

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison,  
and John Jay

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*The Federalist*

with

*Letters of “Brutus”*

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## Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xiii
<i>Synopsis</i>	xxxiii
<i>Chronology</i>	xxxv
<i>Biographical synopses</i>	xxxvii
<i>A note on sources and abbreviations</i>	xlvi
<i>Bibliographical note</i>	xlix
<i>The Federalist</i>	i
<i>Letters of Brutus</i>	433
<i>Appendices</i>	535
The Articles of Confederation	537
The Constitution of the United States	545
<i>Index</i>	566

# *The Federalist*

## The Federalist No. 1 [HAMILTON]

October 27, 1787

AFTER an unequivocal experience of the inefficacy of the subsisting Fæderal Government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences, nothing less than the existence of the UNION, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire, in many respects, the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not, of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis, at which we are arrived, may with propriety be regarded as the æra in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act, may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.

This idea will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism to heighten the solicitude, which all considerate and good men must feel for the event. Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiassed by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished, than seriously to be expected. The plan offered to our deliberations, affects too many particular interests, innovates upon

too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion a variety of objects foreign to its merits, and of views, passions and prejudices little favourable to the discovery of truth.

Among the most formidable of the obstacles which the new Constitution will have to encounter, may readily be distinguished the obvious interest of a certain class of men in every State to resist all changes which may hazard a diminution of the power, emolument and consequence of the offices they hold under the State-establishments – and the perverted ambition of another class of men, who will either hope to aggrandise themselves by the confusions of their country, or will flatter themselves with fairer prospects of elevation from the subdivision of the empire into several partial confederacies, than from its union under one government.

It is not, however, my design to dwell upon observations of this nature. I am well aware that it would be disingenuous to resolve indiscriminately the opposition of any set of men (merely because their situations might subject them to suspicion) into interested or ambitious views: Candour will oblige us to admit, that even such men may be actuated by upright intentions; and it cannot be doubted that much of the opposition which has made its appearance, or may hereafter make its appearance, will spring from sources, blameless at least, if not respectable, the honest errors of minds led astray by preconceived jealousies and fears. So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes, which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions, of the first magnitude to society. This circumstance, if duly attended to, would furnish a lesson of moderation to those, who are ever so much persuaded of their being in the right, in any controversy. And a further reason for caution, in this respect, might be drawn from the reflection, that we are not always sure, that those who advocate the truth are influenced by purer principles than their antagonists. Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives, not more laudable than these, are apt to operate as well upon those who support as upon those who oppose the right side of a question. Were there not even these inducements to moderation, nothing could be more illjudged than that intolerant spirit, which has, at all times, characterised political parties. For, in politics as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword. Heresies in either can rarely be cured by persecution.

And yet however just these sentiments will be allowed to be, we have already sufficient indications, that it will happen in this as in all former cases of great national discussion. A torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose. To judge from the conduct of the opposite parties, we shall be led to conclude, that they will mutually hope to evince the justness of their opinions, and to increase the number of their converts by the loudness of their declamations, and by the bitterness of their invectives. An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government will be stigmatized, as the off-spring of a temper fond of despotic power and hostile to the principles of liberty. An overscrupulous jealousy of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as mere pretence and artifice; the bait for popularity at the expence of public good. It will be forgotten, on the one hand, that jealousy is the usual concomitant of violent love, and that the noble enthusiasm of liberty is too apt to be infected with a spirit of narrow and illiberal distrust. On the other hand, it will be equally forgotten, that the vigour of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well informed judgment, their interest can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people, than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us, that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism, than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics the greatest number have begun their career, by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing Demagogues and ending Tyrants.

In the course of the preceeding observations I have had an eye, my Fellow Citizens, to putting you upon your guard against all attempts, from whatever quarter, to influence your decision in a matter of the utmost moment to your welfare by any impressions other than those which may result from the evidence of truth. You will, no doubt, at the same time, have collected from the general scope of them that they proceed from a source not unfriendly to the new Constitution. Yes, my Countrymen, I own to you, that, after having given it an attentive consideration, I am clearly of opinion, it is your interest to adopt it. I am convinced, that this is the safest course for your liberty, your dignity, and your happiness. I effect not reserves, which I do not feel. I will not amuse you with an appearance of deliberation, when I have decided. I frankly acknowledge to you my

convictions, and I will freely lay before you the reasons on which they are founded. The consciousness of good intentions disdains ambiguity. I shall not however multiply professions on this head. My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast: My arguments will be open to all, and may be judged of by all. They shall at least be offered in a spirit, which will not disgrace the cause of truth.

