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DEFINING THE REPUBLIC

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Theory)

Approved by:

Advisor

Date

DEDICATION

To Dr. Jeffrey Grynviski, for taking on the enormous task of advising.

To Dr. Philip Abbott, for the inspiration to write this dissertation.

To my Mother and Father, Veradean A. and Kenneth E. Nichols. Ultimately, this dissertation is the result of the love of learning you instilled in me from the very beginning.

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Introduction

This dissertation is entitled "Defining the Republic" because it is a comparison of the definitions of what specifically the newly-founded republic of the United States should be like between the views of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. I have chosen to compare these two Founders because they could agree on the form of government they wanted for the United States, namely the Constitution, but once they attained their goal, they became bitter political enemies since they could not agree on how to implement the Constitution they had both worked so hard to obtain. That is, they had conflicting definitions of, and expectations for, what the republic of the United States would be like.

Hamilton and Madison were not the only two Founders with conflicting definitions of what the United States should be. Anyone who looks at the conflict over ratification of the Constitution will see a wide variety of visions. Also, the political conflicts beginning in the 1790's only add more material showing the range of disagreement among the Founders.

One individual who specifically mentioned the problem of defining a republic was John Adams. In one letter he wrote Mercy Warren about his objections to her history of the American Revolution, he said:

"The first appearance of a national stipulation in favor of Republican government was in the Constitution of the United

States, in which a Republican constitution was guaranteed to the several States. It may perhaps be a sufficient recommendation of this article to say that it was introduced by Mr. Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina; and he ought to have the glory of it. But I confess I never understood of, and I believe no other man ever did, or ever will."¹

One problem with the word "republic," as Adams pointed out, is it has been given so many definitions throughout history. Adams stated a republic is a government of "more than one," but goes on to argue this is almost no definition at all. "A Republican government is a government of more than one. The word Republic has been used, it is true, by learned men, to signify every actual and every possible government among men - that of Constantinople as well as that of Geneva."²

For Adams, the distinction then is between republics which are free and those which are not free.

"The most accurate distinction, then, has been between free republics and republics which are not free. It is not even said in our Constitution that the people shall be guaranteed a free and republican government. The word is so loose and indefinite that successive predominant factions will put glosses and constructions on it as different as light and darkness; and if ever there should be a civil war, which Heaven forbid, the conquering General in all his triumph may establish a military despotism, and yet call it a constitutional republic, as Napoleon has already set him the example. The only effect of it that I could ever see is to deceive the people; and this practice my heart abhors, my head disapproves, and my tongue and my pen have ever avoided. I am no Pharisee, Jesuit, or Machiavellian."³

¹ Adams, John and Mercy Warren, *Correspondence Between John Adams and Mercy Warren* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 352-353.

² *Ibid*, 353.

³ *Ibid*, 353.

Adams points out just how "loose and indefinite" the word republic is, how many different types of government have been identified as republics, and the danger that follows from relying on such an ill-defined word to describe and understand just what form of government the United States exists under. It is that difficulty in defining the word republic I want to further explore through my comparison of Hamilton and Madison.

Now, Hamilton and Madison did not see their disagreements as a matter of conflicting definitions of "republic," or indeed any other word. They simply wanted different things for the United States. The reason I argue for taking the approach I advocate in comparing their conflicting visions is that by focusing on a word central to both (after all, both considered themselves republicans), one gains a theme around which to organize such a comparison. This means it can also be used for other Founders, and later individuals as well.

Examination of the ideas of the Founders is important because of the influence they had on later generations down to today. All sorts of individuals, from all sorts of ideological perspectives, call upon the Founders in support of their policy goals. However, the Founders were not the coherent group, with coherent sets of ideas and political principles, that many would like them to be. So it is rather to their differences and to their conflicts that we must look to fully understand their influence. In so doing we can not only more completely understand them, but ourselves

as well.

Not surprisingly, the literature on Hamilton and Madison is vast. However, the literature that focuses on both of them at the same time is much smaller. Even within the smaller corpus of work no one has yet done the specific kind of work I propose. Nevertheless, a survey of work done thus far that will assist in the project I propose is in order.

One simply cannot do any work during this era without consulting, and distinguishing one's work from, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick's "The Age of Federalism." Elkins and McKittrick do compare Hamilton and Madison, but with an eye towards explaining why they differed. For Elkins and McKittrick, their differences all boil down to the different goals, and different feelings toward, each man had vis a vis relations with Great Britain. In short, Hamilton's "Anglophilia" and Madison's "Anglophobia" underlay their conflict. Elkins and McKittrick do identify the question I focus on, that of defining of what a republic should be, once the Founders had achieved the goal of ratifying the Constitution.

"But once the new government was in being, and its legitimacy established, a new kind of ideological problem, hitherto not of the first urgency, became insistent. The Revolution had made the United States republican, and now it had been determined that these states were no longer a republican confederation, but a republican nation. But what else? Beyond the words of the Constitution and the republican values represented by General Washington, what was to be its character? At the beginning of 1790, the answer still lay very much in the future. Now that it lies in the past, we find it hard to imagine how heavily this question

could have weighed upon the leaders of the time."⁴

For Elkins and McKittrick, the conflict began with Hamilton's policy goals as Treasury Secretary. They begin, following Lance Banning's *The Jeffersonian Persuasion*, by noting the similarities (which shocked and horrified Madison), between Hamilton's proposals for funding the national debt, creating a national bank, and providing governmental support for manufacturing, and the "Court" policies of Sir Horace Walpole as Prime Minister of Great Britain.

"As the Hamiltonian program revealed itself over the the next two years - a sizable funded debt, a powerful national bank, excises, national subsidized manufactures, and eventually even a standing army - the Walpolean parallel at every point was too obvious to miss. It was in resistance to this, and everything it seemed to imply, that the 'Jeffersonian Persuasion' was erected."⁵

For most who have studied this era, the conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson is the focus of their work. However, Elkins and McKittrick take a similar approach to mine in emphasizing that one must first look at Madison vs Hamilton to truly understand the conflicts of that era.

"The character and quality of national life in the 1790's are thus not to be understood aside from the warfare of Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans. Worth noting, however, is that the groundwork for Jefferson's side was laid not by Jefferson himself, but by his friend and fellow Virginian, James Madison. It is to James Madison's estrangement from his friend, Alexander Hamilton, that one must go as a first step in plumbing the political passions of the

⁴ Elkins, Stanley and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 78.

⁵ Ibid, 19.

1790's."⁶

Again, as I mentioned above, this conflict between Hamilton and Madison boils down to, for Elkins and McKittrick, their respective “Anglophilia” and “Anglophobia.” They argue Madison’s point of view resulted from, first, what they term the “Virginia principle.” This is a contrasting way of thinking to the way Elkins and McKittrick ascribe to most of the members of the Constitutional convention. Elkins and McKittrick’s second influence on Madison’s point of view is the aforementioned “Anglophobia.”

“This was an anglophobia that could make ‘England’ a word capable of tainting almost anything. Few other individuals were more propelled by it in all they thought, said, and did than Jefferson and Madison, and nothing was more of a constant than this same anglophobia in the hostility to Hamiltonian Federalism, which depended for its very life on a prosperous commerce with England, or to give body to the wild francophilia – or ‘Gallomania’ as the Federalists sullenly called it – that persisted throughout the 1790s.”⁷

In contrast, Hamilton’s “Anglophilia” they attribute to his having grown up in a commercial environment, unlike Madison’s more agrarian background. His plans, so clearly outlined in his work as Treasury Secretary, displayed his affinity for a more commercial vision for the republic.

“A clear by-product of all this, for Alexander Hamilton, was the makings of a very special attitude toward England. An anglophile position on virtually everything was a basic

⁶ Ibid, 77.

⁷ Ibid, 27.

component in what Hamilton would come to stand for ideologically, and it would be of extraordinary importance in the political divisions of the future.”⁸

So, with Elkins and McKittrick, we see an argument for the eventual conflict between erstwhile friends Hamilton and Madison attributed to different preferences regarding the United States’ relationship with Great Britain. They hint at deeper preferences, though, such as different views on the economy, but do not pursue them. It is to one such deeper preference this work is dedicated.

Lance Banning, in his *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, also examines the conflict between Hamilton and Madison. Starting with Hamilton’s attempts to understand the developing conflict between himself and Madison, Banning argues that their views had never been exactly the same, as Hamilton seemed to think at first.

“But Hamilton and Madison, as I have shown, had never really shared ‘the same point of departure’; and Madison’s positions in the years through 1789 were not what many modern analysts have taken them to be. Hamilton misunderstood his colleague, and sharing some of Hamilton’s assumptions, later analysts have often shared in his misjudgment.”⁹

In contrast to other scholars who see a shift in Madison’s beliefs from the 1780s to the 1790s, Banning argues for conflicting underlying preferences between Hamilton and Madison all along regarding the

⁸ Ibid, 128

⁹ Banning, Lance, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 296.

desirable extent of national power.

“Madison, as has been shown, had never been a ‘nationalist’ in Hamilton’s conception of that term. Even as he led the nation through the framing and ratification of the Constitution, he had also shown a lively fear of distant, independent rulers, a fear he had displayed repeatedly during the 1780s. . . . In the 1780s as in the 1790s, Hamilton’s most cherished object was to build a modern nation-state. Madison’s fundamental purpose was to nurture and defend a revolutionary order of society and politics, which he regarded as profoundly inconsistent with the policies that many economic nationalists intended to pursue.”¹⁰

So, we see with Banning an explanation of the conflict between Hamilton and Madison as based on different preferences regarding the balance of power between the states and the national government, which he argues were there all along, even during the time they worked so closely together to get the Constitution they later could not agree on how to interpret and carry into effect.

James H. Read, in his *Power versus Liberty*, focuses on the question of power, and similarly to Banning, attributes the conflict between Hamilton and Madison to different preferences as to where power should reside in the United States.

“What Madison argued against – and believed he saw in Hamilton’s rule of constitutional construction – was the use of implied powers in a way that allowed the indefinite expansion of governmental power. There is a difference between implied powers and complete powers, and Madison’s argument against the Bank hinges on this difference. Neither those who drafted the Constitution nor the people when they ratified it had clear ideas of the extent of the power it

¹⁰ Ibid, 296-297.

granted. But they understood very clearly that the document was not designed to allow indefinite expansion of the powers of the national government."¹¹

I think Read's analysis is enlightening because it focuses specifically on different underlying preferences between Hamilton and Madison regarding how to deal with the question of power itself, and compares the two directly on this question.

"The key to understanding Hamilton's views on power and liberty and why he aroused such extraordinary fears among his contemporaries is the fact that Hamilton made a basic distinction between the liberty of citizens and the power of states, while most of his opponents did not. He believed it was possible greatly to expand the power of the national government with respect to the states without upsetting the ordinary balance between the power of government and the liberty of citizens. But in a sovereignty contest between national government and states, no such balance was possible."¹²

Forrest McDonald, in his *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, focuses on differing underlying definitions of what a republic should be like, so his work is in part similar to this dissertation.

"For example, Hamilton, who had inherited almost nothing, was wont to define a republic as any government in which no one had a hereditary status; whereas his friend Madison, who had inherited the status of freeman amidst slavery and whose blacks had inherited their status as slaves, preferred a definition that would avoid the sticky question of status and merely considered as republican any system in which governmental power derived from the consent of the

¹¹ Read, James H., *Power versus Liberty: Madison, Hamilton, Wilson, and Jefferson* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 12.

¹² *Ibid*, 15.

'public.'"¹³

Like other scholars, McDonald describes Hamilton as a thinker more in the vein of a political economist, while Madison is more of a political theorist for him. McDonald points to this as being one of the sources of their disagreement, in that they came to the subject of interpreting the Constitution from different mindsets.

"There is a mystery here: despite their close collaboration in 1787-1788 and the many conversations on public matters they had engaged in during that period, Hamilton and Madison apparently never discussed at any length their thoughts on political economy. When, in the period 1789-1791, the differences between them became overwhelmingly obvious, both men were genuinely surprised."¹⁴

McDonald argues Hamilton believed his plans would increase the quality of human life in the new republic. Note the positive role McDonald identifies in Hamilton's ideas regarding the role of the national government. For Hamilton, but not Madison, it is to the actions of the national government that one can look for potential improvements in life for United States citizens.

"The greatest benefits of a government-stimulated and government-channeled system of free private enterprise for profit, as Hamilton visualized things, were spiritual, not economic – the enlargement of the range of human freedom and the diversification of the possibilities for human endeavor."¹⁵

¹³ McDonald, Forrest, *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 135-136.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 141

Madison, on the other hand, was never, in McDonald's view, as sanguine regarding the role of the national government as Hamilton. It is true he did want to increase the power of the federal government, but not as much as Hamilton. McDonald attributes this to Hamilton not having as close emotional ties with his adopted home state of New York as Madison did with Virginia.

"The Madison of the 1780s, however, is generally regarded as having been as solidly entrenched in the nationalist camp as Hamilton was. This view of Madison as ardent nationalist must be tempered by at least two major sets of qualifications. One was that throughout his career on the national stage, at least until Jefferson became president, Madison was always mindful of the interests of his state and was rarely if ever willing to do anything in the national interest which he believed to be inconsonant with the interests of Virginia. That alone repeatedly set him apart from such nationalists as Gouverneur Morris, Hamilton, and Washington.

The other qualification to Madison's nationalism was that it was a matter of vital concern with him that the national government be appropriately balanced and checked, lest it become an engine of tyranny."¹⁶

I have saved for last the works most similar to my own. The aforementioned works did not concentrate solely on Hamilton and Madison, but included their disagreement as part of each one's overall work. Colleen A. Sheehan's 2004 *American Political Science Review* article, "Madison v. Hamilton: The Battle Over Republicanism and the Role of Public Opinion," does directly compare Hamilton and Madison, taking their conflicting ideas as the main point of her work. However, she

¹⁶ Ibid, 204

does not compare them on a variety of points, as I propose for this dissertation. Rather, she focuses on their conflicting views of the role of public opinion in determining public policy.

