

Resource Sheet #6

Direct Quotes from Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, George Mason and Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry

June, 1788 from a speech to the Virginia Ratifying Convention

1. That this is a consolidated Government is demonstrably clear, and the danger of such a Government, is, to my mind, very striking.
2. I need not take much pains to show, that the principles of this system, are extremely dangerous.
3. Here is a revolution as radical as that which separated us from Great Britain. It is as radical, if in this transition our rights and privileges are endangered, and the sovereignty of the States be relinquished: And cannot we plainly see, that this is the case?
4. The English Government is founded on Self-love. This powerful irresistible stimulus of self-love has saved that government... Where is the rock of your salvation? The real rock of political salvation is *self-love* perpetuated from age to age in every human breast, and manifested in every action. If they can stand the temptations of human nature, you are safe. If you have a good President, Senators and Representatives, there is no danger. – But can this be expected from human nature? A good President, or Senator, or Representative, will have a natural weakness.- Virtue will slumber. The wicked will be continually watching: Consequently, you will be undone.

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George Mason

Sept., 1781 in a letter to Thomas Jefferson

1. "You have, no Doubt, been informed of the illegal, and dangerous Schemes now in Contemplation in Congress. (The Constitution), if not immediately arrested in it's progress, will be productive of every Evil; and the Revolution, instead of securing, as was intended, our Rights and Libertys, will only change the Name and place of Residence of our Tyrants.'

<http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mcc/036/0001.jpg>

June, 1788 Virginia Ratifying Convention

2. Whether the Constitution be good or bad, the present clause clearly discovers that it is a National Government, and no longer a confederation. I mean that clause which gives the first hint of the General Government laying direct taxes. The very idea of converting what was formerly a confederation, to a consolidated government, is totally subversive of every principle which has hitherto governed us. This power (of laying taxes) is calculated to annihilate totally the State Governments.
3. Is it supposed that one National Government will suit so extensive a country, embracing so many climates, and containing inhabitants so very different in manners, habits, and customs? It is ascertained by history, that there never was a Government, over a very extensive country, without destroying the liberties of the people.

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James Madison

Federalist Paper No. 10

The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection

1. 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.
2. By faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or 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.
3. The instability, injustice, and confusion, introduced into the public councils, have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished.
4. 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; ... the more easily will the 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.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>

Alexander Hamilton

Federalist Paper No. 9

The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection

1. A firm union will be of the utmost moment to the peace and liberty of the states, as a barrier against domestic faction and insurrection.
2. The utility of a confederacy, as well to suppress faction, and to guard the internal tranquility of states, as to increase their external force and security, is in reality not a new idea.

Federalist Paper No. 11

The Utility of the Union in respect to Commerce and a Navy

3. Suppose, for instance, we had a government in America, capable of excluding Great Britain (which whom we have at present no treaty of commerce) from all our ports; what would be the probable operation of this step upon her (Great Britain's) politics? Would it not enable us to negotiate, with the fairest prospect of success, for commercial privileges of the most valuable and extensive kind, in the dominions of that kingdom?
4. There can be no doubt, that the continuance of the union, under an efficient government, would put it in our power, at a period not very distant, to create a navy, which, if it could not vie with those of the great maritime powers, would at least be of respectable weight.
5. The rights of neutrality will only be respected, when they are defended by an adequate power. A nation, despicable by its weakness, forfeits even the privilege of being neutral.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>