8) had in the contemporary policy, ferments, and pacifications, of a
considerable part of Europe, are topics that have been too often descanted upon not to be
generally known.

To multiply examples of the agency of personal considerations in the production of great
national events, either foreign or domestic, according to their direction, would be an
unnecessary waste of time. Those who have but a superficial acquaintance with the sources
from which they are to be drawn, will themselves recollect a variety of instances; and those
who have a tolerable knowledge of human nature will not stand in need of such lights to
form their opinion either of the reality or extent of that agency. Perhaps, however, a
reference, tending to illustrate the general principle, may with propriety be made to a case
which has lately happened among ourselves. If Shays had not been a DESPERATE
DEBTOR, it is much to be doubted whether Massachusetts would have been plunged into
a civil war.
But notwithstanding the concurring testimony of experience, in this particular, there are
still to be found visionary or designing men, who stand ready to advocate the paradox of
perpetual peace between the States, though dismembered and alienated from each other.
The genius of republics (say they) is pacific; the spirit of commerce has a tendency to soften
the manners of men, and to extinguish those inflammable humors which have so often
kindled into wars. Commercial republics, like ours, will never be disposed to waste
themselves in ruinous contentions with each other. They will be governed by mutual
interest, and will cultivate a spirit of mutual amity and concord.

Is it not (we may ask these projectors in politics) the true interest of all nations to
cultivate the same benevolent and philosophic spirit? If this be their true interest, have they
in fact pursued it? Has it not, on the contrary, invariably been found that momentary
passions, and immediate interest, have a more active and imperious control over human
conduct than general or remote considerations of policy, utility or justice? Have republics
in practice been less addicted to war than monarchies? Are not the former administered by
MEN as well as the latter? Are there not aversions, predilections, rivalships, and desires of
unjust acquisitions, that affect nations as well as kings? Are not popular assemblies
frequently subject to the impulses of rage, resentment, jealousy, avarice, and of other
irregular and violent propensities? Is it not well known that their determinations are often
governed by a few individuals in whom they place confidence, and are, of course, liable to
be tinctured by the passions and views of those individuals? Has commerce hitherto done
anything more than change the objects of war? Is not the love of wealth as domineering
and enterprising a passion as that of power or glory? Have there not been as many wars
founded upon commercial motives since that has become the prevailing system of nations,
as were before occasioned by the cupiditv of territory or dominion? Has not the spirit of
commerce, in many instances, administered new incentives to the appetite, both for the
one and for the other? Let experience, the least fallible guide of human opinions, be
appealed to for an answer to these inquiries.

Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were all republics; two of them, Athens and
Carthage, of the commercial kind. Yet were they as often engaged in wars, offensive and
defensive, as the neighboring monarchies of the same times. Sparta was little better than a
wellregulated camp; and Rome was never sated of carnage and conquest.

Carthage, though a commercial republic, was the aggressor in the very war that ended in
her destruction. Hannibal had carried her arms into the heart of Italy and to the gates of
Rome, before Scipio, in turn, gave him an overthrow in the territories of Carthage, and
made a conquest of the commonwealth.
Venice, in later times, figured more than once in wars of ambition, till, becoming an object to the other Italian states, Pope Julius II. found means to accomplish that formidable league,(9) which gave a deadly blow to the power and pride of this haughty republic.

The provinces of Holland, till they were overwhelmed in debts and taxes, took a leading and conspicuous part in the wars of Europe. They had furious contests with England for the dominion of the sea, and were among the most persevering and most implacable of the opponents of Louis XIV.

In the government of Britain the representatives of the people compose one branch of the national legislature. Commerce has been for ages the predominant pursuit of that country. Few nations, nevertheless, have been more frequently engaged in war; and the wars in which that kingdom has been engaged have, in numerous instances, proceeded from the people.

There have been, if I may so express it, almost as many popular as royal wars. The cries of the nation and the importunities of their representatives have, upon various occasions, dragged their monarchs into war, or continued them in it, contrary to their inclinations, and sometimes contrary to the real interests of the State. In that memorable struggle for superiority between the rival houses of AUSTRIA and BOURBON, which so long kept Europe in a flame, it is well known that the antipathies of the English against the French, seconding the ambition, or rather the avarice, of a favorite leader,(10) protracted the war beyond the limits marked out by sound policy, and for a considerable time in opposition to the views of the court.

The wars of these two last-mentioned nations have in a great measure grown out of commercial considerations,—the desire of supplanting and the fear of being supplanted, either in particular branches of traffic or in the general advantages of trade and navigation, and sometimes even the more culpable desire of sharing in the commerce of other nations without their consent.