“By 1801, and probably earlier, Hamilton recognized that Madison’s opposition to him and the Federalists was propelled by a fundamental philosophic disagreement over the nature and role of public opinion in a republic. Tied to Madison’s and Hamilton’s differing perspectives on public opinion were conflicting interpretations of the Constitution and divergent visions of America’s economic future. These disagreements between the two leading Publii shattered their Roman alliance of 1787-88.”¹⁷

Sheehan argues Madison was far more in favor of ongoing input from citizens, not just political elites, in determining public policy. Also, though, she argues he was in favor of limiting the interpretation of the Constitution to how those who ratified it thought of it at the time of ratification.

“In Madison’s mind, the principle of popular sovereignty meant the recognition of the supremacy of the Constitution, understood and administered in a manner consistent with the sense of the people who ratified and adopted it. It also meant the *ongoing sovereignty of public opinion*, which requires the active participation of the citizenry in the affairs of the political community.”¹⁸

Hamilton had, Sheehan argues, a very different understanding of the role of public opinion. Following on his well-known concerns regarding democratic forms of government, Hamilton wanted as little

¹⁷ Colleen A. Sheehan, “Madison v. Hamilton: The Battle Over Republicanism and the Role of Public Opinion,” *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 3 (2004): 405 – 406.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 406.

ongoing, direct, participation by citizens in government. Rather, Sheehan states, Hamilton wanted citizens to participate through expressing, or withholding, their “confidence” in their elected leaders.

“Hamilton feared that the Republican agenda embraced the naive democratic optimism of his age, that in fact it had close connections across the seas to the ‘vain reveries of a false and new fangled philosophy’ of the French Enlightenment. In contrast, he advocated a less active, more submissive role for the citizenry and a more energetic and independent status for the executive and his administration. For him, public opinion was the reflection of the citizens ‘confidence’ in government.”¹⁹

Another article which compares Hamilton and Madison on a specific issue is Michael Schwarz's “The Great Divergence Reconsidered: Hamilton, Madison, and U.S. – British Relations, 1783-89.” As the title indicates, Schwarz compares the two on how they differed in regards to dealing with Great Britain during the era of the Articles of Confederation.

Schwarz references the controversy which of the two, Hamilton or Madison, had supposedly “abandoned” the other. Various authors have taken the side of one or the other, but Schwarz argues that Madison had good reason to consider that it was Hamilton who had abandoned him.

“Because Madison and Hamilton led the movement for constitutional reform, and because the sorry state of foreign affairs provided substantial impetus for that movement, it seems reasonable that we should reassess the Great Divergence of the 1790s by examining Madison and Hamilton's approach to Anglo-American relations in the 1780s. On this issue, at least, important evidence suggests that in specific yet fundamental ways it was Hamilton, not

¹⁹ Ibid, 406.

Madison, who reversed course."²⁰

Even though Madison and Hamilton had worked together on *The Federalist*, it was only a few years after the ratification of the Constitution that their differences became all-too-evident. Schwarz characterizes their differences over how to deal with Great Britain as tied to their conflicting estimations on either the utility, or danger, of the United States continuing to have Great Britain as its primary trade partner.

"By the time the Wars of the French Revolution broke out in 1792, Hamilton and Madison had developed irreconcilable views of America's proper relationship to Great Britain. As Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton saw in Britain a model of stability and an invaluable trading partner, whose commerce would provide a major source of revenue to support his ambitious fiscal plans. Madison, on the other hand, had come to view Britain as an enemy to republican liberty and an implacable foe to American independence, which he feared was threatened by Britain's virtual monopoly over American trade. They had, however, arrived at these differing views from much the same starting point. Throughout the 1780s, Hamilton and Madison shared similar concerns and offered similar solutions to every important problem in Anglo-American relations."²¹

Schwarz's claim that Hamilton wanted to continue relations with Great Britain as part of his economic goals for the United States is plausible, but he does not offer any direct statement from Hamilton himself to support it. Likewise, his estimation of Madison's motivation is also plausible, but he does not offer any statement from Madison himself

²⁰ Michael Schwarz, "The Great Divergence Reconsidered: Hamilton, Madison, and U.S.-British Relations, 1783-89," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 3 (2007): 409.

²¹ *Ibid*, 410-411.

either. So, for me, Schwarz's characterization is indicative of the kind of claim that needs more evidence before we can be truly confident it is correct.

As is clear from this review of other work done, the sort of direct, issue-by-issue comparison of Hamilton and Madison has not been done, with the exception of Sheehan's and Schwarz's articles I just discussed. This dissertation will expand the comparison of Hamilton and Madison into new areas that have not been as fully explored as they will be here. This is my original contribution to the literature on Hamilton, Madison, Constitutional interpretation, and the early history of the United States republic.

In Chapter One, I will review the history of the idea of a republic, beginning with Polybius and continuing up until the time of Hamilton and Madison. My approach follows, for the most part, the presentation from J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment*. My approach differs slightly from his, though, in that I will include some individual thinkers he does not.

In Chapter Two I will compare Hamilton and Madison on the issue of slavery. As I will show, Hamilton was a documented opponent of slavery since service in the Army during the Revolution. He also was active in the New York Manumission society to the end of his life. Madison, on the other hand, while he disliked slavery, and even expressed a desire to have as little to do with it as possible, did not take any overt action to oppose

slavery throughout his life. Only late in life did he offer a rather tepid support for the idea of resettling voluntarily freed slaves in Africa. Also, Hamilton did not display any bias towards blacks, considering them to be to be just as competent as whites. He did not express any reservations or fears regarding freed slaves living alongside other Americans. Madison, though, was convinced to the end of his life that blacks and whites could not live together successfully.

In Chapter Three I will compare Hamilton and Madison on the issue of how the United States should position itself between the two major powers of the early period of American history, France and Great Britain. I will show how, rather than having an "Anglophilia," as Elkins and McKittrick describe him, Hamilton had a staunch focus on the well-being of the United States. He was concerned about the influence of both major powers, and the influence of Europe in general, rather than having a preference for one over the other. Madison, though, was more attached to republicanism, as he understood it, than to France. He supported connections with France as a way of counterbalancing the influence of Great Britain, but once France had left its experiment in republicanism behind for the rule of Napoleon, he treated France no differently than any other foreign country.

In Chapter Four I will compare Hamilton and Madison on the issue of Constitutional interpretation. I will show how their differences of opinion

existed even during the time they worked together on *The Federalist*, as Hamilton and Madison's opinions, which I will document, during that time showed sharply different expectations. Neither departed from the other in later years, because neither understood they had conflicting views all along. That they did not realize this only shows that they simply did not have an in-depth discussion of their expectations for the future of the United States.

In Chapter Five I will compare Hamilton and Madison on the issue of religion. Madison, as is well known, was an ardent defender of individual religious freedom throughout his adult life. He did not express any strong religious beliefs of his own at any point in his life. His focus was not on personal piety, but rather on freedom from religion. He even tried to have the protections from official religion in the United States Constitution extended to limit the state governments as well during the time Congress was writing the Bill of Rights. Hamilton was similarly not given to religious expressions during most of his life, but he did show some religious reflections when young and still living in the Caribbean. However, as he aged, especially after leaving public office, he showed greater and greater interest in religion. He expressed his thoughts on Christianity in writing more and more during the late 1790s and early 1800s. Finally, as he lay dying, he wanted to receive Communion.

In Chapter Six I will compare Hamilton and Madison on the issue of

federal government involvement in the economy. Both showed their later preferences before the Constitution was ratified, so again, neither genuinely departed from the other in later years. Hamilton showed his strong preference for government regulation of various aspects of the economy all along, and Madison, while favoring regulation in some ways, was nowhere near as eager to involve the federal, rather than state, government in economic matters.

My conclusion will focus on the overall implications for republicanism of the differing points of view Hamilton and Madison had. As I mentioned above, there is no one definitive definition of the word "republic," and so what it means for the United States to be a republic has been a source of constant debate throughout its history. The differences Hamilton and Madison had will help highlight that debate, as both were pivotal figures in the early history of the United States, and their influence has continued to this day.

Chapter One: Definitions of a Republic From Other Authors

Since this dissertation is an examination of the idea of a republic according to the preferences of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, I will dedicate this chapter to a discussion of the background to the idea of a republic throughout history. In so doing, my approach is heavily influenced by J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment*, although I will include some figures he does not in my presentation. Regardless of whether they are all strictly within the historical development of republican thought as it is currently understood, I argue the individuals I include are worth discussing because Hamilton and Madison did not concern themselves with the intellectual categories that we later academics use. Their thought on what constituted "proper" republicanism drew on a wider range of influences.

As Pocock argues, though, the primary source for what we now identify as republican thought, with its emphasis on a mixed constitution, is Polybius and his *The Histories*.

"The sixth book of Polybius' *Histories*, though it did not become available in a language other than Greek until the second decade of the sixteenth century, exercised so great an influence on Renaissance ideas about politics in time that it may be considered here as indicative of that age's fundamental conceptual problems."²²

²² Pocock, J.G.A., *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 77.

As is well known, Polybius borrowed the idea for a mixed constitution from Aristotle, but further elaborated on and expanded Aristotle's ideas. The whole point of positing a mixture of different political systems was stability, at least one which would conceivably last longer than any of the stages through which Polybius argues societies moved as a matter of regular history.

"In the natural, spontaneous course of events, the first system to arise is monarchy, and this is followed by kingship, but it takes the deliberate correction of the defects of monarchy for it to develop into kingship. Kingship changes into its congenital vice – that is, into tyranny – and then it is the turn of aristocracy, after the dissolution of tyranny. Aristocracy necessarily degenerates into oligarchy, and when the general populace get impassioned enough to seek redress for the crimes committed by their leaders, democracy is born. And in due course of time, once democracy turns to violating and breaking the law, mob-rule arises and completes the series."²³

Polybius' cure for this endless cycle is once again the mixture of all three types of government at its best, kingship, aristocracy, and democracy, specifically exemplified by the Roman republic. The three components, or building blocks, as Polybius called them, were the consuls, which provided the kingship element, the senate, which provided the aristocratic element, and the people, which provided the democratic element.

"To a considerable extent, then, each of the three components of the Roman constitution can harm or help the

²³ Polybius, *The Histories*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 373.

other two. This enables the whole made up of all three parts to respond appropriately to every situation that arises, and that is what makes it the best conceivable system of government."²⁴

I will follow an historical approach to discussing the other authors who followed in Polybius' footsteps, so the next individual I have included is Cicero, the Roman senator. He also discussed the possible types of government as including monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

"When, therefore, the supreme power is in the hands of one man, we call that man a king and that form of government a monarchy. When it is in the hands of certain selected persons, the state is said to be ruled by the will of an aristocracy. And a state is democratic – for that is the term used – when all authority is in the hands of the people themselves. Any one of these three forms of government, while not, of course, perfect nor in my judgment the best, is nevertheless a possible form of government, if the bond holds which originally united its members in the social order of the commonwealth; and one may be better than another."²⁵

Cicero does not posit the same cycle of governments as Polybius, merely listing the options he sees as possible. However, he does argue there is in fact a kind of government which is superior to any of these three, and here we see a continuation of Polybius' mixed model.

"There is, accordingly, a fourth kind of commonwealth which, in my opinion, should receive the highest approval, since it is formed by the combination, in due measure, of the three forms of state which I described as original."²⁶

²⁴ *ibid*, 384.

²⁵ Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*, trans. by George Holland Sabine and Stanley Barney Smith (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1976), 131.

²⁶ *ibid*, 134.

Machiavelli, in *The Discourses*, also presents Polybius' cycle without specifically referring to him by name. Humans originally select the strongest man among them to rule, and thus begins the cycle through kingship, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, anarchy, and then begin the cycle all over again. However, there is a kind of government that is better than any of these by itself.

"I say, then, that all kinds of government are defective; those three which we have qualified as good because they are too short-lived, and the three bad ones because of their inherent viciousness. Thus sagacious legislators, knowing the vices of each of these systems of government by themselves, have chosen one that should partake of all of them, judging that to be the most stable and solid. In fact, when there is combined under the same constitution a prince, a nobility, and the power of the people, then these three powers will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check."²⁷

Machiavelli argues the origin of this especially worthwhile form of government comes from a gifted legislator, who sets up laws which thereafter are complied with throughout subsequent generations. For Machiavelli, one such legislator was Lycurgus, whose model of government for Sparta lasted for centuries. Even though Rome did not have any such individual legislator, though, it nevertheless developed the type of government of which Machiavelli approves.

"But let us come to Rome. Although she had no legislator like Lycurgus, who constituted her government, at her very origin, in a manner to secure her liberty for a length of time, yet the disunion which existed between the Senate and the people

²⁷ Machiavelli, Niccolo, *The Prince and the Discourses*, trans. by Luigi Ricci, revised by E.R.P. Vincent (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), 114-115.

produced such extraordinary events, that chance did for her what the laws had failed to do. Thus, if Rome did not attain the first degree of happiness, she at least had the second. Her first institutions were doubtless defective, but they were not in conflict with the principles that might bring her to perfection."²⁸

Returning to Pocock, he argues the "glue," if you will, of this preferred, mixed form of government, according to Machiavelli, is virtue. Just having the structural elements of a monarchical element, an aristocratical element, and a democratical element, are not enough. What is needed in addition is, specifically, "civic" virtue, in order for such republics to succeed.

"The republic or polity was in yet another sense a structure of virtue: it was a structure in which every citizen's ability to place the common good before his own was the precondition of every other's, so that every man's virtue saved every other's from that corruption part of whose time-dimension was *fortuna*. The republic was therefore a structure whose organizing principle was something far more complex and positive than custom."²⁹

Pocock ascribes the importation of Machiavellian republican influence into England to the political conflict which led to that nation's Civil War. Instead of monarchical and feudal ideas, some allowance was held to be needed for the other sources of political power, namely the aristocracy and the people. Pocock identifies the crucial step as having been taken by Charles I's advisors.

²⁸ *ibid*, 115-116.

²⁹ Pocock, J.G.A., *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 184.

“On 21 June 1642, with about two months to go before the formal beginnings of civil war, two of Charles 1’s advisors – Viscount Falkland and Sir John Colepeper – drafted, and persuaded him to issue, a document in which the King, not Parliament, took the step of declaring England a mixed government rather than a condescending monarchy. *His Majesty’s Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Both Houses of Parliament* . . . is a crucial document in English political thought, and among other things one of a series of keys which opened the door to Machiavellian analysis. In essence, it asserts that the government of England is vested in three estates, the King, the lords, and the commons, and that the health and the very survival of the system depend upon maintenance of the balance between them.”³⁰

While he is not included among the authors Pocock discusses, I am including Thomas Hobbes because of his undisputed place in the development of English, and thus later American, political thought. Hobbes also identifies three main types of government, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. However, for Hobbes, the most important goal for any form of government, is not virtue as with Machiavelli, but rather peace and security.