I propose in a series of papers to discuss the following interesting particulars – *The utility of the UNION to your political prosperity* – *The insufficiency of the present Confederation to preserve that Union* – *The necessity of a government at least equally energetic with the one proposed to the attainment of this object* – *The conformity of the proposed constitution to the true principles of republican government* – *Its analogy to your own state constitution*<sup>1</sup> – and lastly, *The additional security, which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty and to property.*

In the progress of this discussion I shall endeavour to give a satisfactory answer to all the objections which shall have made their appearance that may seem to have any claim to your attention.

It may perhaps be thought superfluous to offer arguments to prove the utility of the UNION, a point, no doubt, deeply engraved on the hearts of the great body of the people in every state, and one, which it may be imagined has no adversaries. But the fact is, that we already hear it whispered in the private circles of those who oppose the new constitution, that the Thirteen States are of too great extent for any general system, and that we must of necessity resort to separate confederacies of distinct portions of the whole.<sup>a</sup> This doctrine will, in all probability, be gradually propagated, till it has votaries enough to countenance an open avowal of it. For nothing can be more evident, to those who are able to take an enlarged view of the subject, than the alternative of an adoption of the new Constitution, or a dismemberment of the Union. It will therefore be of use to begin by examining the advantages of that Union, the certain evils and the probable dangers, to which every State will be exposed from its dissolution. This shall accordingly constitute the subject of my next address.

<sup>a</sup> *The same idea, tracing the arguments to their consequences, is held out in several of the late publications against the New Constitution.* [See Brutus I (443–45), published ten days earlier. Brutus III develops the argument at greater length.]

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton's plan to compare the proposed constitution to that of New York state was later dropped in favor of a branch-by-branch examination of the government to be created (Nos. 52–83).

The Federalist No. 2 [JAY]

October 31, 1787

WHEN the people of America reflect that they are now called upon to decide a question, which, in its consequences, must prove one of the most important, that ever engaged their attention, the propriety of their taking a very comprehensive, as well as a very serious view of it, will be evident.

Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of Government, and it is equally undeniable, that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights, in order to vest it with requisite powers. It is well worthy of consideration therefore, whether it would conduce more to the interest of the people of America, that they should, to all general purposes, be one nation, under one fœderal Government, than that they should divide themselves into separate confederacies, and give to the head of each, the same kind of powers which they are advised to place in one national Government.

It has until lately been a received and uncontradicted opinion, that the prosperity of the people of America depended on their continuing firmly united, and the wishes, prayers, and efforts of our best and wisest Citizens have been constantly directed to that object. But Politicians now appear, who insist that this opinion is erroneous, and that instead of looking for safety and happiness in union, we ought to seek it in a division of the States into distinct confederacies or sovereignties.<sup>1</sup> However extraordinary this new doctrine may appear, it nevertheless has its advocates; and certain characters who were much opposed to it formerly, are at present of the number. Whatever may be the arguments or inducements, which have wrought this change in the sentiments and declarations of these Gentlemen, it certainly would not be wise in the people at large to adopt these new political tenets without being fully convinced that they are founded in truth and sound Policy.

It has often given me pleasure to observe, that Independent America was not composed of detached and distant territories, but that one connected, fertile, wide spreading country was the portion of our western sons of liberty. Providence has in a particular manner blessed it with a variety of soils and productions, and watered it with innumerable streams, for the delight and accomodation of its inhabitants. A succession of

<sup>1</sup> Brutus avers that America is too large and diverse to be ruled by a single "consolidated" national government. He favors instead a "confederation" of "independent states." See Brutus v (466 and 470). Compare The Federal Farmer, Letter xvii (AF 87-95).



navigable waters forms a kind of chain round its borders, as if to bind it together; while the most noble rivers in the world, running at convenient distances, present them with highways for the easy communication of friendly aids, and the mutual transportation and exchange of their various commodities.