The last war but between Britain and Spain sprang from the attempts of the British merchants to prosecute an illicit trade with the Spanish main. These unjustifiable practices on their part produced severity on the part of the Spaniards toward the subjects of Great Britain which were not more justifiable, because they exceeded the bounds of a just retaliation and were chargeable with inhumanity and cruelty. Many of the English who were taken on the Spanish coast were sent to dig in the mines of Potosi; and by the usual progress of a spirit of resentment, the innocent were, after a while, confounded with the guilty in indiscriminate punishment. The complaints of the merchants kindled a violent flame throughout the nation, which soon after broke out in the House of Commons, and was communicated from that body to the ministry. Letters of reprisal were granted, and a
war ensued, which in its consequences overthrew all the alliances that but twenty years before had been formed with sanguine expectations of the most beneficial fruits.

From this summary of what has taken place in other countries, whose situations have borne the nearest resemblance to our own, what reason can we have to confide in those reveries which would seduce us into an expectation of peace and cordiality between the members of the present confederacy, in a state of separation? Have we not already seen enough of the fallacy and extravagance of those idle theories which have amused us with promises of an exemption from the imperfections, weaknesses and evils incident to society in every shape? Is it not time to awake from the deceitful dream of a golden age, and to adopt as a practical maxim for the direction of our political conduct that we, as well as the other inhabitants of the globe, are yet remote from the happy empire of perfect wisdom and perfect virtue?

Let the point of extreme depression to which our national dignity and credit have sunk, let the inconveniences felt everywhere from a lax and ill administration of government, let the revolt of a part of the State of North Carolina, the late menacing disturbances in Pennsylvania, and the actual insurrections and rebellions in Massachusetts, declare—!

So far is the general sense of mankind from corresponding with the tenets of those who endeavor to lull asleep our apprehensions of discord and hostility between the States, in the event of disunion, that it has from long observation of the progress of society become a sort of axiom in politics, that vicinity or nearness of situation, constitutes nations natural enemies. An intelligent writer expresses himself on this subject to this effect: "NEIGHBORING NATIONS (says he) are naturally enemies of each other unless their common weakness forces them to league in a CONFEDERATE REPUBLIC, and their constitution prevents the differences that neighborhood occasions, extinguishing that secret jealousy which disposes all states to aggrandize themselves at the expense of their neighbors."(11) This passage, at the same time, points out the EVIL and suggests the REMEDY.

PUBLIUS

1. Aspasia, vide "Plutarch's Life of Pericles."
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. Phidias was supposed to have stolen some public gold, with the connivance of Pericles, for the embellishment of the statue of Minerva.
5. Worn by the popes.
6. Madame de Maintenon.
7. Duchess of Marlborough.
8. Madame de Pompadour.
9. The League of Cambray, comprehending the Emperor, the King of France, the King of Aragon, and most of the Italian princes and states.
10. The Duke of Marlborough.
HAMILTON

To the People of the State of New York:

IT IS sometimes asked, with an air of seeming triumph, what inducements could the States have, if disunited, to make war upon each other? It would be a full answer to this question to say—precisely the same inducements which have, at different times, deluged in blood all the nations in the world. But, unfortunately for us, the question admits of a more particular answer. There are causes of differences within our immediate contemplation, of the tendency of which, even under the restraints of a federal constitution, we have had sufficient experience to enable us to form a judgment of what might be expected if those restraints were removed.