“The difference between these three kindes of Commonwealth, consisteth not in the difference of Power; but in the difference of Convenience, or Aptitude to produce the Peace, and Security of the people; for which end they were instituted.”³¹

For Hobbes, the kind of government whose end result is most clearly the peace and security of the people, is in fact monarchy. Hobbes argues that the interest of the monarch is the same as that of the country

³⁰ *ibid*, 361.

³¹ Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*, ed. by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131.

as a whole, and thus monarchy is best suited to creating the hoped-for outcomes of peace and security.

“From whence it follows, that where the publique and private interest are most closely united, there is the publique most advanced. Now, in Monarchy, the private interest is the same with the publique. The riches, power, and honour of a Monarch arise onely from the riches, strength and reputation of his Subjects. For no King can be rich, nor glorious, nor secure; whose subjects are either poore, or contemptible, or too weak through want, or dissension, to maintain a war against their enemies: Whereas in a Democracy, or Aristocracy, the publique prosperity conferres not so much to the private fortune of one that is corrupt, or ambitious, as doth many times a perfidious advice, a treacherous action, or a Civill warre.”³²

It is with James Harrington, however, who Pocock does identify as being clearly within the republican tradition, that we begin to receive even more details regarding what a republic should be like, more than just having a mixed government. For Harrington, land ownership, and also possession of weapons, is vital.

“But the tillage, bringing up a good soldiery, bringeth up a good commonwealth . . . for where the owner of the plough comes to have the sword too, he will use it in defence of his own, whence it hath happened that the people of Oceana, in proportion to their property, have always been free, and the genius of this nation hath ever had some resemblance with that of ancient Italy, which was wholly addicted unto commonwealths, and where Rome came to make the greatest account of her rustic tribes and to call her consuls from the plough.”³³

³² *ibid*, 131.

³³ Harrington, James, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. by J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 4-5.

It is this ownership of land, though, which specifically provides for Harrington the means of balancing power within a commonwealth. Rather than relying solely on civic virtue, having a successful commonwealth means the otherwise weakest of the three, the people, have sufficient land to counteract the power of the other two.

“And if the whole people be landlords, or hold the lands so divided among them, that no one man, or number of men, within the compass of the few or aristocracy, overbalance them, the empire *without the interposition of force* is a commonwealth.”³⁴

Furthermore, Harrington defines “popular government” as the best, because it best approximates what human beings can accomplish through the use of their reason.

“Mankind then must either be less just than the creature, or acknowledge also his common interest to be common right. And if reason be nothing else but interest, and the interest of mankind be the right interest, then the reason of mankind must be right reason. Now compute well, for if the interest of popular government come the nearest unto the interest of mankind, then the reason of popular government must come the nearest unto right reason.”³⁵

But what, exactly, kind of “popular government” did Harrington intend in *The Commonwealth of Oceana*? Not only does his ideal form of government rely on widespread land ownership, armed commoners, and a mixed government, it also specifically includes voting rights. Missing are references to a hereditary monarchy, or a hereditary aristocracy as well.

³⁴ *ibid*, 12.

³⁵ *ibid*, 22.

“An equal commonwealth by that which hath been said is a government established upon an equal agrarian, arising into the superstructures or three orders, the senate debating and proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing by an equal rotation through the suffrage of the people given by the ballot.”³⁶

John Locke is another author who, like Thomas Hobbes, is not included among those considered by Pocock to be within the republican tradition. Nevertheless, any discussion of background influences on early Americans such as Hamilton and Madison would be incomplete without noting his contributions.

To begin, Locke of course argues that organized societies come into being through the consent of the people who constitute them, in order to better protect their “liberty and property.” For Locke, there are specific goals people have in mind when they make the choice to live together rather than apart. Those goals limit the range of actions any government the people choose to create can take on its own. Moreover, the primary part of government for Locke is in fact the legislature which is the first thing created.

“THE great end of mens entering into Society, being the enjoyment of the Properties in Peace and Safety, and the great instrument and means of that being the Laws established in that Society; the *first and fundamental positive Law* of all Common-wealths, is the *establishing of the Legislative Power*; as the *first and fundamental natural law*.”³⁷

³⁶ *ibid*, 34.

³⁷ Locke, John, *The Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 355-356.

Not only is the form of government chosen by the people who choose to create it limited in what it can do, the people who created it can change the government itself if they so choose.

“. . . there remains still *in the People a Supreme Power* to remove or *alter the Legislative*, when they find the *Legislative* act contrary to the trust reposed in them.”³⁸

Furthermore, the government itself can even be removed if that is felt to be necessary.

“There is therefore, secondly, another way whereby *Governments are dissolved*, and that is; when the *Legislative*, or the *Prince*, either of them act contrary to their *Trust*.”³⁹

Algernon Sidney, writing, like Locke, in response to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, makes arguments quite similar to Locke's in regards to the origins and limited powers of government. His arguments do include the notion of “justice” in the forming of governments, though.

“The liberty of one is thwarted by that of another; and whilst they are all equal, none will yield to any, otherwise than by a general consent. This is the ground of all just governments; for violence or fraud can create no right; and the same consent gives the form to them all, how much soever they differ from each other.”⁴⁰

The purpose of creating government, according to Sidney, is justice, and those who are given power under any form of government, are there

³⁸ *ibid*, 367.

³⁹ *ibid*, 412.

⁴⁰ Sidney, Algernon, *Discourses Concerning Government*, ed. by Thomas G. West (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990), 30-31.

to carry out justice. Justice is the good of the society, not of any one individual or group within that society.

“‘Tis lawful therefore for any such bodies to set up one, or a few men to govern them, or to retain the power in themselves; and he or they who are set up, having no other power but what is conferred upon them by that multitude, whether great or small, are truly by them made what they are; and by the law of their own creation, are to exercise those powers according to the proportion, and to the ends for which they were given.”⁴¹

Sidney does give pride of place to mixed government as being the best of all possible choices.

“And if I should undertake to say, there never was a good government in the world, that did not consist of the three simple species of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, I think I might make it good.”⁴²

Like Locke, Sidney clearly states that governments can be changed as desired.

“. . . whilst the foundation and principle of a government remains good, the superstructures may be changed according to occasions, without any prejudice to it.”⁴³

Sidney’s main concern is with “corruption,” which, even if a government is initially set up well, can cause its decline into despotism. Corruption for Sidney is ultimately reliance on the monarch for one’s income, since it is in absolute monarchies that corruption inevitably occurs.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 99.

⁴² *ibid*, 166.

⁴³ *ibid*, 175.

“This being the state of the matter on both sides, we may easily collect, that all governments are subject to corruption and decay; but with this difference, that absolute monarchy is by principle led unto, or rooted in it; whereas mixed or popular governments are only in a possibility of falling into it: As the first cannot subsist, unless the prevailing part of the people be corrupted; the other must certainly perish, unless they be preserved in a great measure free from vices: and I doubt whether any better reason can be given, why there have been and are more monarchies than popular governments in the world, than that nations are more easily drawn into corruption than defended from it; and I think that monarchy can be said to be natural in no other sense, than that our depraved nature is most inclined to that which is worst.”⁴⁴

This need for virtue in Sidney’s thought does reveal a conflict within his argument. At one point he admits that aristocratically-rooted governments are less subject to corruption than popular, or democratically-rooted governments.

“If it be said, that those governments in which the democratical part governs most, do more frequently err in the choice of men or of the means of preserving that purity of manners which is required for the well-being of a people, than those wherein aristocracy prevails; I confess it.”⁴⁵

However, just sentences later, he extols the virtues of democracy as the form of government most likely to be the best one possible.

“. . . and of all governments, democracy, in which every man’s liberty is least restrained, because every man hath an equal part, would certainly prove to be the most just, rational and natural;”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 189.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 191.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, 192.

Be that as it may, Sidney's goal in *Discourses Concerning Government* is to argue against absolute monarchies, because they are the most unjust possible form of government. Power comes from the people, not from divine right. Power proceeds upwards from the people to their magistrates, and does not descend from a divinely appointed monarch.

“. . . I take liberty to say, that whereas there is no form appointed by God or nature, those governments only can be called just, which are established by the consent of nations. These nations may at the first set up popular or mixed governments, and without the guilt of sedition introduce them afterwards, if that which was first established prove unprofitable or hurtful to them; and those that have done so, have enjoy'd more justice in times of peace, and managed wars, when occasion requir'd, with more virtue and better success, than any absolute monarchies have done.”⁴⁷

Sidney was a martyr to other Whigs, especially the later “True Whig” writers who were so influential with the leaders of the American Revolution. His *Discourses Concerning Government* were the source of ideas which revolutionary leaders across the colonies called upon to justify their complaints regarding the actions of Parliament and King. Some passages of his need only be mentioned to show the influence of his thought.

“But those who seek after truth, will easily find, that there can be no such thing in the world as the rebellion of a nation against its own magistrates, and that rebellion is not always evil.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 196.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 519.

This passage also needs no further comment in regards to not only the ideas, but the actions taken, by leaders of the American Revolution.

“But tho every private man singly taken be subject to the commands of the magistrate, the whole body of the people is not so; for he is by and for the people, and the people is neither by nor for him. The obedience due to him from private men is grounded upon, and measured by the general law; and that law regarding the welfare of the people, cannot set up the interest of one or a few men against the publick. The whole body therefore of a nation cannot be tied to any other obedience than is consistent with the common good, according to their own judgment: and having never been subdued or brought to terms of peace with their magistrates, they cannot be said to revolt or rebel against them to whom they owe no more than seems good to themselves, and who are nothing of or by themselves, more than other men.”⁴⁹

Montesquieu, as has been demonstrated by Donald Lutz⁵⁰, was cited a comparable number of times as John Locke during the 1760's and 1770's (15 vs. 18), and his influence on the separation of powers debate clearly justifies his inclusion here. Montesquieu identifies a somewhat different set of possible governments than do the other authors I have thus far discussed.

“There are three kinds of government: REPUBLICAN, MONARCHICAL, and DESPOTIC. To discover the nature of each, the idea of them held by the least educated of men is sufficient. I assume three definitions, or rather, three facts: one, *republican government is that in which the people as a body, or only a part of the people, have sovereign power;*

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 519.

⁵⁰ Lutz, Donald, “The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth Century American Political Thought.” *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 1 (1984): 189-197.

*monarchical government is that in which one alone governs, but by fixed and established laws; whereas, in despotic government, one alone, without law and without rule, draws everything along by his will and his caprices.”*⁵¹

Notice his inclusion of both democracy and aristocracy under the label of republic, and his definition of a monarchy as one which abides by laws, which is what distinguishes it from the rule of a despot. Also, Montesquieu distinguishes between the “nature” of a type of government and its “principle.”

“There is this difference between the nature of the government as its principle: its nature is that which makes it what it is, and its principle, that which makes it act. The one is its particular structure, and the other is the human passions that set it in motion.”⁵²

The particular principle that both democratic republics and aristocratic republics need is “virtue,” although Montesquieu argues aristocracies need it less than democracies.

“Just as there must be virtue in popular government, there must also be virtue in the aristocratic one. It is true that it is not as absolutely required.”⁵³

Montesquieu goes into considerable detail to specify just what kind of virtue he argues is necessary for a democratic republic to exist.

“One can define this virtue as love of the laws and the homeland. This love, requiring a continuous preference of the public interest over one’s own, produces all the individual virtues; they are only that preference.

⁵¹ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. and ed. by Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10.

⁵² *ibid*, 21.

⁵³ *ibid*, 24.

This love is singularly connected with democracies. In them alone, government is entrusted to each citizen. Now government is like all things in the world; in order to preserve it, one must love it.”⁵⁴

Montesquieu also provides, and argues in favor of, a specific definition of “liberty” as part of his presentation of what a government is like when people have a country in which they can enjoy liberty. First of all, liberty does “not” mean just doing whatever one chooses to do:

“It is true that in democracies the people seem to do what they want, but political liberty in no way consists in doing what one wants. In a state, that is, in a society where there are laws, liberty can consist only having the power to do what one should want to do and in no way being constrained to do what one should not want to do.

One must put oneself in mind of what independence is and what liberty is. Liberty is the right to do everything the laws permit; and if one citizen could do what they forbid, he would no longer have liberty because the others would likewise have this same power.”⁵⁵

Montesquieu does not automatically assign political liberty to republics or democracies. In fact, he states that quite often republics and democracies are less free than monarchies. This is due to his insistence that the exercise of power by any one person or group be constrained, or checked, by the power of other people or other groups.

“Democracy and aristocracy are not free states by their nature. Political liberty is found only in moderate governments. But it is not always in moderate states. It is present only when power is not abused, but it has eternally been observed that any man who has power is led to abuse

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 36.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 155.

it; he continues until he finds limits. Who would think it? Even virtue has need of limits.

So that one cannot abuse power, power must check power by the arrangement of things. A constitution can be such that no one will be constrained to do the things the law does not oblige him to do or be kept from doing the things the law permits him to do."⁵⁶

Most countries, according to Montesquieu, did not have political liberty as their purpose, not even the Italian republics of his day. The only country he considered as having political liberty as its purpose was Great Britain, because there political power was divided between different branches of government. The influence of this distinction on the United States Constitution and its division of power between executive, legislative and judicial powers is of course well known.

"In each state there are three sorts of powers: legislative power, executive power over the things depending on the right of nations, and executive power over the things depending on civil right. . . . Political liberty in a citizen is that tranquility of spirit which comes from the opinion each one has of his security, and in order for him to have this liberty the government must be such that one citizen cannot fear another citizen.

When legislative power is united with executive power in a single person or in a single body of the magistracy, there is no liberty, because one can fear that the same monarch or senate that makes tyrannical laws will execute them tyrannically.