With equal pleasure I have as often taken notice, that Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country, to one united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs, and who, by their joint counsels, arms and efforts, fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established their general Liberty and Independence.

This country and this people seem to have been made for each other, and it appears as if it was the design of Providence, that an inheritance so proper and convenient for a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties, should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous and alien sovereignties.

Similar sentiments have hitherto prevailed among all orders and denominations of men among us. To all general purposes we have uniformly been one people – each individual citizen every where enjoying the same national rights, privileges, and protection. As a nation we have made peace and war – as a nation we have vanquished our common enemies – as a nation we have formed alliances and made treaties, and entered into various compacts and conventions with foreign States.

A strong sense of the value and blessings of Union induced the people, at a very early period, to institute a Fœderal Government to preserve and perpetuate it. They formed it almost as soon as they had a political existence; nay at a time, when their habitations were in flames, when many of their Citizens were bleeding, and when the progress of hostility and desolation left little room for those calm and mature enquiries and reflections, which must ever precede the formation of a wise and well balanced government for a free people. It is not to be wondered at that a Government instituted in times so inauspicious, should on experiment be found greatly deficient and inadequate to the purpose it was intended to answer.

This intelligent people perceived and regretted these defects. Still continuing no less attached to union, than enamoured of liberty, they observed the danger, which immediately threatened the former and more remotely

the latter; and being persuaded that ample security for both, could only be found in a national Government more wisely framed, they, as with one voice, convened the late Convention at Philadelphia, to take that important subject under consideration.

This Convention, composed of men, who possessed the confidence of the people, and many of whom had become highly distinguished by their patriotism, virtue and wisdom, in times which tried the minds and hearts of men, undertook the arduous task. In the mild season of peace, with minds unoccupied by other subjects, they passed many months in cool uninterrupted and daily consultations: and finally, without having been awed by power, or influenced by any passions except love for their Country, they presented and recommended to the people the plan produced by their joint and very unanimous counsels.

Admit, for so is the fact, that this plan is only *recommended*, not imposed, yet let it be remembered, that it is neither recommended to *blind* approbation, nor to *blind* reprobation; but to that sedate and candid [open-minded] consideration, which the magnitude and importance of the subject demand, and which it certainly ought to receive. But this, (as was remarked in the foregoing number of this Paper,) is more to be wished than expected that it may be so considered and examined. Experience on a former occasion teaches us not to be too sanguine in such hopes. It is not yet forgotten, that well grounded apprehensions of imminent danger induced the people of America to form the Memorable [First Continental] Congress of 1774. That Body recommended certain measures to their Constituents, and the event proved their wisdom; yet it is fresh in our memories how soon the Press began to teem with Pamphlets and weekly Papers against those very measures. Not only many of the Officers of Government who obeyed the dictates of personal interest, but others from a mistaken estimate of consequences, or the undue influence of former attachments, or whose ambition aimed at objects which did not correspond with the public good, were indefatigable in their endeavours to persuade the people to reject the advice of that Patriotic Congress. Many indeed were deceived and deluded, but the great majority of the people reasoned and decided judiciously; and happy they are in reflecting that they did so.

They considered that the Congress was composed of many wise and experienced men. That being convened from different parts of the country, they brought with them and communicated to each other a variety of useful information. That in the course of the time they passed together in enquiring into and discussing the true interests of their country, they

must have acquired very accurate knowledge on that head. That they were individually interested in the public liberty and prosperity, and therefore that it was not less their inclination, than their duty, to recommend only such measures, as after the most mature deliberation they really thought prudent and adviseable.

These and similar considerations then induced the people to rely greatly on the judgment and integrity of the Congress; and they took their advice, notwithstanding the various arts and endeavours used to deter and dissuade them from it. But if the people at large had reason to confide in the men of that Congress, few of whom had then been fully tried or generally known, still greater reason have they now to respect the judgment and advice of the Convention, for it is well known that some of the most distinguished members of that Congress, who have been since tried and justly approved for patriotism and abilities, and who have grown old in acquiring political information, were also members of this Convention and carried into it their accumulated knowledge and experience.