Territorial disputes have at all times been found one of the most fertile sources of hostility among nations. Perhaps the greatest proportion of wars that have desolated the earth have sprung from this origin. This cause would exist among us in full force. We have a vast tract of unsettled territory within the boundaries of the United States. There still are discordant and undecided claims between several of them, and the dissolution of the Union would lay a foundation for similar claims between them all. It is well known that they have heretofore had serious and animated discussion concerning the rights to the lands which were ungranted at the time of the Revolution, and which usually went under the name of crown lands. The States within the limits of whose colonial governments they were comprised have claimed them as their property, the others have contended that the rights of the crown in this article devolved upon the Union; especially as to all that part of the Western territory which, either by actual possession, or through the submission of the Indian proprietors, was subjected to the jurisdiction of the king of Great Britain, till it was relinquished in the treaty of peace. This, it has been said, was at all events an acquisition to the Confederacy by compact with a foreign power. It has been the prudent policy of Congress to appease this controversy, by prevailing upon the States to make cessions to the United States for the benefit of the whole. This has been so far accomplished as, under
a continuation of the Union, to afford a decided prospect of an amicable termination of
the dispute. A dismemberment of the Confederacy, however, would revive this dispute,
and would create others on the same subject. At present, a large part of the vacant Western
territory is, by cession at least, if not by any anterior right, the common property of the
Union. If that were at an end, the States which made the cession, on a principle of federal
compromise, would be apt when the motive of the grant had ceased, to reclaim the lands
as a reversion. The other States would no doubt insist on a proportion, by right of
representation. Their argument would be, that a grant, once made, could not be revoked;
and that the justice of participating in territory acquired or secured by the joint efforts of
the Confederacy, remained undiminished. If, contrary to probability, it should be admitted
by all the States, that each had a right to a share of this common stock, there would still be
a difficulty to be surmounted, as to a proper rule of apportionment. Different principles
would be set up by different States for this purpose; and as they would affect the opposite
interests of the parties, they might not easily be susceptible of a pacific adjustment.

In the wide field of Western territory, therefore, we perceive an ample theatre for hostile
pretensions, without any umpire or common judge to interpose between the contending
parties. To reason from the past to the future, we shall have good ground to apprehend,
that the sword would sometimes be appealed to as the arbiter of their differences. The
circumstances of the dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, respecting the land
at Wyoming, admonish us not to be sanguine in expecting an easy accommodation of such
differences. The articles of confederation obliged the parties to submit the matter to the
decision of a federal court. The submission was made, and the court decided in favor of
Pennsylvania. But Connecticut gave strong indications of dissatisfaction with that
determination; nor did she appear to be entirely resigned to it, till, by negotiation and
management, something like an equivalent was found for the loss she supposed herself to
have sustained. Nothing here said is intended to convey the slightest censure on the
conduct of that State. She no doubt sincerely believed herself to have been injured by the
decision; and States, like individuals, acquiesce with great reluctance in determinations to
their disadvantage.

Those who had an opportunity of seeing the inside of the transactions which attended
the progress of the controversy between this State and the district of Vermont, can vouch
the opposition we experienced, as well from States not interested as from those which were
interested in the claim; and can attest the danger to which the peace of the Confederacy
might have been exposed, had this State attempted to assert its rights by force. Two
motives preponderated in that opposition: one, a jealousy entertained of our future power;
and the other, the interest of certain individuals of influence in the neighboring States, who
had obtained grants of lands under the actual government of that district. Even the States which brought forward claims, in contradiction to ours, seemed more solicitous to dismember this State, than to establish their own pretensions. These were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. New Jersey and Rhode Island, upon all occasions, discovered a warm zeal for the independence of Vermont; and Maryland, till alarmed by the appearance of a connection between Canada and that State, entered deeply into the same views. These being small States, saw with an unfriendly eye the perspective of our growing greatness. In a review of these transactions we may trace some of the causes which would be likely to embroil the States with each other, if it should be their unpropitious destiny to become disunited.

The competitions of commerce would be another fruitful source of contention. The States less favorably circumstanced would be desirous of escaping from the disadvantages of local situation, and of sharing in the advantages of their more fortunate neighbors. Each State, or separate confederacy, would pursue a system of commercial policy peculiar to itself. This would occasion distinctions, preferences, and exclusions, which would beget discontent. The habits of intercourse, on the basis of equal privileges, to which we have been accustomed since the earliest settlement of the country, would give a keener edge to those causes of discontent than they would naturally have independent of this circumstance. WE SHOULD BE READY TO DENOMINATE INJURIES THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE IN REALITY THE JUSTIFIABLE ACTS OF INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGNTIES CONSULTING A DISTINCT INTEREST. The spirit of enterprise, which characterizes the commercial part of America, has left no occasion of displaying itself unimproved. It is not at all probable that this unbridled spirit would pay much respect to those regulations of trade by which particular States might endeavor to secure exclusive benefits to their own citizens. The infractions of these regulations, on one side, the efforts to prevent and repel them, on the other, would naturally lead to outrages, and these to reprisals and wars.