Nor is there liberty if the power of judging is not separate from legislative power and from executive power. . . . All would be lost if the same man or the same body of principal men, either of nobles, or of the people, exercised these three powers: that of making the laws, that of

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 155-156.

executing public resolutions, and that of judging the crimes or the disputes of individuals."⁵⁷

David Hume, even though his role was more that of a foil than of a source of inspiration because of his support for the monarchy and his preference for tradition rather than innovation, nevertheless was a widely read, and even cited, author during the early decades of the United States, as again Donald Lutz has shown.⁵⁸ Even though Hume was hesitant to recommend any changes to political institutions, he nevertheless did ponder the possibility of exploring the idea of an ideal form of government against which current forms could be compared so as to provide a kind of model for alterations.

"First, a legislature is essential, but not a unicameral legislature: All free governments must consist of two councils, lesser and greater; or, in other words, of a senate and people. The people, as HARRINGTON observes, would want wisdom, without the senate: The senate, without the people, would want honesty."⁵⁹

Interestingly, Hume precedes later individuals such as Madison in arguing that it is possible to extend a republic over a large country. In fact, Hume argues that if done properly, a large republic would have distinct advantages over a small one.

"We shall conclude this subject, with observing the falsehood of the common opinion, that no large state, such as FRANCE

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 156-157.

⁵⁸ Lutz, Donald, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth Century American Political Thought." *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 1 (1984): 189-197.

⁵⁹ Hume, David, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 522-523.

or GREAT BRITAIN, could ever be modelled into a commonwealth, but that such a form of government can only take place in a city or small territory. The contrary seems probable. Though it is more difficult to form a republican government in an extensive country than in a city; there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult and faction."⁶⁰

In fact, Hume argues that such large countries are precisely the sort in which one can, slowly and cautiously to be sure, approach more refined and perhaps even ideal forms of government.

"In a large government, which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people, who may be admitted into the first elections or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates, who direct all the movements."⁶¹

I conclude this discussion with an examination of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon's *Cato's Letters*, which antedated the American Revolution by only a few decades. That *Cato's Letters* was widely read, appreciated, and used by the leaders of the American Revolution is already well known. They also, like others before mentioned, locate ultimate power in the people at large.

"The first Principles of Power are in the People; and all the Projects of Men in Power ought to refer to the People, to aim solely at their Good, and end in it: And whoever will pretend to govern them without regarding them, will soon repent it."⁶²

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 527.

⁶¹ *ibid*, 528.

⁶² Trenchard, John and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters*, third edition (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), 179.

The only form of government that can be called good according to Trenchard and Gordon is the one which aims at the common good, rather than the good of one or of a few.

“Dominion that is not maintained by the Sword, must be maintained by Consent; and in this latter Case, what Security can any Man at the Head of Affairs expect, but from pursuing the People’s Welfare, and seeking their good Will? The Government of One for the Sake of One, is Tyranny; and so is the Government of a Few for the Sake of Themselves: But the Government executed for the Good of All, and with the Consent of All, is Liberty; and the Word (Government) is prophaned, and its Meaning abused, when it signifies any Thing else.”⁶³

The only form of government which does actively seek the good of all is the government that dutifully represents all of the people. That form of government is the mixed constitution, because it in turn represents the people at large, the aristocracy, and the monarchy, all at the same time rather than any one at a time.

“But, Thanks be to Heaven and our worthy Ancestors, our Liberties are better secured. We have a Constitution, in which the People have a large Share: They are one part of the Legislature, and have the sole Power of giving Money; which includes in it every thing that they can ask for the publick Good; and the Representatives, being neither awed nor bribed, will always act for the Country’s Interest; their own being so interwoven with the People’s Happiness, that they must stand and fall together.”⁶⁴

Any form of good government must also be one in which the laws are the ultimate power. Rule of law, rather than rule by any one person or

⁶³ *ibid*, 179-180.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 181.

group, is for Trenchard and Gordon an essential aspect of the good government the people of Great Britain enjoy.

“Power is like Fire; it warms, scorches, or destroys, according as it is watched, provoked, or increased. It is as dangerous as useful. Its only Rule is the Good of the People; but because it is apt to break its Bounds, in all good Governments nothing, or as little as may be, ought to be left to Chance, or the Humors of Men in Authority: All should proceed by fixed and stated Rules; and upon any Emergency, new Rules should be made. This is the Constitution, and this the Happiness of *Englishmen*, as has been formerly shewn at large in these Letters.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Ibid, 192.

Chapter Two: Hamilton and Madison on Slavery

I will now compare Hamilton and Madison on a variety of issues, beginning with slavery. I have chosen this issue because slavery was spoken of by both over several decades of their lives, and each took a quite different approach in responding to the problem of slavery. Neither Hamilton nor Madison was actually in favor of slavery, but as I will show, Hamilton was far more active in opposing slavery, and even seeking its discontinuation, while Madison was much more equivocal in his response. Madison did not speak out publicly in favor of ending slavery until near the end of his life, while Hamilton took a far more active, public role as early as during the Revolutionary War.

From Hamilton we will see an effort during the Revolution, along with his friend and fellow Army officer Henry Laurens, to actively recruit slaves for the Army, and offer them their freedom in exchange for service. He simply did not think that slaves were either better or worse than other ordinary people. That he maintained this point of view throughout the remainder of his life we will clearly see by his extremely active involvement in the New York Manumission Society up until the time of his duel with Aaron Burr.

Madison, on the other hand, even though as we will see, found the idea of freeing slaves in exchange for military service a good idea, he never adopted an active role in ridding the United States of slavery. Only

late in life did he even half-heartedly "recommend" an effort to resettle slaves who had been voluntarily freed back in Africa. Indeed, he remained convinced throughout his life that blacks and whites could not peacefully and successfully coexist in the United States.

Lance Banning speculates that, even though Madison did not take action to end slavery during most of his life, he was nevertheless guilt-ridden by its existence. Furthermore, Banning argues Madison was especially troubled by his own involvement in its continuation.

"Madison was fully conscious of the wickedness of slavery, probably from the beginning of the war. Throughout his life - and with increasing guilt - he thought of it as an abomination absolutely incompatible with his ideals. Nevertheless, through forty years of active public service, he refused to risk his usefulness in other urgent causes by identifying with the more outspoken, active critics of the institution; and he never freed himself from daily, intimate involvement with the evil. Attended by a body servant even when he traveled to the North, he willed his chattels to his wife and hoped in his retirement that a voluntary, gradual emancipation could be speeded by permitting slavery's diffusion to the West. Trapped by his belief that whites wouldn't permit equality for blacks and that the former slaves would be impoverished and dangerous in a state of partial freedom, he could do no more, in his old age, than to commit his waning energies and great prestige to the leadership of the American Colonization Society. Slavery clamped its fetters even on his mind."⁶⁶

In a similar manner, Ron Chernow speculates about the influence of Hamilton's childhood on his perception of slavery, arguing it was the

⁶⁶ Banning, Lance, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, 83.

memories of growing up in the midst of slavery in the Caribbean and seeing its horrors first-hand that made him an opponent.

“The memories of his West Indian childhood left Hamilton with a settled antipathy to slavery. During the war, Hamilton had supported John Laurens' futile effort to emancipate southern slaves who fought for independence. He had expressed an unwavering belief in the genetic equality of blacks and whites - unlike Jefferson, for instance, who regarded blacks as innately inferior - that was enlightened for his day. And he knew this from his personal boyhood experience.”⁶⁷

The problem with both Banning's and Chernow's arguments is not their lack of plausibility, but rather that neither actually provides documentation showing where Hamilton or Madison specifically expressed the sentiment Banning and Chernow attribute to them. Yes, as I will include below, Madison did express a desire to have as little to do with slavery himself, but nowhere did he express the guilt Banning mentions. Likewise, Chernow does not point to a statement by Hamilton himself identifying the origin of his opposition to slavery as coming from his childhood.

Now, we do know Hamilton clearly opposed slavery from at least the time of the Revolutionary War, because he stated such in his correspondence. So, while the points Banning and Chernow raise might be valid, I argue it is better to rely on what both Hamilton and Madison actually wrote for their views on the subject of slavery.

⁶⁷ Chernow, Ron, Alexander Hamilton. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004, 210.

Clearly, Hamilton did not believe Africans were inferior to Europeans. He unequivocally said so as part of the plan he and his friend, Lt. Colonel Henry Laurens developed to organize battalions of slave soldiers, who would as a result of their service gain their freedom.

“Colonel Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this letter, is on his way to South Carolina, on a project, which I think, in the present situation of affairs there, is a very good one and deserves every kind of support and encouragement. This is to raise two three or four batalions of negroes; with the assistance of the government of that state, by contributions from the owners in proportion to the number they possess. . . .

It appears to me, that an expedient of this kind, in the present state of Southern affairs, is the most rational, that can be adopted, and promises very important advantages. Indeed, I can hardly see how a sufficient force can be collected in that quarter without it; and the enemy's operations there are growing infinitely serious and formidable. I have not the least doubt, that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management; and I will venture to pronounce, that they cannot be put in better hands than those of Mr. Laurens. He has all the zeal, intelligence, enterprise, and every other qualification requisite to succeed in such an undertaking. It is a maxim with some great military judges, that with sensible officers soldiers can hardly be too stupid; . . . I mention this, because I frequently hear it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes that they are too stupid to make soldiers. This is so far from appearing to me a valid objection that I think their want of cultivation (for their natural faculties are probably as good as ours) joined to that habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will make them sooner become soldiers than our White inhabitants. Let officers be men of sense and sentiment, and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines perhaps the better.

I foresee that this project will have to combat much opposition from prejudice and self-interest. The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience; and an unwillingness to part with property of so

valuable a kind will furnish a thousand arguments to show the impracticability or pernicious tendency of a scheme which requires such a sacrifice. But it should be considered, that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will; and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out will be to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is to give them their freedom with their muskets. This will secure their fidelity, animate their courage, and I believe will have a good influence upon those who remain, by opening a door to their emancipation. This circumstance, I confess, has no small weight in inducing me to wish the success of the project; for the dictates of humanity and true policy equally interest me in favour of this unfortunate class of men."⁶⁸

I realize this is a lengthy quote, but since I am basing my arguments entirely on what both Hamilton and Madison actually wrote, in this instance its length is necessary. Here, we see clearly Hamilton's enthusiasm for a way of at least reducing the number of slaves in the United States, in part to make use of their services instead of the British, his clear opinion that Africans are not inferior to Europeans, and finally his emotional preference for the removal of slavery.

Madison also thought it a good idea to offer freedom to slaves in exchange for military service during the Revolution.

"I am glad to find the legislature persist in their resolution to recruit their line of the army for the war, though without deciding on the expediency of the mode under their consideration, would it not be as well to liberate and make soldiers at once of the blacks themselves as to make them instruments for enlisting white Soldiers? It wd. certainly be more consonant to the principles of liberty which ought never

⁶⁸ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob Ed. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume II: 1779-1781. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961, 17-19.

to be lost sight of in a contest for liberty, and with white officers & a majority of white soldrs. no imaginable danger could be feared from themselves, as there certainly could be none from the effect of the example on those who should remain in bondage: experience having shown that a freedman immediately loses all attachment & sympathy with his former fellow slaves."⁶⁹

As I mentioned above, Madison did express a desire to distance himself from slavery, at least in his personal life.

"My wish is if possible to provide a decent & independent subsistence, without encountering the difficulties which I foresee in that line. Another of my wishes is to depend as little as possible on the labour of slaves. The difficulty of reconciling these views, has brought into my thoughts several projects from which advantage seemed attainable."⁷⁰

Nevertheless, he continued to make use of slaves, even when away from home, where he had numerous slaves working in various capacities on his plantation. Concerning a slave that had run away, and a slave currently in his service, he stated in a letter to his father:

"The enquiries which I have at different times made of Billey concerning Anthony satisfy me that he either knows, or will tell nothing of the matter. It does not appear to me probable that all the circumstances mentioned by Anthony with regard to his rambles can be true. Besides other objections which occur, there seems to have been scarcely time for all the trips which he pretends to have made. I have not communicated to John the suspicions entertained of him. Whilst he remains in my service it will be well for him to suppose that he has my

⁶⁹ Hutchinson, William T., and William M.E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 2: 20 March 1780 - 23 February 1781. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962, 209-211.

⁷⁰ Rutland, Robert A., et. al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 8: 10 March 1784 – 28 March 1786. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973, 328.

confidence, and that he has a character staked on his good behaviour. He has been very attentive & faithful to me as yet, particularly since I left Virginia. His misbehaviour in Fredericksbg. was followed by some serious reprehensions, & threats from me, which have never lost their effect."⁷¹

One of his reasons for not actively seeking the end of slavery was the Union of all the states was more important than ending slavery. Since some states were implacable on the subject of emancipation, he placed the maintenance and continuation of the United States as a whole above any effort at ending slavery.

"I should conceive this clause to be impolitic, if it were one of those things which could be excluded without encountering greater evils. The southern states would not have entered into the union of America, without the temporary permission of that trade. And if they were excluded from the union, the consequences might be dreadful to them and to us."⁷²

Also:

"Great as the evil is, a dismemberment of the union would be worse. If those states should disunite from the other states, for not indulging them in the temporary continuance of this traffic, they might solicit and obtain aid from foreign powers."⁷³

Madison was, however, never actively in favor of extending the slave trade any longer than necessary. Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution, specifically prohibited Congress from outlawing the

⁷¹ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 10: 27 May 1787 - 3 March 1788. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 118.

⁷² Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 11: 7 March 1788 - 1 March 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 150.

⁷³ *ibid*, 151.

importation of slaves until 1808, but it did allow Congress to impose a tax on such importation in the meantime. In a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives, he said:

“I conceive the constitution in this particular, was formed in order that the government, whilst it was restrained from laying a total prohibition, might be able to give some testimony of the sense of America, with respect to the African trade. We have liberty to impose a tax or duty upon the importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit; and this liberty was granted, I presume, upon two considerations - the first was, that until the time arrived when they might abolish the importation of slaves, they might have an opportunity of evidencing their sentiments, on the policy and humanity of such a trade; the other was that they might be taxed in due proportion with other articles imported; for if the possessor will consider them as property, of course they are of value, and ought to be paid for.”⁷⁴

And:

“I do not wish to say anything harsh, to the hearing of gentlemen who entertain different sentiments from me, or different sentiments from those I represent; but if there is any one point in which it is clearly the policy of this nation, so far as we constitutionally can, to vary the practice obtaining under some of the state governments it is this; therefore, upon principle, we ought to discountenance it as far as is in our power.”⁷⁵

Further, Madison added one of his reasons for opposing the continuance of the slave trade, that it would weaken the national security of not just the slave states, but of the United States as a whole. Thus,

⁷⁴ Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790, with a supplement 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 161.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 162.

rather than being a states' rights issue regarding their internal police, further importation of slaves was a threat to the entire United States, and given the federal government's requirement in the Constitution to protect each and every state from invasion, this issue became one proper for the federal government to take action on. It would have been interesting to see the effect of this if he had been a more public advocate of the effect of slavery on national security overriding states' rights.