It is worthy of remark that not only the first, but every succeeding Congress, as well as the late Convention, have invariably joined with the people in thinking that the prosperity of America depended on its Union. To preserve and perpetuate it, was the great object of the people in forming that Convention, and it is also the great object of the plan which the Convention has advised them to adopt. With what propriety therefore, or for what good purposes, are attempts at this particular period, made by some men, to depreciate the importance of the Union? or why is it suggested that three or four confederacies would be better than one? I am persuaded in my own mind, that the people have always thought right on this subject, and that their universal and uniform attachment to the cause of the Union, rests on great and weighty reasons, which I shall endeavour to develop and explain in some ensuing papers. They who promote the idea of substituting a number of distinct confederacies in the room of the plan of the Convention, seem clearly to foresee that the rejection of it would put the continuance of the Union in the utmost jeopardy. That certainly would be the case, and I sincerely wish that it may be as clearly foreseen by every good Citizen, that whenever the dissolution of the Union arrives, America will have reason to exclaim in the words of the Poet, "FAREWELL, A LONG FAREWELL, TO ALL MY GREATNESS."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, III, 2.

The Federalist No. 3 [JAY]

November 3, 1787

IT is not a new observation that the people of any country (if like the Americans intelligent and well informed) seldom adopt, and steadily persevere for many years in, an erroneous opinion respecting their interests. That consideration naturally tends to create great respect for the high opinion which the people of America have so long and uniformly entertained of the importance of their continuing firmly united under one Federal Government, vested with sufficient powers for all general and national purposes.

The more attentively I consider and investigate the reasons which appear to have given birth to this opinion, the more I become convinced that they are cogent and conclusive.

Among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their *safety* seems to be the first. The *safety* of the people doubtless has relation to a great variety of circumstances and considerations, and consequently affords great latitude to those who wish to define it precisely and comprehensively.

At present I mean only to consider it as it respects security for the preservation of peace and tranquility, as well against dangers from *foreign arms and influence*, as from dangers of the *like kind* arising from domestic causes. As the former of these comes first in order, it is proper it should be the first discussed. Let us therefore proceed to examine whether the people are not right in their opinion, that a cordial Union under an efficient national Government, affords them the best security that can be devised against *hostilities* from abroad.

The number of wars which have happened or will happen in the world, will always be found to be in proportion to the number and weight of the causes, whether *real* or *pretended*, which *provoke* or *invite* them. If this remark be just, it becomes useful to inquire, whether so many *just* causes of war are likely to be given by *United America*, as by *disunited America*; for if it should turn out that United America will probably give the fewest, then it will follow that, in this respect, the Union tends most to preserve the people in a state of peace with other nations.

The *just* causes of war for the most part arise either from violations of treaties, or from direct violence. America has already formed treaties with no less than six foreign nations, and all of them, except Prussia, are maritime, and therefore able to annoy and injure us: She has also

extensive commerce with Portugal, Spain, and Britain, and with respect to the two latter, has in addition the circumstance of neighbourhood to attend to.

It is of high importance to the peace of America, that she observe the laws of nations towards all these Powers, and to me it appears evident that this will be more perfectly and punctually done by one national Government, than it could be either by thirteen separate States, or by three or four distinct confederacies.

Because when once an efficient national government is established, the best men in the country will not only consent to serve, but also will generally be appointed to manage it; for altho' town or county, or other contracted influence may place men in state assemblies, or Senates, or courts of justice, or executive departments; yet more general and extensive reputation for talents and other qualifications, will be necessary to recommend men to offices under the national government – especially as it will have the widest field for choice, and never experience that want of proper persons, which is not uncommon in some of the States. Hence it will result, that the administration, the political counsels, and the judicial decisions of the national Government will be more wise, systematical and judicious, than those of individual States, and consequently more satisfactory with respect to other nations, as well as more *safe* with respect to us.