The opportunities which some States would have of rendering others tributary to them by commercial regulations would be impatiently submitted to by the tributary States. The relative situation of New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey would afford an example of this kind. New York, from the necessities of revenue, must lay duties on her importations. A great part of these duties must be paid by the inhabitants of the two other States in the capacity of consumers of what we import. New York would neither be willing nor able to forego this advantage. Her citizens would not consent that a duty paid by them should be remitted in favor of the citizens of her neighbors; nor would it be practicable, if there were not this impediment in the way, to distinguish the customers in our own markets. Would
Connecticut and New Jersey long submit to be taxed by New York for her exclusive benefit? Should we be long permitted to remain in the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of a metropolis, from the possession of which we derived an advantage so odious to our neighbors, and, in their opinion, so oppressive? Should we be able to preserve it against the incumbent weight of Connecticut on the one side, and the co-operating pressure of New Jersey on the other? These are questions that temerity alone will answer in the affirmative.

The public debt of the Union would be a further cause of collision between the separate States or confederacies. The apportionment, in the first instance, and the progressive extinguishment afterward, would be alike productive of ill-humor and animosity. How would it be possible to agree upon a rule of apportionment satisfactory to all? There is scarcely any that can be proposed which is entirely free from real objections. These, as usual, would be exaggerated by the adverse interest of the parties. There are even dissimilar views among the States as to the general principle of discharging the public debt. Some of them, either less impressed with the importance of national credit, or because their citizens have little, if any, immediate interest in the question, feel an indifference, if not a repugnance, to the payment of the domestic debt at any rate. These would be inclined to magnify the difficulties of a distribution. Others of them, a numerous body of whose citizens are creditors to the public beyond proportion of the State in the total amount of the national debt, would be strenuous for some equitable and effective provision. The procrastinations of the former would excite the resentments of the latter. The settlement of a rule would, in the meantime, be postponed by real differences of opinion and affected delays. The citizens of the States interested would clamour; foreign powers would urge for the satisfaction of their just demands, and the peace of the States would be hazarded to the double contingency of external invasion and internal contention.

Suppose the difficulties of agreeing upon a rule surmounted, and the apportionment made. Still there is great room to suppose that the rule agreed upon would, upon experiment, be found to bear harder upon some States than upon others. Those which were sufferers by it would naturally seek for a mitigation of the burden. The others would as naturally be disinclined to a revision, which was likely to end in an increase of their own incumbrances. Their refusal would be too plausible a pretext to the complaining States to withhold their contributions, not to be embraced with avidity; and the non-compliance of these States with their engagements would be a ground of bitter discussion and altercation. If even the rule adopted should in practice justify the equality of its principle, still delinquencies in payments on the part of some of the States would result from a diversity of other causes—the real deficiency of resources; the mismanagement of their finances;
accidental disorders in the management of the government; and, in addition to the rest, the reluctance with which men commonly part with money for purposes that have outlived the exigencies which produced them, and interfere with the supply of immediate wants. Delinquencies, from whatever causes, would be productive of complaints, recriminations, and quarrels. There is, perhaps, nothing more likely to disturb the tranquillity of nations than their being bound to mutual contributions for any common object that does not yield an equal and coincident benefit. For it is an observation, as true as it is trite, that there is nothing men differ so readily about as the payment of money.

Laws in violation of private contracts, as they amount to aggressions on the rights of those States whose citizens are injured by them, may be considered as another probable source of hostility. We are not authorized to expect that a more liberal or more equitable spirit would preside over the legislations of the individual States hereafter, if unrestrained by any additional checks, than we have heretofore seen in too many instances disgracing their several codes. We have observed the disposition to retaliation excited in Connecticut in consequence of the enormities perpetrated by the Legislature of Rhode Island; and we reasonably infer that, in similar cases, under other circumstances, a war, not of PARCHMENT, but of the sword, would chastise such atrocious breaches of moral obligation and social justice.

The probability of incompatible alliances between the different States or confederacies and different foreign nations, and the effects of this situation upon the peace of the whole, have been sufficiently unfolded in some preceding papers. From the view they have exhibited of this part of the subject, this conclusion is to be drawn, that America, if not connected at all, or only by the feeble tie of a simple league, offensive and defensive, would, by the operation of such jarring alliances, be gradually entangled in all the pernicious labyrinths of European politics and wars; and by the destructive contentions of the parts into which she was divided, would be likely to become a prey to the artifices and machinations of powers equally the enemies of them all. Divide et impera(1) must be the motto of every nation that either hates or fears us.(2)

PUBLIUS

1. Divide and command.

2. In order that the whole subject of these papers may as soon as possible be laid before the public, it is proposed to publish them four times a week—on Tuesday in the New York Packet and on Thursday in the Daily Advertiser.
FEDERALIST No. 8. The
Consequences of Hostilities Between
the States

From the New York Packet. Tuesday, November
20, 1787.