"If I was not afraid of being told that the representatives of the several states, are the best able to judge of what is proper and conducive to their particular prosperity, I should venture to say that it is as much the interest of Georgia and South Carolina, as of any in the union. Every addition they receive to their number of slaves, tends to weaken them and renders them less capable of self defence; in case of hostilities with foreign nations, they will be the means of inviting attack instead of repelling invasion. It is a necessary duty of the general government to protect every part of the empire against danger, as well internal as external; every thing therefore which tends to encrease this danger, though it may be a local affair, yet if it involves national expence or safety, becomes of concern to every part of the union, and is a proper subject for the consideration of those charged with the general administration of the government."⁷⁶

This is a point both Hamilton and Madison had made during the Revolutionary War, and both remembered those lessons learned in their later political careers. As students of the later American Civil War have demonstrated, the large slave population was at first a drag on the

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

Confederacy's war efforts, because so many potential troops had to be kept at home rather than on the front lines in order to keep slaves under control, but later freed slaves provided essential services, both under arms and in other ways, to the Union army. Clearly, this issue is one on which both Hamilton and Madison were prescient, but not in the way either expected.

Madison did entertain the idea of a more voluntary form of emancipation through the settlement of freed slaves in Africa, primarily because he did not think people of European descent would ever genuinely accept those of African descent. He simply did not believe they could co-exist, in stark contrast to Hamilton. The only option he ever supported, at least in theory, was colonization.

“Without enquiring into the practicability or the most proper means of establishing a Settlement of freed blacks on the Coast of Africa, it may be remarked as one motive to the benevolent experiment that if such an asylum was provided, it might prove a great encouragement to manumission in the Southern parts of the U.S. and even afford the best hope yet presented of putting an end to the slavery in which not less than 600,000 unhappy negroes are now involved.”⁷⁷

And:

“In order to render this change eligible as well to the Society as to the Slaves, it would be necessary that a compleat incorporation of the latter into the former should

⁷⁷ Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790, with a supplement 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 437-438.

result from the act of manumission. This is rendered impossible by the prejudices of the Whites, prejudices which proceeding principally from the difference of colour must be considered as permanent and insuperable.

It only remains then that some proper external receptacle be provided for the slaves who obtain their liberty. The interior wilderness of America, and the Coast of Africa seem to present the most obvious alternative. The former is liable to great if not invincible objections. If the settlement were attempted at a considerable distance from the White frontier, it would be destroyed by the Savages who have a peculiar antipathy to the blacks: If the attempt were made in the neighbourhood of the White Settlements, peace would not long be expected to remain between Societies, distinguished by such characteristic marks, and retaining the feelings inspired by their former relation of oppressors & oppressed. The result then is that an experiment for providing such an external establishment for the blacks as might induce the humanity of Masters, and by degrees both the humanity & policy of the Governments, to forward the abolition of slavery in America, ought to be pursued on the Coast of Africa or in some other foreign situation."⁷⁸

As I have mentioned above, Madison was equivocal on the issue of slavery throughout his life. He clearly did not approve of slavery itself, but was not convinced, as Hamilton was, that it was possible to both end slavery and have former slaves live peacefully alongside former slave owners and others of European descent. In contrast to active slave advocates, however, he emphatically did not believe slavery to be in any way a good influence on society.

"The Petitions on the subject of Slavery have employed more

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

than a week, and are still before the Committee of the whole. The Gentlemen from S. Carolina & Georgia are intemperate beyond all example and even all decorum. They are not content with palliating slavery as a deep-rooted abuse, but plead for the lawfulness of the African trade itself - nor with protesting agst. the object of the Memorials, but lavish the most virulent language on the authors of them. If this folly did not reproach the public councils, it ought to excite no regret in the patrons of Humanity & freedom. Nothing could hasten more the progress of those reflections & sentiments which are secretly undermining the institution which this mistaken zeal is laboring to secure agst. the most distant approach of danger."⁷⁹

However, Madison also did not think it proper, or possible, for him as an elected official to speak out against the institution of slavery as such, given the number of his constituents who, like he, owned slaves. In a letter to Robert Pleasants during his time serving in Congress under the Articles of Confederation, he stated:

"The petition relating to the Militia bill contains nothing that makes it improper for me to present it. I shall therefore readily comply with your desire on that subject. I am not satisfied that I am equally at liberty with respect to the other petition. Animadversions, such as it contains and which the authorized object of the petitioners did not require on the slavery existing in our country, are supposed by the holders of that species of property, to lessen the value by weakening the tenure of it. Those from whom I derive my public station are known by me to be greatly interested in that species of property, and to view the matter in that light. It would seem that I might be chargeable at least with want of candour, if not of fidelity, were I to make use of a situation in which their confidence

⁷⁹ Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 13: 20 January 1790 - 31 March 1791. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, 109.

has placed me, to become a volunteer in giving a public wound, as they would deem it, to an interest on which they set so great a value."⁸⁰

So, what we see from this comparison of Hamilton and Madison on the issue of slavery is agreement on the evil of slavery, but wide divergence on just what to do about it, given their vastly different expectations for whether or not those of European descent could ever live peaceably with those of African descent. Hamilton was again far more active in opposing slavery, had essentially an equal view of the abilities of blacks versus whites, and continued his efforts from early until the end of his life.

Madison, on the other hand, while personally deploring slavery, never actually took action, either privately or publicly, to oppose the institution itself. He remained a slave owner throughout his life, thought it improper to even indirectly associate himself with anti-slavery efforts while in political office, and only late in life made even the limited public statements regarding slavery that he made. He just did not think whites would ever accept blacks, especially former slaves.

This disagreement between Hamilton and Madison is of course reflective of the much wider conflict over slavery in the United States, which was not resolved until the Civil War ended, and the issue of race

⁸⁰ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, 91-92.

relations is one which the United States, like almost every other country, still struggles with to this day.

As far as their conflicting visions of republicanism, these excerpts from the writings of Hamilton and Madison show that, for Hamilton, “liberty” meant liberty for everyone, including slaves. The American Revolution was an event Hamilton saw as demanding freedom for all Americans, not just those considered “white.” Hamilton clearly did not consider there to be any underlying racial differences of importance between blacks and whites, which we saw in his opinion regarding the suitability of freed slaves for military service. Neither better nor worse than whites, freed slaves would have been an asset, not a threat to the republic. If nothing else, Hamilton was prescient in arguing that if the Americans did not make slaves the offer, the British would. For Hamilton, republicanism did not carry with it any racial component. Blacks and whites were in his estimation equal, and could participate equally in the American republic as he envisioned it.

Any participation by both free blacks and whites in the American republic was, on the other hand, impossible for Madison. He disliked slavery, but made use of slaves throughout his life. He did not, in contrast to some other Founders, ever free his slaves. Finally, even his belated effort of supporting resettling voluntarily freed slaves reflected only his unwavering belief that blacks and whites simply could not successfully live

together as equals. For Madison, the American republic did have a racial component, whites only, as part of his vision for its success.

Chapter Three: Hamilton and Madison on France versus Great Britain

As I mentioned in discussing the research which has already been done on Hamilton and Madison by Elkins and McKittrick in their *The Age of Federalism*, they argue that the later political differences between Hamilton and Madison can be explained largely by Hamilton's Anglophilia and Madison's Anglophobia. I respectfully disagree, and will argue that Hamilton and Madison's differences in regards to overall foreign policy, when each had the opportunity to weigh in on that issue, were not attributable to a strong preference by either for the two great powers of that time.

We will see Hamilton's focus was on American independence from both Great Britain and France, and not on maintaining ties with Great Britain at any cost out of some "Anglophilia." In each case, when the potential of war loomed, first with Great Britain, later with France, he counseled the exact same approach: Prepare for war at home, but first try to negotiate a solution before resorting to a declaration of war. Hamilton also at first supported the French Revolution, but had doubts all along, which were for him confirmed by the Terror and other assorted violence, and especially by the execution of Louis XVI. That did turn him away from actively supporting France, but not towards greater support for Great Britain in response.

With Madison we will see him of two different minds regarding Great Britain and France at various points. At first, after the Revolution, he did clearly favor France, out of both a sense of gratitude for French assistance, and also out of a strong antipathy towards Great Britain. Then, when the French Revolution occurred, he did show a continued preference for France out of a spirit of worldwide republican revolution. It is only with Napoleon's takeover that he abandoned France, not in preference for Great Britain, but rather towards a much cooler attitude towards both countries.

The point Elkins and McKittrick argue can be found, attributed in part to figures such as Jefferson, in Marshall Smelser's articles on "The Jacobin Phrenzy," in both its Anglophobic and Gallophobic manifestations during the 1790's. Ultimately, both sides, including Hamilton and Madison on each, were afraid of the influence over the United States of the two great powers of the time, France and Great Britain. Each side suspected the other of being too greatly influenced by either France or Great Britain, if not in fact traitors plotting to bring the United States under the control of their respective patrons.

The most influential event leading to this fear by both sides is widely regarded to be the French Revolution, with its expansion of the change in government to other countries in Europe. Regarding the attitude common amongst Federalists, Smelser writes:

“During the first years of the American federal republic, Europe was being overrun by French revolutionary forces and ideas. Nation after nation had fallen to the revolutionaries – first weakened by propaganda and subversive organizations, then subdued by soldiery, finally converted into subordinate allies. Watching these successes, some Americans feared that the Atlantic was too narrow to keep revolutionary arms and ideology away. Indeed, the ideology seemed already to permeate the country.”⁸¹

Smelser argues this fear amongst Federalists had at least some plausibility. After all, the French revolutionaries had clearly first subverted, then taken over other countries. To those living at that time, this could easily seem as a possible future for the United States as well.

“What they feared might happen here had happened in Europe several times – that is, satellite republics (the Batavian, Helvetian, and others) had been established in part by betrayal to the French from within. John Quincy Adams and others in the foreign service had seen it done and had reported in detail to superiors, relatives, and friends.”⁸²

Jeffersonian Republicans were not immune to this fear, either, although their anxiety fixated not on France, especially once it had joined the republican revolution movement, but rather Great Britain and the specter of aristocracy, monarchy, or both.

“One group, forming around Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Albert Gallatin and like-minded men – now called the Republicans – came to suspect that the executive officers of government – of the group known as the Federalists – were engaged in a vast plot to establish a pro-

⁸¹ Marshall Smelser, “The Jacobin Phrenzy: Federalism and the Menace of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” *The Review of Politics* 13, No. 4 (1951), 457.

⁸² *ibid.*, 470.

British, tyrannical plutocracy wearing the gaudy cloak of monarchy."⁸³

Since President Washington himself was beyond direct criticism or attack, Smelser states the Jeffersonians' target was instead Alexander Hamilton.

"By and large the Republicans tried to convince the people that the archmiscreant of plutocratic monarchism was the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton. They could not attack Washington. The President's popular standing was so high and his solid common sense so apparent that the leadership of the party concentrated the fire on Hamilton."⁸⁴

Overall, though, the Jeffersonians' fear, so similar to that of the Federalists', but different in its focus, was grounded on Washington Administration policies they perceived as favoring Great Britain over France, and thus putting the United States in danger of being, in effect, a British satellite.

"As in the suspected plot to monarchize the country, Alexander Hamilton was considered to be the archvillain of Anglophilia. Jefferson had long been recording evidences of Hamilton's pro-British leanings: opposition to trade discriminations against Britain, improper communications with the British Minister in Philadelphia, suggestion of a defensive treaty of alliance with Britain in 1790, a pro-British position in the cabinet discussions at the time of the Neutrality Proclamation, a rumor that the British relied more on Hamilton than on their resident Minister in the United States – even a note of pure fantasy to the effect that asylum in Britain had already been arranged for Hamilton in the event of an Anglo-American war. Jefferson could not quite believe this last bit of 'derogatory information' but the remainder of the 'record'

⁸³ Marshall Smelser, "The Jacobin Phrenzy: The Menace of Monarchy, Plutocracy, and Anglophilia, 1789-1798," *The Review of Politics* 21, No. 1 (1959), 241.

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 249.

was sufficient to cause him to doubt Hamilton's loyalty thereafter."⁸⁵

As I mentioned above, though, I disagree with Elkins and McKittrick's argument, and will begin my argument with Hamilton's views, since as Smelser noted he was the centerpiece of the dispute over the feared influences of either Great Britain or France, at least according to the Jeffersonians.

I argue Hamilton had, rather than Anglophilia, a staunch commitment to the United States. His commitment sometimes seems to me to be such that only converts to a cause or religion manifest, but that can be traced to his birth in the Caribbean rather than in any state. Thus, in comparison with Madison, his credentials as an American were based far more on his deeds, rather than simply being part of his identity. In a letter to George Washington during 1783, he stated:

"We have I fear men <among> us and men in trust who have a hankering afte<r> British connection. We have others whose confidence in France savours of credulity. The intrigues of the former and the incautiousness of the latter may be both, though in different degrees, injurious to the American interests; and make it difficult for prudent men to steer a proper course."⁸⁶

So, even before the later conflicts of the 1790's, Hamilton was himself concerned about the possible influence of Great Britain and France. Here, he clearly states his goal is to "steer a proper course," not

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 255-256.

⁸⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume III: 1782-1786. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, 291.

as an adherent to either great power, but rather to find an American way of proceeding.