Because under the national Government, treaties and articles of treaties, as well as the laws of nations, will always be expounded in one sense, and executed in the same manner – whereas adjudications on the same points and questions, in thirteen States, or in three or four confederacies, will not always accord or be consistent; and that as well from the variety of independent courts and judges appointed by different and independent Governments, as from the different local laws and interests which may affect and influence them. The wisdom of the Convention in committing such questions to the jurisdiction and judgment of courts appointed by, and responsible only to one national Government, cannot be too much commended.

Because the prospect of present loss or advantage, may often tempt the governing party in one or two States to swerve from good faith and justice; but those temptations not reaching the other States, and consequently having little or no influence on the national government, the temptation will be fruitless, and good faith and justice be preserved.

The case of the treaty of peace with Britain, adds great weight to this reasoning.<sup>1</sup>

Because even if the governing party in a State should be disposed to resist such temptations, yet as such temptations may, and commonly do result from circumstances peculiar to the State, and may affect a great number of the inhabitants, the governing party may not always be able if willing to prevent the injustice meditated, or to punish the aggressors. But the national Government, not being affected by those local circumstances, will neither be induced to commit the wrong themselves, nor want power or inclination to prevent, or punish its commission by others.

So far therefore as either designed or accidental violation of treaties and of the laws of nations afford *just* causes of war, they are less to be apprehended under one general government, than under several lesser ones, and in that respect, the former most favors the *safety* of the people.

As to those just causes of war which proceed from direct and unlawful violence, it appears equally clear to me, that one good national government affords vastly more security against dangers of that sort, than can be derived from any other quarter.

Because such violences are more frequently caused by the passions and interests of a part than of the whole, of one or two States than of the Union. Not a single Indian war has yet been occasioned by aggressions of the present Fœderal Government, feeble as it is, but there are several instances of Indian hostilities having been provoked by the improper conduct of individual States, who either unable or unwilling to restrain or punish offences, have given occasion to the slaughter of many innocent inhabitants.

The neighbourhood of Spanish and British territories, bordering on some States, and not on others, naturally confines the causes of quarrel more immediately to the borderers. The bordering States if any, will be those who, under the impulse of sudden irritation, and a quick sense of apparent interest or injury, will be most likely by direct violence, to excite war with those nations; and nothing can so effectually obviate that danger, as a national Government, whose wisdom and prudence will not be diminished by the passions which actuate the parties immediately interested.

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Paris (1783) ended the war between Great Britain and the United States. Treaty provisions protecting British property and guaranteeing the payment of debts were openly flouted by many Americans.

But not only fewer just causes of war will be given by the national Government, but it will also be more in their power to accommodate and settle them amicably. They will be more temperate and cool, and in that respect, as well as in others, will be more in capacity to act advisedly than the offending State. The pride of States as well as of men, naturally disposes them to justify all their actions, and opposes their acknowledging, correcting or repairing their errors and offences. The national Government in such cases will not be affected by this pride, but will proceed with moderation and candour to consider and decide on the means most proper to extricate them from the difficulties which threaten them.

Besides it is well known that acknowledgments, explanations and compensations are often accepted as satisfactory from a strong united nation, which would be rejected as unsatisfactory if offered by a State or Confederacy of little consideration or power.

In the year 1685 the State of Genoa having offended Louis the XIVth endeavoured to appease him. He demanded that they should send their *Doge* or chief magistrate, accompanied by four of their Senators to *France* to ask his pardon and receive his terms. They were obliged to submit to it for the sake of peace. Would he on any occasion either have demanded, or have received the like humiliation from Spain, or Britain, or any other *powerful* nation?

### The Federalist No. 4 [JAY]

November 7, 1787

MY last Paper assigned several reasons why the safety of the people would be best secured by Union against the danger it may be exposed to by *just* causes of war given to other nations; and those reasons shew that such causes would not only be more rarely given, but would also be more easily accommodated by a national Government, than either by the State Governments, or the proposed little Confederacies.

But the safety of the People of America against dangers from *foreign* force, depends not only on their forbearing to give *just* causes of war to other nations, but also on their placing and continuing themselves in such a situation as not to *invite* hostility or insult; for it need not be observed, that there are *pretended* as well as just causes of war.