HAMILTON

To the People of the State of New York:

ASSUMING it therefore as an established truth that the several States, in case of
disunion, or such combinations of them as might happen to be formed out of the wreck
of the general Confederacy, would be subject to those vicissitudes of peace and war, of
friendship and enmity, with each other, which have fallen to the lot of all neighboring
nations not united under one government, let us enter into a concise detail of some of the
consequences that would attend such a situation.

War between the States, in the first period of their separate existence, would be
accompanied with much greater distresses than it commonly is in those countries where
regular military establishments have long obtained. The disciplined armies always kept on
foot on the continent of Europe, though they bear a malignant aspect to liberty and
economy, have, notwithstanding, been productive of the signal advantage of rendering
sudden conquests impracticable, and of preventing that rapid desolation which used to
mark the progress of war prior to their introduction. The art of fortification has
contributed to the same ends. The nations of Europe are encircled with chains of fortified
places, which mutually obstruct invasion. Campaigns are wasted in reducing two or three
frontier garrisons, to gain admittance into an enemy's country. Similar impediments occur
at every step, to exhaust the strength and delay the progress of an invader. Formerly, an
invading army would penetrate into the heart of a neighboring country almost as soon as
intelligence of its approach could be received; but now a comparatively small force of
disciplined troops, acting on the defensive, with the aid of posts, is able to impede, and
finally to frustrate, the enterprises of one much more considerable. The history of war, in
that quarter of the globe, is no longer a history of nations subdued and empires overturned,
but of towns taken and retaken; of battles that decide nothing; of retreats more beneficial
than victories; of much effort and little acquisition.

In this country the scene would be altogether reversed. The jealousy of military
establishments would postpone them as long as possible. The want of fortifications,
leaving the frontiers of one state open to another, would facilitate inroads. The populous States would, with little difficulty, overrun their less populous neighbors. Conquests would be as easy to be made as difficult to be retained. War, therefore, would be desultory and predatory. PLUNDER and devastation ever march in the train of irregulars. The calamities of individuals would make the principal figure in the events which would characterize our military exploits.

This picture is not too highly wrought; though, I confess, it would not long remain a just one. Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct. Even the ardent love of liberty will, after a time, give way to its dictates. The violent destruction of life and property incident to war, the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations the most attached to liberty to resort for repose and security to institutions which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To be more safe, they at length become willing to run the risk of being less free.

The institutions chiefly alluded to are STANDING ARMIES and the correspondent appendages of military establishments. Standing armies, it is said, are not provided against in the new Constitution; and it is therefore inferred that they may exist under it.(1) Their existence, however, from the very terms of the proposition, is, at most, problematical and uncertain. But standing armies, it may be replied, must inevitably result from a dissolution of the Confederacy. Frequent war and constant apprehension, which require a state of as constant preparation, will infallibly produce them. The weaker States or confederacies would first have recourse to them, to put themselves upon an equality with their more potent neighbors. They would endeavor to supply the inferiority of population and resources by a more regular and effective system of defense, by disciplined troops, and by fortifications. They would, at the same time, be necessitated to strengthen the executive arm of government, in doing which their constitutions would acquire a progressive direction toward monarchy. It is of the nature of war to increase the executive at the expense of the legislative authority.

The expedients which have been mentioned would soon give the States or confederacies that made use of them a superiority over their neighbors. Small states, or states of less natural strength, under vigorous governments, and with the assistance of disciplined armies, have often triumphed over large states, or states of greater natural strength, which have been destitute of these advantages. Neither the pride nor the safety of the more important States or confederacies would permit them long to submit to this mortifying and adventitious superiority. They would quickly resort to means similar to those by which it had been effected, to reinstate themselves in their lost pre-eminence. Thus, we should, in a little time, see established in every part of this country the same engines of despotism.
which have been the scourge of the Old World. This, at least, would be the natural course of things; and our reasonings will be the more likely to be just, in proportion as they are accommodated to this standard.

These are not vague inferences drawn from supposed or speculative defects in a Constitution, the whole power of which is lodged in the hands of a people, or their representatives and delegates, but they are solid conclusions, drawn from the natural and necessary progress of human affairs.

It may, perhaps, be asked, by way of objection to this, why did not standing armies spring up out of the contentions which so often distracted the ancient republics of Greece? Different answers, equally satisfactory, may be given to this question. The industrious habits of the people of the present day, absorbed in the pursuits of gain, and devoted to the improvements of agriculture and commerce, are incompatible with the condition of a nation of soldiers, which was the true condition of the people of those republics. The means of revenue, which have been so greatly multiplied by the increase of gold and silver and of the arts of industry, and the science of finance, which is the offspring of modern times, concurring with the habits of nations, have produced an entire revolution in the system of war, and have rendered disciplined armies, distinct from the body of the citizens, the inseparable companions of frequent hostility.