Further, he was also concerned with European influence in general over the United States, and of course wanted to avoid such an occurrence. In another letter to George Washington from 1783, he remarked:

“Your Excellency will before this reaches you have received a letter from the Marquis De la Fayette informing you that the preliminaries of peace between all the belligerent powers have been concluded. I congratulate your Excellency on this happy conclusion of your labours. It now only remains to make solid establishments within to perpetuate our union to prevent our being a ball in the hands of European powers bandied against each other at their pleasure - in fine to make our independence truly a blessing. This it is to be lamented will be an arduous work, for to borrow a figure from mechanics, the centrifugal is much stronger than the centripetal force in these states - the seeds of disunion much more numerous than those of union.”⁸⁷

Regarding the French Revolution, Hamilton made it clear in a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette during 1789 that he was, at first, quite happy with that event, but that he did have fears all along about possible outcomes of the Revolution. He hoped the French would not make too many changes, given his assessment of what he considered the French “character,” and also what he considered possible, due to his understanding of human nature. Notably, Hamilton also expressed concern regarding the influence of French philosophers.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 304.

"I have seen with a mixture of Pleasure and apprehension the Progress of the events which have lately taken Place in your Country. As a friend to mankind and to liberty I rejoice in the efforts which you are making to establish it while I fear much for the final success of the attempts, for the fate of those I esteem who are engaged in it, and for the danger in case of success of innovations greater than will consist with the real felicity of your Nation. If your affairs still go well, when this reaches you, you will ask why this foreboding of ill, when all the appearances have been so much in your favor. I will tell you; I dread disagreements among those who are now united (which will be likely to be improved by the adverse party) about the nature of your constitution; I dread the vehement character of your people, whom I fear you may find it more easy to bring on, than to keep within Proper bounds, after you have put them in motion; I dread the interested refractoriness of your nobles, who cannot all be gratified and who may be unwilling to submit to the requisite sacrifices. And I dread the reveries of your Philosophic politicians who appear in the moment to have great influence and who being mere speculatists may aim at more refinement than suits either with human nature or the composition of your Nation.

These my dear Marquis are my apprehensions. My wishes for your personal success and that of the cause of liberty are incessant. Be virtuous amidst the Seductions of ambition, and you can hardly in any event be unhappy."⁸⁸

In fact, Hamilton sought parity in trade for the United States with both Great Britain and France. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson during 1791, he wrote:

"I had rather endeavour by a new Treaty of Commerce with France to extend reciprocal advantages and fix them on a permanent basis. This would not only be more solid but it would perhaps be less likely than apparently gratuitous and voluntary exemptions to beget discontents elsewhere; especially (as ought to be the case) if each party should be

⁸⁸ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume V: June 1788 - November 1789. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, 425.

at liberty for equivalent considerations to grant like privileges to others. My commercial system turns very much on giving a free course to Trade and cultivating good humour with all the world. And I feel a particular reluctance to hazard any thing in the present state of our affairs which may lead to commercial warfare with any power; which as far as my knowledge of examples extends is commonly productive of mutual inconvenience and injury and of dispositions tending to a worse kind of warfare. Exemptions & preferences which are not the effect of Treaty are apt to be regarded by those who do not partake in them as proofs of an unfriendly temper towards them."⁸⁹

For Hamilton, the point, and value, of good relations with Great Britain would be the bargaining strength it would give the United States with the rest of Europe. In a letter to Benjamin Goodhue during 1791 he mentioned:

"I would not warrant the issue; but if some liberal arrangement with Great Britain should ensue, it will have a prodigious effect upon the Conduct of some other parts of Europe. 'Tis however most wise for us to depend as little as possible upon European Caprice & to exert ourselves to the utmost to unfold and improve every domestic resource."⁹⁰

In regards to establishing and maintaining a foreign policy based on neutrality between warring European powers, Hamilton argued this approach would be the best way to retire the Revolutionary War debt as fast as possible. In a letter to George Washington from 1792 he wrote:

"The public Debt was produced by the late war. It is not the

⁸⁹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume VII: September 1790 - January 1791. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, 425-426.

⁹⁰ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume VIII: February 1791 - July 1791. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 517.

fault of the present government that it exists; unless it can be proved, that public morality and policy do not require of a Government an honest provision for its debts. Whether it is greater than can be paid before new causes of adding to it will occur is a problem incapable of being solved, but by experience; and this would be the case if it were not one fourth as much as it is. If the policy of the Country be prudent, cautious and *neutral* towards foreign nations, there is a rational probability, that war may be avoided long enough to wipe off the debt. . . . But whether the public Debt shall be extinguished or not within a moderate period depends on the temper of the people. If they are rendered dissatisfied by misrepresentations of the measures of the government, the Government will be deprived of an efficient command of the resources of the community towards extinguishing the Debt. And thus, those who clamour are likely to be the principal causes of protracting the existence of the debt."⁹¹

So, far from being based on a preference for relations with Great Britain, Hamilton's policies were aimed at greater strength and stability for the United States, in part by paying off its indebtedness as soon as could be by staying out of wars as long as possible.

Further evidence of Hamilton's strictly American views can be seen in an article he wrote for the *Gazette of the United States* in 1793.

"The late War with Great Britain produced three parties in the UStates, an *English* party, a *French* Party, and an *American* party, if the latter can with propriety be called a party. These parties continue to the present moment. There are persons among us, who appear to be more alive to the interests of France, on the one hand, and to those of Great

⁹¹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XII: July 1792 - October 1792. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, 229-230.

Britain, on the other, than to those of the UStates. Both these dispositions are to be condemned, and will be rejected by every true American.

A dispassionate and virtuous citizen of the UStates will scorn to stand on any but purely *American* ground. It will be his study to render his feeling and affections neutral and impartial towards all foreign Nations. His prayer will be for peace, and that his country may be as much as possible kept out of the destructive vortex of foreign politics."⁹²

In his *Defense of the President's Neutrality Proclamation* from May, 1793, Hamilton first stated what had caused his support for the French Revolution to weaken and then disappear. Also, he indicated again for the first time his concern that such "French" influence might even negatively affect the United States as well.

"That zeal for the liberty of mankind, which produced so universal a sympathy in the cause of France in the first stages of its revolution, and which, it is supposed, has not yet yielded to the just reprobation, which a sober temperate and humane people, friends of religion, social order, and justice, enemies to tumult and massacre, to the wanton and lawless shedding of human blood cannot but bestow upon those extravagancies excesses and outrages, which have sullied and which endanger that cause - that laudable, it is not too much to say that holy zeal is intended by every art of misrepresentation and deception to be made the instrument first of controuling finally of overturning the Government of the Union."⁹³

When as a result of British attacks on American shipping after the outbreak of war with revolutionary France, many called for the United States to join the war on France's side, Hamilton urged President

⁹² Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cook, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XIV: February 1793 - June 1793. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, 267.

⁹³ *ibid*, 503.

Washington to negotiate first, but also to have the United States prepare for war. Hamilton clearly shows a willingness to go to war if needed, but not a desire to avoid war with Great Britain at all costs out of some preference for that country. In a letter to George Washington during 1794, he argued:

“A course of accurate observation has impressed on my mind a full conviction, that there exist in our councils three considerable parties - one decided for preserving peace by every effort which shall any way consist with the ultimate maintenance of the national honor and rights and disposed to cultivate with all nations a friendly understanding - another decided for war and resolved to bring it about by every expedient which shall not too directly violate the public opinion - a third not absolutely desirous of war but solicitous at all events to excite and keep alive irritation and ill humour between the UStates and Great Britain, not unwilling in the pursuit of this object to expose the peace of the country to imminent hazards.

The views of the first party in respect to the questions between GBritain and us favour the following course of conduct - To take effectual measures of military preparation, creating in earnest force and revenue - to vest the President with important powers respecting navigation and commerce for ulterior contingencies - to endeavour by another effort of negotiation confided to hands able to manage it and friendly to the object, to obtain reparation for the wrongs we suffer and a demarkation of a line of conduct to govern in future - to avoid 'till the issue of that experiment all measures of a nature to occasion a conflict between the motives which might dispose the British Government to do us the justice to which we are intitled and the sense of its own dignity - If that experiment fails then and not till then to resort to reprisals and war. . . . Prosperous as is truly the situation of this country, great as would be the evils of War to it, it would hardly seem to admit of a doubt, that no chance for preserving peace ought to be lost or diminished, in compliance either with resentment or the speculative ideas, which are the arguments for a hostile course of conduct.

At no moment were the indications of a plan on the part of Great Britain to go to War with us sufficiently decisive to preclude the hope of averting it by a negotiation conducted with prudent energy and seconded by such military preparations as should be demonstrative of a Resolution eventually to vindicate our rights. . . . To you, Sir, it is unnecessary to urge the extreme precariousness of the events of War. The inference to be drawn is too manifest to escape your penetration. This Country ought not to set itself afloat upon an ocean so fluctuating so dangerous and so uncertain but in a case of absolute necessity."⁹⁴

Note Hamilton's main points: The United States should avoid war if possible, but should be ready should there be no other option; Great Britain has not itself declared war, and has not shown a clear intention of doing so; and finally, war is an extremely uncertain state for any country to be in, let alone a young country such as the United States. His concerns do not include maintaining peace with Great Britain at any cost, but rather what he conceives the best options for the United States to be.

He did make his disillusionment with France clear, though, in his work *The Cause of France*, in which he compares the behavior of France's new rulers with that of religious fanatics.

"The world has been scourged with many fanatical sects in religion - who inflamed by a sincere but mistaken zeal have perpetuated under the idea of serving God the most atrocious crimes. If we were to call the cause of such men the cause of religion, would not every one agree, that it was an abuse of terms?"

⁹⁴ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVI: February 1794 - July 1794. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, 266-271.

The best apology to be made for the terrible scenes (of which every new arrival shocks us with the dreadful detail) is the supposition, that the ruling party in France is actuated by a zeal similar in its nature (though different in its object) to that which influences religious fanatics. Can this political phrenzy be dignified with the honorable appellation of the cause of Liberty with any greater propriety than the other kind of phrenzy would be denominated the cause of religion?

But even this comparison is too favourable to the ruling party in France. Judging from their acts, we are authorised to pronounce the cause in which they are engaged, not the cause of Liberty, but the cause of Vice Atheism and Anarchy."⁹⁵

Hamilton was clearly one of those who Smelser mentioned as being afraid of French influence, and of the United States becoming one of its satellites as had several countries in Europe. In a letter to William Bradford in 1795, he complained: "When shall we cease to consider ourselves as a colony to France?"⁹⁶ He quite clearly did not have such concerns about Great Britain, which may very well have contributed to his being characterized by his opponents as being in favor of too much influence for that country in contrast to France.

He was not, though, opposed to at least cordial relations with France if possible. In response to a request from George Washington for his thoughts on the recently negotiated Jay Treaty with Great Britain, Hamilton argued:

"But will it give umbrage to France?
It cannot do it unless France is unreasonable.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 585-586.

⁹⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVIII: January 1795 - July 1795. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973, 374.

Because our engagements with her remain unimpaired & because she will still be upon as good a footing as Great Britain.

We are in a deplorable situation if we cannot secure our peace and promote our own interests by means which not only do not de<rogate> from our faith but which leave the same advantages to France as to other powers with whom we form Treaties. Equality is all that can be claimed from us."⁹⁷

Hamilton is clearly not of the mindset of preferring Great Britain over France, at least in commercial matters. If he had been, he would have sought greater trade privileges for Great Britain than France, and there is no record of his ever expressing such a desire or goal.

When later war with France appeared to be a possibility, Hamilton once again advocated policies which mirrored his earlier preferences for avoiding war with Great Britain: preparedness at home, but making every possible effort to avoid war first. He even suggested that any group of extraordinary envoys to France include James Madison, whom he had by this point known for years to be a critic, in order to show no partiality towards Great Britain. To William Loughton Smith he wrote in 1797:

"I am clearly of opinion for an extraordinary mission and as clearly it should embrace *Madison*. I do not think we ought to construe the declaration of the Directory against receiving a Minister Plenipotentiary as extending to an *extraordinary mission pro hac vice*. And if it does, it would be no reason with me against it. I would accumulate the proofs of French Violence & demonstrate to all our Citizens that nothing possible has been omitted. That a certain party

⁹⁷ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVIII: January 1795 - July 1795. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973, 453-454.

desires it is with me a strong reason for it - since I would disarm them of all plea that we have not made every possible effort for peace. The idea is a plausible one that as we sent an Envoy Extraordinary to Britain so ought we to send one to France. And plausible ideas are always enough for the multitude.

These and other reasons (and principally to avoid Rupture with a political monster with seems destined soon to have no Competitor but England) make me even *anxious* for an extraordinary mission."⁹⁸

Again in 1797, Hamilton expressed a desire for, instead of preference for either Great Britain or France, a genuinely American way of understanding the United States' standing as regards the various European powers. To George Washington he wrote:

"We have nothing new here more than our papers contain; but are anxiously looking forward to a further development of the negotiations in Europe with an ardent desire for general accomodation. It is at the same time agreeable to observe that the public mind is adopting more and more sentiments truly American and free from foreign tincture."⁹⁹

Hamilton, like Madison, corresponded with the Marquis de Lafayette. It is noteworthy that the Marquis did try to counsel each side in the American debate at that time to give each other the benefit of the doubt, but neither was willing to listen, unfortunately. In any case, Hamilton did express his views to the Marquis regarding France, its revolution, Great Britain, whether or not France was capable of being a

⁹⁸ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXI: April 1797 - July 1798. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 21.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 287.

republic like the United States, and the charges against him of Anglophilia. In 1798 he wrote:

“Your letter implied, as I had before understood, that though your engagements did not permit you to follow the fortunes of the republic yet your attachments had never been separated from them. In this, I frankly confess, I have differed from you. The suspension of the King and the massacre of September (of which events a temporary intelligence was received in this Country) cured me of my good will for the French Revolution.

I have never been able to believe that France can make a republic and I have believed that the attempt while it continues can only produce misfortunes.

