



Source One: George Washington

George Washington's letter to Alexander Hamilton, July 29, 1792

“The public debt is greater than we can possibly pay before other causes of adding new debt to it will occur . . . this accumulation of debt has taken for ever out of our power those easy sources of revenue. . . extraordinary calls for extraordinary occasions would animate the people to meet them.”

**Modern Translation:** The amount of money the national government owes is greater than it can possibly pay. We have other government expenses that will add to the debt. The amount of debt owed is so large that the national government does not have the ability to raise the money. The Whiskey Tax is more than the government would usually ask for, but we must raise the Whiskey Tax.

From his Proclamation of the Whiskey Rebellion, August 9, 1794

“And whereas, it is in my judgment necessary under the circumstances of the case to take measures for calling forth the militia in order to suppress the combinations aforesaid, and to cause the laws to be duly executed; and I have accordingly determined so to do, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal the most solemn conviction that the essential interests of the Union demand it, that the very existence of government and the fundamental principles of social order are materially involved in the issue, and that the patriotism and firmness of all good citizens are seriously called upon, as occasions may require, to aid in the effectual suppression of so fatal a spirit;

Therefore, and in pursuance of the proviso above recited, I, George Washington, President of the United States, do hereby command all persons, being insurgents, as aforesaid, and all others whom it may concern, on or before the 1st day of September next to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes. And I do moreover warn all persons whomsoever against aiding, abetting, or comforting the perpetrators of the aforesaid treasonable acts; and do require

all officers and other citizens, according to their respective duties and the laws of the land, to exert their utmost endeavors to prevent and suppress such dangerous proceedings.”

**Modern Translation:** Due to the fact that the citizens are in open rebellion against the government, I regret to say that I consider it necessary to put down this rebellion. The interest of the nation and the need for social order is at risk if I do not stop this uprising.

Therefore I order all people who are involved in this act of treason to stop and return to their homes by September 1<sup>st</sup>. I further order all others who are helping the rebels to stop. All military officers and other citizens should follow the law and do their best to put down any acts of rebellion.



Source Two: Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton, Tully, No. 3, August 28, 1794

The instrument by which it [government] must act are either the **authority of the laws** or **force**. If the first be destroyed, the last must be substituted; and where this becomes the ordinary instrument of government there is an end to liberty!

**Modern Translation:** A government gets its power through either strong laws or by using force against its citizens. If the laws are weak and power cannot be held through the law, then the government must use force. When force is used on a regular basis, liberty is ended.

Alexander Hamilton, speech to the New York Ratifying Convention, June, 1788

“The local interest of a State ought in every case to give way to the interests of the Union. For when a sacrifice of one or the other is necessary, the former becomes only an apparent, partial interest, and should yield, on the principle that the smaller good ought never to oppose the greater good. “

**Modern translation:** States’ rights and interests should always be less important than the rights and interests of the entire nation. When there is a disagreement over whether states’ interests or the national interest is more important, the national interest should always win. This is because the state is just a smaller part of the whole nation.



Source Three: Herman Husband

From a pamphlet to his fellow backcountry residents of North Carolina, 1769

“Has not the Charges of Government been unnecessarily raised, to the great Encrease of the Publick Tax? Has not the Publick Money been intrusted in Hands of insufficient Persons, without sufficient Securities, or due Care taken in accounting for, and recovering the same? Has not this often reduced us to the disagreeable Necessity of contributing or paying by Tax the Sum once raised— but through Carelessness or Neglect, or something worse, uselessly consumed? To what doth this tend? is not the Issue manifestly the Impoverishment of the Country?—fatal Consequences.

The Exorbitant, not to say unlawful Fees, required and assumed by Officers, — — — —the unnecessary, not to say destructive Abridgement of a Court’s Jurisdiction,— the enormous Encrease of the provincial Tax unnecessary; these are Evils of which no Person can be insensible, and which T doubt not has been lamented by each of you. It must have obliged you to examine from what Quarter Relief might be found against these sad Calamities — — — —In vain will you search for a Remedy until you find out the Disease.”

**Modern translation:** Hasn’t the government raised taxes without regard for paying it back? Hasn’t the government used the money carelessly? Hasn’t this forced citizens to pay even more taxes? If this continues, the country will become poor and may even cease to exist.

This increase in taxes is evil and most of you are probably angry and upset about this. Most of you will want to find some way to stop this problem.

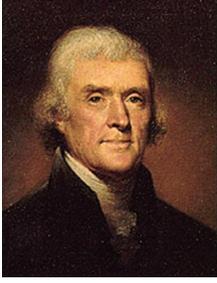


Source Four: Hugh Henry Brackenridge

From the Pennsylvania Gazette (Hugh Henry Brackenridge was the editor of the newspaper)

“Internal taxes upon consumption [are] most dangerous to the civil rights of freedmen and must in the end destroy the liberties of every country in which they are introduced.”

**Modern translation:** Taxes on food and drink are dangerous to people’s civil rights. Such taxes will end up destroying the liberties of the people in any country that tries them.



Source Five: Thomas Jefferson

“But with respect to future debt; would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming that neither the legislature, nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt, than they may pay within their own age, or within the term of 19 years.”

Thomas Jefferson, September 6, 1789

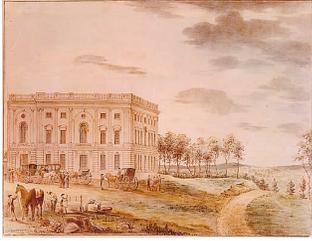
**Modern translation:** People who are writing the laws (Constitution) for a new nation should not allow that nation to owe more money than they can pay back within their lifetimes or within a time of 19 years.

From a letter to Edward Carrington

“Cherish, therefore, the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, Judges, and Governors, shall all become wolves.”

Thomas Jefferson, January 16, 1787

**Modern translation:** Pay attention to the common people and their needs. Do not judge them too harshly if they make mistakes but gently remind them of their duties as citizens. If we, the powerful people in our country, forget the common people then we will be like wolves.



Source Six: US Congress of 1794

#### US Congress, Message in regards to the Whiskey Rebellion, 1794

“The Governor having received information that a daring and cruel outrage has been committed in the county of Allegheny by a lawless body of armed men, who, among other enormities, attacked and destroyed the house of Gen. Neville on the 17th instant, request, in the most earnest manner, that you will exert all your influence and authority to suppress, within your jurisdiction, so pernicious and unwarrantable a spirit; that you will ascertain, with all possible dispatch, the circumstances of the offence; and that you will pursue, with the utmost vigilance, the lawful steps for bringing the offenders to justice. Every honest Citizen must feel himself personally mortified at the conduct of the rioters, which, particular if it passes with impunity, is calculated to fix an indelible stigma on the honor and reputation of the state....”

**Modern translation:** The governor (of Pennsylvania) received information that a large number of armed men have attacked and destroyed the house of General Neville, a military officer. Since this is an unlawful and terrible act, he asks that we do whatever is necessary to bring these men to justice. All honest men should be embarrassed and ashamed by the actions of these men. The nation should be ashamed if nothing is done about this situation.