There is a wide difference, also, between military establishments in a country seldom exposed by its situation to internal invasions, and in one which is often subject to them, and always apprehensive of them. The rulers of the former can have no good pretext, if they are even so inclined, to keep on foot armies so numerous as must of necessity be maintained in the latter. These armies being, in the first case, rarely, if at all, called into activity for interior defense, the people are in no danger of being broken to military subordination. The laws are not accustomed to relaxations, in favor of military exigencies; the civil state remains in full vigor, neither corrupted, nor confounded with the principles or propensities of the other state. The smallness of the army renders the natural strength of the community an overmatch for it; and the citizens, not habituated to look up to the military power for protection, or to submit to its oppressions, neither love nor fear the soldiery; they view them with a spirit of jealous acquiescence in a necessary evil, and stand ready to resist a power which they suppose may be exerted to the prejudice of their rights.

The army under such circumstances may usefully aid the magistrate to suppress a small faction, or an occasional mob, or insurrection; but it will be unable to enforce encroachments against the united efforts of the great body of the people.

In a country in the predicament last described, the contrary of all this happens. The perpetual menacings of danger oblige the government to be always prepared to repel it; its
armies must be numerous enough for instant defense. The continual necessity for their
services enhances the importance of the soldier, and proportionably degrades the condition
of the citizen. The military state becomes elevated above the civil. The inhabitants of
territories, often the theatre of war, are unavoidably subjected to frequent infringements
on their rights, which serve to weaken their sense of those rights; and by degrees the people
are brought to consider the soldiery not only as their protectors, but as their superiors. The
transition from this disposition to that of considering them masters, is neither remote nor
difficult; but it is very difficult to prevail upon a people under such impressions, to make a
bold or effectual resistance to usurpations supported by the military power.

The kingdom of Great Britain falls within the first description. An insular situation, and
a powerful marine, guarding it in a great measure against the possibility of foreign invasion,
supersede the necessity of a numerous army within the kingdom. A sufficient force to make
head against a sudden descent, till the militia could have time to rally and embody, is all
that has been deemed requisite. No motive of national policy has demanded, nor would
public opinion have tolerated, a larger number of troops upon its domestic establishment.
There has been, for a long time past, little room for the operation of the other causes,
which have been enumerated as the consequences of internal war. This peculiar felicity of
situation has, in a great degree, contributed to preserve the liberty which that country to
this day enjoys, in spite of the prevalent venality and corruption. If, on the contrary, Britain
had been situated on the continent, and had been compelled, as she would have been, by
that situation, to make her military establishments at home coextensive with those of the
other great powers of Europe, she, like them, would in all probability be, at this day, a
victim to the absolute power of a single man. It is possible, though not easy, that the people
of that island may be enslaved from other causes; but it cannot be by the prowess of an
army so inconsiderable as that which has been usually kept up within the kingdom.

If we are wise enough to preserve the Union we may for ages enjoy an advantage similar
to that of an insulated situation. Europe is at a great distance from us. Her colonies in our
vicinity will be likely to continue too much disproportioned in strength to be able to give
us any dangerous annoyance. Extensive military establishments cannot, in this position, be
necessary to our security. But if we should be disunited, and the integral parts should either
remain separated, or, which is most probable, should be thrown together into two or three
confederacies, we should be, in a short course of time, in the predicament of the
continental powers of Europe—our liberties would be a prey to the means of defending
ourselves against the ambition and jealousy of each other.

This is an idea not superficial or futile, but solid and weighty. It deserves the most serious
and mature consideration of every prudent and honest man of whatever party. If such men
will make a firm and solemn pause, and meditate dispassionately on the importance of this interesting idea; if they will contemplate it in all its attitudes, and trace it to all its consequences, they will not hesitate to part with trivial objections to a Constitution, the rejection of which would in all probability put a final period to the Union. The airy phantoms that flit before the distempered imaginations of some of its adversaries would quickly give place to the more substantial forms of dangers, real, certain, and formidable.

PUBLIUS

1. This objection will be fully examined in its proper place, and it will be shown that the only natural precaution which could have been taken on this subject has been taken; and a much better one than is to be found in any constitution that has been heretofore framed in America, most of which contain no guard at all on this subject.