Among the events of this revolution I regret extremely the misunderstanding which has taken place between your country and ours and which seems to threaten an open rupture. It would be useless to discuss the causes of this state of things. I shall only assure you that a disposition to form an intimate connection with Great Britain, which is charged upon us forms no part of the real Cause, though it has served the purpose of a party to impose its belief of it on France. I give you this assurance on the faith of our former friendship. And the effect will prove to you that I am not wrong. The basis of the policy of the party, of which I am, is to avoid intimate and exclusive connection with any foreign powers.”¹⁰⁰

The case for Madison's views is much simpler. Not needing to establish himself as a genuine American, having been born and raised in Virginia to a prominent family, Madison did not need to make such vehement statements of Americanism as did Hamilton. Nor, however, did he display the Francophilia that many attribute to Thomas Jefferson. As I will show below, his attachment to the French Revolution was the product of a genuine belief in the overwhelmingly positive benefits to the human

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, 450-451.

race of self-government along republican lines. When France gave up its republican experiment in favor of Napoleon, however, he quickly lost his admiration for that country. Like Hamilton, Madison also reached a breaking point regarding events in France.

Writing for the *National Gazette* in 1792, Madison made clear his view that the establishment of government through reason, rather than force, was the greatest accomplishment of the United States, and also of France at that time.

"In Europe, charters of liberty have been granted by power. America has set the example and France has followed it, of charters of power granted by liberty. This revolution in the practice of the world, may, with an honest praise, be pronounced the most triumphant epoch of its history, and the most consoling presage of its happiness. We look back, already, with astonishment, at the daring outrages committed by despotism, on the reason and the rights of man; We look forward with joy, to the period, when it shall be despoiled of all its usurpations, and bound for ever in the chains, with which it had loaded its miserable victims."¹⁰¹

As I mentioned above, though, once France gave up on republicanism, Madison lost his admiration for France. It became simply another foreign country which the United States needed to deal with as best it could. To Thomas Jefferson he wrote in 1800:

"The spirit manifested in the Senate steadily, & in the other House occasionally, however mischevious in its immediate effects, cannot fail I think to aid the progress of reflection &

¹⁰¹ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, 191.

change among the people. In this view our public malady may work its own cure, and ultimately rescue the republican principle from the imputation brought on it by the degeneracy of the public Councils. Such a demonstration of the rectitude & efficacy of popular sentiment, will be the more precious, as the late defection of France has left America the only Theatre on which true liberty can have a fair trial."¹⁰²

Like Hamilton, when it came Madison's turn to take part in Executive branch matters, he also emphasized the desire for the United States to involve itself as little as possible in the affairs of Europe. To Robert Livingston he wrote in 1801:

"Your observations on Neutral rights & the means of promoting them are certainly very interesting, & will merit consideration. It is questionable however whether any leading arrangements by the U. States during the war, even in an eventual form adapted to a state of peace, would be free from the danger of entangling us too much in the present contests & vicisitudes of Europe; or at least of exciting too much the apprehensions of this consequence, among our own Citizens."¹⁰³

Further, his ideas regarding dealing with France and Great Britain once he was Secretary of State are essentially the same as the advice Hamilton provided then-President Washington. I will come back to this later, but I have become convinced the differences between Hamilton and Madison, while real, were not as dramatic as each believed. Both

¹⁰² Mattern, David B., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 17: 31 March 1797 - 3 March 1801, with a supplement 22 January 1778 - 9 August 1795. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, 377.

¹⁰³ Brugger, Robert J., et.al, eds. *The Papers of James Madison*, Secretary of State Series, Volume 1: 4 March - 31 July 1801. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986, 402.

should have followed Lafayette's advice and given each other the benefit of the doubt. In 1802, Madison wrote to Rufus King:

"It is I am persuaded the sincere desire of the people of this Country, and of every department of its Government, to cultivate the most thorough good will, and the most friendly commerce with G. Britain; but I do not believe that they will purchase either by improper sacrifices. . . . I think with you that in our respective stipulations with G.B. & France, it is desirable to have them both so shaped as to avoid as much as possible collisions between them, which might involve the U.S. with one or other of those Nations."¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, as I stated at the beginning of this chapter, I disagree with Elkins and McKittrick's assessment of the disagreement between Hamilton and Madison as stemming from Hamilton's Anglophilia and Madison's Anglophobia. I can find no clear statement from either that would support that argument. Rather, what I have found is instead a desire by both to establish a clear identity for the nascent United States on the world stage, mainly through staying out of the endless conflicts that characterized European politics, especially at that time.

Hamilton's view of American republicanism stressed independence from all other countries. He wanted to be a part of creating a unique, specifically American, way of acting in the international arena. For him, it was more important for the United States to create an identity separate from either of the "superpowers" of the time, Great Britain and France.

¹⁰⁴ Hackett, Mary A., et.al., eds. *The Papers of James Madison, Secretary of State Series, Volume 2: 1 August 1801 - 28 February 1802*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993, 435.

Especially in his response to the threat he perceived of the United States becoming a satellite republic of France, as had happened with the Batavian and Helvetic Republics, among others, we see his fear for the continued independence of the United States.

With Madison we see a much less amount of fear for the independence of the United States from France, although he did abandon overt support for France in comparison with Great Britain once Napoleon took control. For Madison, there was much less of a pressing need for the United States to go out of its way to craft a uniquely American approach to dealing with any foreign country. I argue this is due to his, unlike Hamilton, having been a lifelong Virginian and American. He did not have to establish or prove himself worthy of the United States. Madison was much more committed to the idea of republicanism as something that could be successfully established in other countries than he was a supporter of France. He did display a strong antipathy towards Great Britain, but that did not cause him to abandon an idea similar to Hamilton's, that of the United States involving itself as little as possible in the affairs, and especially the wars, of Europe.

Chapter Four: Hamilton and Madison on Constitutional Interpretation

At the center of Hamilton and Madison's later conflicts, in spite of their earlier collaboration in favor of the Constitution, is precisely their varying interpretations of that document, and what powers each thought it gave the federal government. Focus by others has been thus far on those disagreements, such as over Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures*, and also whether or not Publius, in the *Federalist*, spoke with two different voices. I myself am going to concentrate my efforts elsewhere, because I am convinced that, for instance, the *Federalist* is in many ways not truly indicative of either Hamilton or Madison's essential points of view, being written to convince potential convention delegates in New York and Virginia to support ratification. Also, the disagreement which emerged over the *Report on Manufactures* is exactly the sort of conflict I am trying to explain the reasons for, so I will not include that here.

We will see in the excerpts that follow the very different view Hamilton and Madison had all along regarding the issue of Constitutional interpretation. Even before they worked together on *The Federalist*, they had differences of opinion, and my take on why they never discussed this or any of the other issues I point to is the extreme time constraints they were under while working to write those newspapers articles in support of ratifying the Constitution.

With Hamilton we will see his preference for a loose construction, because for him one simply cannot spell out all the details regarding governmental power in any constitution. He regarded the issue of how to distribute power between the federal and state governments as one of “convenience,” rather than of exact definition. For Hamilton, one simply had to set up the governments of the United States on a firm foundation, and he thought all one would need thereafter for success would be for elected officials to make “prudent” decisions as to how to administer the nation as a whole.

Madison, however, was very concerned about corruption, about the concentration of too much power in any one set of hands. For him, the boundaries between the various branches of the federal government, and especially between the federal government and the states, needed to be precisely defined in order to prevent overreaching by power-hungry individuals bent on tyranny. He did concede there were ambiguities in the Constitution as written, but he thought those were inevitable, and would be resolved once and for all before long by the accumulation of precedents. That he reacted so strongly to the decisions made during the Washington Administration in carrying out policies preferred by Hamilton can be explained by his not wanting “those” precedents to be the way Constitutional ambiguities were resolved.

Hamilton clearly showed the point of view which Madison later came to loathe during his efforts to secure ratification of the Constitution by the state of New York's convention.

"It is far from my intention to wound the feelings of any gentleman; but I must, in this most interesting discussion, speak of things as they are; and hold up opinions in the light of which they ought to appear: and I maintain, that all that has been said of corruption, of the purse and the sword, and of the danger of giving powers, is not supported by principle or fact - That it is mere verbage, and idle declamation. The true principle of government is this - Make the system compleat in its structure; give a perfect proportion and balance to its parts; and the powers you give it will never affect your security. The question then, of the division of powers between the general and state governments, is a question of convenience: It becomes a prudential enquiry, what powers are proper to be reversed to the latter; and this immediately involves another enquiry into the proper objects of the two governments. This is the criterion, by which we shall determine the just distribution of powers."¹⁰⁵

Corruption was very much on the mind of Madison, whose response to Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* included the argument that basing actions taken by the federal government on the general welfare of the nation would leave the federal government with no limits whatsoever on its powers. But, as we see here, Hamilton was much less concerned with corruption, and clearly felt much more comfortable with the power given to the federal government. Especially, though, note his argument that the division of powers between the states and the federal government is a

¹⁰⁵ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume V: June 1788 - November 1789. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, 97.

“question of convenience.” This shows the preference we will see in further quotes I will include below that Hamilton had for the federal government over the states.

We see this in Hamilton's desire for more powerful law enforcement in the hands of the federal government. He bemoaned the federal government having to rely on the states to enforce laws. To George Washington he wrote in 1791:

“It is to be lamented that our system is such as still to leave the public peace of the Union at the mercy of each state Government. This is not only the case as it regards direct interferences, but as it regards the *inability* of the National Government in many particulars to take those direct measures for carrying into execution its views and engagements which exigencies require.”¹⁰⁶

Hamilton was genuinely surprised when Madison began to oppose his policy proposals as Treasury Secretary. He had considered Madison to have the same preference for federal power over state power, but as we have seen this was not really the case. The Constitution was, by 11 out of the 13 states, ratified by 1789. By 1792, Hamilton and Madison's conflict had become apparent to both. To Edward Carrington, Hamilton wrote in 1792:

“When I accepted the Office, I now hold, it was under a full persuasion, that from similarity of thinking, conspiring with personal goodwill, I should have the firm support of Mr. Madison, in the *general course* of my administration. Aware

¹⁰⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume VIII: February 1791 - July 1791. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 269.

of the intrinsic difficulties of the situation and of the powers of Mr. Madison, I do not believe I should have accepted under a different supposition.

I have mentioned the similarity of thinking between that Gentleman and myself. This was relative not merely to the general principles of National Policy and Government but to the leading points which were likely to constitute questions in the administration of the finances. I mean 1 the expediency of *funding* the debt 2 the inexpediency of *discrimination* between original and present holders 3 The expediency of *assuming* the state Debts."¹⁰⁷

Not only was this a difference of opinion for either man: each considered the ideas the other had as not only mistaken, but dangerous, even bordering on treasonous. I have mentioned this before, and will explore this more fully later, but this is one of the most important aspects of their disagreement. Just like today, neither side in the first political conflicts under the Constitution could consider the other side as legitimate. For both, it was their way of understanding the Constitution, and no other. Also to Edward Carrington from 1792:

*"It was not 'till the last session that I became unequivocally convinced of the following truth – 'That Mr. Madison cooperating with Mr. Jefferson is at the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration, and actuated by views in my judgment subversive of the principles of good government and dangerous to the union, peace and happiness of the Country.'"*¹⁰⁸

One example of Hamilton's expansive vision for interpreting the Constitution, and thus the powers of the federal government, is his plan to

¹⁰⁷ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XI: February 1792 - June 1792. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, 427.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, 429.

fund, and eventually pay off, the Revolutionary War debt. Hamilton is sometimes portrayed as being in favor of a perpetual debt. That is simply mistaken. His efforts were all focused on paying off that debt, as I have already shown in regards to his support for American neutrality between France and Great Britain. Yet more from his letter to Edward Carrington in 1792:

“Whatever the original merits of the funding system, after having been so solemnly adopted, & after so great a transfer of property under it, what would become of the Government should it be reversed? What of the National Reputation? Upon what system of morality can so atrocious a doctrine be maintained? In me, I confess it excites *indignation & horror!*

What are we to think of those maxims of Government by which the power of a Legislature is denied to bind the Nation by a *Contract* in an affair of *property* for twenty four years? For this is precisely the case of the debt. What are to become of all the legal rights of property, of all charters to corporations, nay, of all grants to a man his heirs & assigns for ever, if this doctrine be true? What is the term for which a government is in capacity to *contract*? Questions might be multiplied without end to demonstrate the perniciousness & absurdity of such a doctrine.

In almost all the questions great & small which have arisen, since the first session of Congress, Mr. Jefferson & Mr. Madison have been found among those who were disposed to narrow the Federal authority. The question of a National Bank is one example.”¹⁰⁹

This quote shows another aspect of Hamilton’s concern with giving the federal government more power. He clearly wanted to protect

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, 437.

property rights, and was afraid of the tendency in the states towards negating such rights through debt relief, paper money, etc. Thus, he argued in favor of the above mentioned power to contract for extensive periods of time, which of course would bind subsequent administrations, Congresses, and even later voters.

Hamilton's underlying reason for interpreting the Constitution as he did was his fear that the federal government would not prove strong enough to control the states, which would, in his estimation, eventually lead to a dissolution of the Union, and perhaps even civil war. Because of his desire for a stronger federal government than, say, Madison wanted, some accused him of secretly desiring a return to a monarchical form of government. As Hamilton stated in that letter to Edward Carrington from 1792:

“A word on another point. I am told that serious apprehensions are disseminated in your state as to the existence of a Monarchical party meditating the destruction of State & Republican Government. If it is possible that so absurd an idea can gain ground it is necessary that it should be combatted. I assure you on my *private faith and honor* as a Man that there is not in my judgment a shadow of foundation of it. A very small number of men indeed may entertain theories less republican than Mr. Jefferson & Mr. Madison; but I am persuaded there is not a Man among them who would not regard as both *criminal & visionary* any attempt to subvert the republican system of the Country. Most of these men rather *fear* that it may not justify itself by its fruits, than feel a predilection for a different form; and their fears are not diminished by the factions & fanatical politics

which they find prevailing among a certain set of Gentlemen and threatening to disturb the tranquility and order of the Government.

As to the destruction of State Governments, the *great* and *real* anxiety is to be able to preserve the National from the too potent and counteracting influence of those Governments. As to my own political Creed, I give it to you with the utmost sincerity. I am *affectionately* attached to the Republican theory. I desire *above all things* to see the *equality* of political rights exclusive of all *hereditary* distinction firmly established by a practical demonstration of its being consistent with the order and happiness of society.

As to State Governments, the prevailing byass of my judgment is that if they can be circumscribed within bounds consistent with the preservation of the National Government they will prove useful and salutary. If the States were all the size of Connecticut, Maryland or New Jersey, I should decidedly regard the local Governments as both safe & useful. As the thing is, however, I acknowledge the most serious apprehensions that the Government of the U States will not be able to maintain itself against their influence. I see that influence already penetrating into the National Councils & perverting their direction.