It is too true, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, that nations in general will make war whenever they have a prospect of getting

any thing by it, nay that absolute monarchs will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for purposes and objects merely personal, such as, a thirst for military glory, revenge for personal affronts; ambition or private compacts to aggrandize or support their particular families, or partizans. These and a variety of motives, which affect only the mind of the Sovereign, often lead him to engage in wars not sanctified by justice, or the voice and interests of his people. But independent of these inducements to war, which are more prevalent in absolute monarchies, but which well deserve our attention, there are others which affect nations as often as Kings; and some of them will on examination be found to grow out of our relative situation and circumstances.

With France and with Britain we are rivals in the fisheries, and can supply their markets cheaper than they can themselves, notwithstanding any efforts to prevent it by bounties on their own, or duties on foreign fish.

With them and most other European nations, we are rivals in navigation and the carrying trade [i. e., international commerce]; and we shall deceive ourselves, if we suppose that any of them will rejoice to see it flourish: for as our carrying trade cannot encrease, without in some degree diminishing their's, it is more their interest and will be more their policy, to restrain, than to promote it.

In the trade to China and India, we interfere with more than one nation, in as much as it enables us to partake in advantages which they had in a manner monopolized, and as we thereby supply ourselves with commodities which we used to purchase from them.

The extension of our own commerce in our own vessels, cannot give pleasure to any nations who possess territories on or near this Continent, because the cheapness and excellence of our productions, added to the circumstance of vicinity, and the enterprize and address of our merchants and navigators, will give us a greater share in the advantages which those territories afford, than consists with the wishes or policy of their respective Sovereigns.

Spain thinks it convenient to shut the Mississippi against us on the one side, and Britain excludes us from the St. Laurence on the other; nor will either of them permit the other waters, which are between them and us, to become the means of mutual intercourse and traffic.

From these and such like considerations, which might if consistent with prudence, be more amplified and detailed, it is easy to see that jealousies and uneasinesses may gradually slide into the minds and cabinets of other



nations; and that we are not to expect they should regard our advancement in union, in power and consequence by land and by sea, with an eye of indifference and composure.

The People of America are aware that inducements to war, may arise out of these circumstances, as well as from others not so obvious at present; and that whenever such inducements may find fit time and opportunity for operation, pretences to colour and justify them will not be wanting. Wisely therefore do they consider Union and a good national Government as necessary to put and keep them in *such a situation* as instead of *inviting* war, will tend to repress and discourage it. That situation consists in the best possible state of defence, and necessarily depends on the Government, the arms and the resources of the country.

As the safety of the whole is the interest of the whole, and cannot be provided for without Government, either one or more or many, let us inquire whether one good Government is not, relative to the object in question, more competent than any other given number whatever.

One Government can collect and avail itself of the talents and experience of the ablest men, in whatever part of the Union they may be found. It can move on uniform principles of policy – It can harmonize, assimilate, and protect the several parts and members, and extend the benefit of its foresight and precautions to each. In the formation of treaties it will regard the interest of the whole, and the particular interests of the parts as connected with that of the whole. It can apply the resources and power of the whole to the defence of any particular part, and that more easily and expeditiously than State Governments, or separate confederacies can possibly do, for want of concert and unity of system. It can place the militia under one plan of discipline, and by putting their officers in a proper line of subordination to the Chief Magistrate, will as it were consolidate them into one corps, and thereby render them more efficient than if divided into thirteen or into three or four distinct independent bodies.

What would the militia of Britain be, if the English militia obeyed the Government of England, if the Scotch militia obeyed the Government of Scotland, and if the Welch militia obeyed the Government of Wales! Suppose an invasion – would those three Governments (if they agreed at all) be able with all their respective forces, to operate against the enemy so effectually as the single Government of Great Britain would?

We have heard much of the fleets of Britain, and the time may come, if we are wise, when the fleets of America may engage attention. But if one national Government had not so regulated the navigation of Britain as to

make it a nursery for seamen – if one national Government had not called forth all the national means and materials for forming fleets, their prowess and their thunder would never have been celebrated. Let England have its navigation and fleet – Let Scotland have its navigation and fleet – Let Wales have its navigation and fleet – Let Ireland have its navigation and fleet – Let those four of the constituent parts of the British empire be under four independent Governments, and it is easy to perceive how soon they would each dwindle into comparative insignificance.

Apply these facts to our own case – Leave America divided into thirteen, or if you please into three or four independent Governments, what armies could they raise and pay, what fleets could they ever hope to have? If one was attacked would the others fly to its succour, and spend their blood and money in its defence? Would there be no danger of their being flattered into neutrality by specious promises, or seduced by a too great fondness for peace to decline hazarding their tranquillity and present safety for the sake of neighbours, of whom perhaps they have been jealous, and whose importance they are content to see diminished? Altho' such conduct would not be wise it would nevertheless be natural. The history of the States of Greece, and of other Countries abound with such instances, and it is not improbable that what has so often happened, would under similar circumstances happen again.

But admit that they might be willing to help the invaded State or Confederacy. How and when, and in what proportion shall aids of men and money be afforded? Who shall command the allied armies, and from which of them shall he receive his orders? Who shall settle the terms of peace, and in case of disputes what umpire shall decide between them, and compel acquiescence? Various difficulties and inconveniences would be inseparable from such a situation; whereas one Government watching over the general and common interests, and combining and directing the powers and resources of the whole, would be free from all these embarrassments, and conduce far more to the safety of the people.

But whatever may be our situation, whether firmly united under one national Government, or split into a number of confederacies, certain it is, that foreign nations will know and view it exactly as it is; and they will act towards us accordingly. If they see that our national Government is efficient and well administered – our trade prudently regulated – our militia properly organized and disciplined – our resources and finances discreetly managed – our credit re-established – our people free, contented, and united, they will be much more disposed to cultivate our

friendship, than provoke our resentment. If on the other hand they find us either destitute of an effectual Government, (each State doing right or wrong as to its rulers may seem convenient), or split into three or four independent and probably discordant republics or confederacies, one inclining to Britain, another to France, and a third to Spain, and perhaps played off against each other by the three, what a poor pitiful figure will America make in their eyes! How liable would she become not only to their contempt, but to their outrage; and how soon would dear bought experience proclaim, that when a people or family so divide, it never fails to be against themselves.

### The Federalist No. 5 [JAY]

November 10, 1787

QUEEN ANN, 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 encrease 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 endeavours 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. Altho’ 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 enflamed, 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,<sup>1</sup> 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 encrease 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 and 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 their neighbours, that moment would those neighbours 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

<sup>1</sup> See above, No. 1, n. *a* and No. 2, ed. n. 1.

confidence in her neighbours, 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 neighbours.

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 neighbours, 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 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 defence against foreign enemies.

When did the independent states into which Britain and Spain were formerly divided, combine in such alliances, 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 interests 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, neighbouring nations, acting under the impulse of opposite interest, 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 [fair-minded] 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.

### The Federalist No. 6 [HAMILTON]

November 14, 1787

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, situated in the same neighbourhood, 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 preeminence 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 intirely 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 favourites 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 tranquility to personal advantage, or personal gratification.

The celebrated Pericles, in compliance with the resentments of a prostitute,<sup>a</sup> at the expence of much of the blood and treasure of his countrymen, attacked, vanquished and destroyed, the city of the *Samnians*. The same man, stimulated by private pique against the *Megarensians*,<sup>b</sup> another nation of Greece, or to avoid a prosecution with which he was threatened as an accomplice in a supposed theft of the statuary *Phidias*,<sup>c</sup> 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,<sup>d</sup> 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 *Pelopponesian* war; which after various vicissitudes, intermissions and renewals, terminated in the ruin of the Athenian commonwealth.

The ambitious Cardinal,<sup>1</sup> who was Prime Minister to Henry VIIIth. permitting his vanity to aspire to the Tripple-Crown,<sup>e</sup> entertained hopes

<sup>a</sup> ASPASIA, vide PLUTARCH'S life of Pericles.

<sup>b</sup> – Idem.

<sup>c</sup> – Idem. Phidias was supposed to have stolen some public gold with the connivance of Pericles for the embellishment of the statue of Minerva.

<sup>d</sup> Idem.

<sup>e</sup> Worn by the Popes.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wolsey (1475–1530).