Hence a disposition on my part towards a liberal construction of the powers of the National Government and to erect every fence to guard it from depredations, which is, in my opinion, consistent with constitutional propriety."¹¹⁰

Hamilton and John Adams are often lumped in together as being indicative of Federalist Party thought, but there are in fact many differences between the two, which no doubt contributed to their conflict and eventual break during Adams' term as President. Note Hamilton's argument above in favor of republicanism without hereditary distinctions

¹¹⁰ *ibid*, 443.

and in favor of equality of rights. In contrast to how many have interpreted Adams' *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, Hamilton here clearly indicates he does not see any need for different orders in society written into the Constitution or law. This is yet another example of the fears both Hamilton and Madison had regarding the other that obscured their similarities.

Another aspect of Hamilton's view of the proper way to interpret the Constitution was his argument that one could never spell out all the details necessary for actually carrying governing into practice. This shows why he favored use of notions such as the "general welfare" as warrant for the policies he wanted to carry out. Madison considered this method dangerous, though, arguing it would lead to no limits whatsoever on what the federal government could do. Regardless, as Hamilton wrote to William Heth in 1791:

"My opinion is that there is and necessarily must be a great number of undefined particulars incident to the general duty of every officer, for the requiring of which no special warrant is to be found in any law. . . . What law could ever define the details of the duty of a Secretary of the Treasury? It is evident these must be an endless variety of things unexpressed which are incident to the nature of his station & which he is bound in duty to perform at the call of the President. . . . If it be said the law should then require this, I answer that the detail would be endless. And surely it would not answer to say in respect to any officer that he must do *whatever* he is required to do. And if all that he is to do is to be defined the Statutes of the United States must be more voluminous than those of any Country in the world.

There is a large chapter of duties *between Executive Officers* which grow out of the Nature of Executive power

and which the natural relations of things can alone determine.”¹¹¹

Thus, neither the Constitution itself, nor even laws, can have all the details spelled out in advance according to Hamilton. It is up to those who administer both the laws and the Constitution to provide the vast majority of the details. We have seen this Hamiltonian notion carried out in great measure in recent decades by Congress' delegation to the bureaucracy the power to write the actual regulations which provide much of the detail for administering laws.

Overall, Hamilton's method of interpreting the Constitution, and thus his understanding of the way government officials should act, can be accurately characterized by a comment he made to Rufus King in 1798:

“You know also how widely different the *business* of Government is from the *speculation* of it, and the energy of the imagination, dealing in general propositions, from that of *execution in detail*.”¹¹²

James Madison, on the other hand, had all along some important differences from Hamilton in both his understanding of the importance of the new Constitution, and how it should be put into practice. First of all, he did not display Hamilton's tendency towards a radical break with the approach to governing under the Articles of Confederation, and he

¹¹¹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume VIII: February 1791 - July 1791. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 499-500.

¹¹² Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXII: July 1798 - March 1799. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, 192.

certainly did not entertain as much limitation on the powers of the states.

To Edmund Randolph, Madison wrote in 1787:

“I think with you that it will be well to retain as much as possible of the old Confederation, tho' I doubt whether it may not be best to work the valuable articles into the new System, instead of engrafting the latter on the former. I am also perfectly of your opinion that in framing a system, no material sacrifices ought to be made to local or temporary prejudices. . . . I hold it for a fundamental point that an individual independence of the States, is utterly irreconcilable with the idea of an aggregate sovereignty. I think at the same time that a consolidation of the States into one simple republic is not less unattainable than it would be inexpedient. Let it be tried then whether any middle ground can be taken which will at once support a due supremacy of the national authority, and leave in force the local authorities so far as they can be subordinately useful.”¹¹³

Even with Madison's most famous attempt to give power to the federal government over the states, that is, his desire for Congress to have a veto on state legislation, he conceived of it not as a replacement of the states by the federal government, but rather a way of providing stability to both governments.

“Let the national Government be armed with a positive & compleat authority in all cases where uniform measures are necessary. As in trade &c. &c. Let it also retain the powers which it now possesses.

Let it have a negative in all cases whatsoever on the Legislative Acts of the States as the K. of G.B. heretofore had. This I conceive to be essential and the least possible abridgement of the State Sovereignities. Without such a defensive power, every positive power that can be given on paper will be unavailing. It will also give internal stability to

¹¹³ Hutchinson, William T., and William M.E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 6: 9 April 1786 - 24 May 1787. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975, 369.

the States. There has been no moment since the peace at which the federal assent wd have been given to paper money &c. &c."¹¹⁴

Notice Madison's emphasis that the federal government should have "compleat authority" only in cases where "uniform measures are necessary." This is a very different conception of the relationship between the federal and state governments than Hamilton had. Instead of an overwhelming fear of the states, Madison argued that only in certain areas would they need to be restricted, and power instead given to the federal government.

The problem of interpreting the Constitution, and thus how to put it into effect, was on Madison's mind from the very first. He clearly understood that it contained many ambiguities, but he thought those would be removed over time as more and more precedents were established. We can clearly see here the source of Madison's concern with Hamilton's policy proposals, as if these became the precedents on which later practice was to be based, then a way of understanding the Constitution contrary to his own would become the norm. As he stated in 1790, "Among other difficulties, the exposition of the Constitution is frequently a copious source, and must continue so until its meaning on all

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, 370.

great points shall have been settled by precedents."¹¹⁵

Much more so than Hamilton, Madison all along expressed concerns about the federal government becoming too powerful. However, his primary fear at the beginning of the new federal government was with the power of Congress, no doubt in part because of the criticisms he had had of the behavior of state legislatures under the Articles of Confederation.

"In truth the Legislative power is of such a nature that it scarcely can be restrained either by the Constitution or by itself. And if the federal Government should lose its proper equilibrium within itself, I am persuaded that the effect will proceed from the Encroachments of the Legislative department. If the possibility of encroachments on the part of the Ex. or the Senate were to be compared, I should pronounce the danger to lie rather in the latter than the former."¹¹⁶

Madison did express some concern over the power of the state governments, but specifically in regards to civil rights. During the debates in Congress over the then-proposed amendments to the Constitution which became the Bill of Rights, Madison was in favor of extending some of the protections therein to restrict the power of the states. Far before the incorporation of the Bill of Rights through the 14th Amendment by the Supreme Court, Madison was in favor of limiting the states' abilities to violate certain rights. When a fellow member of the House of

¹¹⁵ Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison, Volume 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790, with a supplement 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 250.

¹¹⁶ *ibid*, 253.

Representatives moved to strike out "No state shall infringe the equal rights of conscience, nor the freedom of speech, or of the press, nor of the right of trial by jury in criminal cases," Madison responded with this argument, according to the record:

"Mr. Madison Conceived this to be the most valuable amendment on the whole list; if there was any reason to restrain the government of the United States from infringing upon these essential rights, it was equally necessary that they should be secured against the state governments; he thought if they provided against the one, it was as necessary to provide against the others, and was satisfied that it would be equally grateful to the people."¹¹⁷

Madison even, in part, agreed with Hamilton's assessment that one could never specify the powers of the federal government in advance through the Constitution. He argued implied powers were inevitable. In response to another House member's proposal to add the word "expressly" just before the word "delegated" in what has become known as the 10th Amendment's phrase where it says, "The powers not delegated by this Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively," Madison's response was:

"Mr. Madison Objected to this amendment, because it was impossible to confine a government to the exercise of express powers. There must necessarily be admitted powers by implication, unless the constitution descended to recount every minutiae. He remembered the word "expressly" had been moved in the convention of Virginia, by the opponents to the ratification, and after full and fair discussion was given up by them, and the system allowed to retain its present

¹¹⁷ *ibid*, 344.

form.”¹¹⁸

When Hamilton began to propose various measures for actually putting the Constitution into practice, however, Madison realized just how different his and his former collaborator's ideas truly were. As I mentioned above with Hamilton, Madison also considered ideas which differed from his own as not only being simply mistaken, but as being subversive and quite possibly even treasonous. It is surprising, as many have noted, just how quickly individuals that knew each other, and had worked together for years and even decades, could so abruptly alter their assessments of each other to conclude that each was up to the worst possible things they could imagine. To Henry Lee, Madison wrote in 1792:

“With respect to the general spirit of the administration you already know how far my ideas square with yours. You know also how extremely offensive some particular measures have been; & I will frankly own, (though the remark is for yourself alone at present) that if they should be followed by the usurpation of power recommended in the report on manufactures, I shall consider the fundamental & characteristic principle of the Govt. as subverted. It will no longer be a Govt. possessing special powers taken from the General Mass, but one possessing the genl. mass with special powers reserved out of it. And this change will take place in defiance of the true & universal construction, & of the sense in which the instrument is known to have been proposed, advocated & ratified. Whether the people of this country will submit to a constitution not established by themselves, but imposed on them by their rulers, is a problem to be solved by the event alone. It must unquestionably be the wish of all

¹¹⁸ *ibid*, 346.

who are friendly to their rights, that their situation should be understood by them, & that they should have as fair an opportunity as possible of judging for themselves."¹¹⁹

Here we see clearly Madison's essential disagreement with Hamilton. For Madison, the federal government had only the specific powers given to it by the Constitution, and not the extensive powers proposed by Hamilton. Now, this is clearly in contrast to his earlier statement above that not all the powers of any government could be completely specified in advance. However, I argue Madison's idea regarding implied powers was that the actual powers mentioned in the Constitution could not be completely specified in advance, and thus his disagreement with Hamilton was that powers not specifically mentioned there could not be claimed for the federal government. They needed to be left to, if anywhere, the states. Note also his argument that there was a clear understanding by those who proposed the Constitution regarding what it meant. I will return to this point below.

Madison elaborated on this point in a letter to Edmund Pendleton, also from 1792:

"If Congress can do whatever in their *discretion* can be *done by money*, and will promote the *general welfare*, the Government is no longer a limited one possessing enumerated powers, but an indefinite one subject to particular exceptions. It is to be remarked that the phrase out of which this doctrine is elaborated, is copied from the old

¹¹⁹ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., The Papers of James Madison, Volume 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, 193-194.

articles of Confederation, where it was always understood as nothing more than a general caption to the specified powers, and it is a fact that it was preferred in the new instrument for that very reason as less liable than any other to misconstruction."¹²⁰

Madison claimed many times that Hamilton's proposals were in violation of the understanding those who proposed the Constitution had in mind when they created the document, and also that those who accepted the Constitution had in mind as well. This is the main point on which I criticize Madison, as I claim this is a classic example of "begging the question," the well-known logical fallacy. If, as is clear, Hamilton had a rather different understanding of that document, and the powers it gave the new government, how could Madison claim to speak authoritatively for ALL those who had proposed it?

For instance, we know, from his own notes taken at the Constitutional Convention, that the Constitution was itself the result of extensive debate and disagreement. Many, if not most, proposals that were accepted were agreed to only on close votes. It is clear that even the individuals who themselves took part in writing the Constitution had different opinions, and this point is further supported by the sides those who had attended the Constitutional Convention took during the debates of the 1790's. One need look no further for examples than Hamilton and Madison themselves, although they are far from the only

¹²⁰ *ibid*, 195-196.

ones.

Further, to state that he knew without a doubt how those who had accepted the Constitution had conceived of it is even more subject to criticism. Madison himself knew what every member of every state convention that accepted the Constitution had in mind when voting in favor of it? This is stretching credulity way beyond what can reasonably be expected, as Madison could not have been sure even of the other members of Virginia's ratifying convention, let alone people in other states he never even met.

This weakness in Madison's arguments can be most clearly seen in his *Virginia Resolution*, where he went so far as to claim the final say in interpreting the Constitution for the individual states. Where once he had wanted: "To give the new system its proper energy it will be desirable to have it ratified by the authority of the people, and not merely by that of the Legislatures,"¹²¹ he altered his argument to claim that the states, and not the people, were the partners in the social contract that had created the Constitution.

"That this Assembly doth explicitly and peremptorily declare, that it views the powers of the federal government, as resulting from the compact to which the states are parties; as limited by the plain sense and intention of the instrument constituting that compact; as no farther valid than they are authorised by the grants enumerated in that compact, and

¹²¹ Hutchinson, William T., and William M.E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 6: 9 April 1786 - 24 May 1787. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975, 370.

that in case of a deliberate, palpable and dangerous exercise of other powers not granted by the said compact, the states who are parties thereto have the right, and are in duty bound, to interpose for arresting the pro<gress> of the evil, and for maintaining within their respective limits, the authorities, rights and liberties appertaining to them.”¹²²

In conclusion, I have argued in this chapter that the disagreements which characterized Hamilton and Madison's later careers, after once closely collaborating on the *Federalist*, occurred because each had, all along, distinctly different ideas as to how much power it would be necessary to give to the federal government created by the Constitution they both worked so hard to create and achieve. That they were both surprised by the disagreements they had once they had secured the Constitution shows that there never really has been a single way of understanding the role of the Constitution and the federal government in the United States, nor has there been a single way of “defining the republic.”

As regards the issue of republicanism, we once again see just how widely different preferences on what a republican government should be like can be held by individuals living at the same time and in the same country. For Hamilton, the difficulty in creating the kind of republic that could survive was what he saw as the centrifugal influence of the states. The states had too much power in his estimation, and people were far

¹²² Mattern, David B., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 17: 31 March 1797 - 3 March 1801, with a supplement 22 January 1778 - 9 August 1795. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, 189.

more loyal to them than to the United States as a whole. In order for that to succeed, the power of the federal government needed to be increased, very specifically taking power, and citizen loyalty, away from the states. States "could" play a useful role in his vision of the United States, but their influence needed to be as limited as possible. One specific issue he especially feared state influence on was property rights. The states, with their tendencies toward debt relief, paper money, etc., would undermine the kind of order he saw as necessary for any human society to continue to exist. Thus, the Constitution needed to be interpreted in such ways as to allow the federal government to do the many things he saw as necessary for creating a lasting, successful, powerful, and especially "great" country.

Madison was much less fearful of state power. Yes, he did see a need to give the federal government more power, but he did not see any need for a radical break from the principles of the Articles of Confederation. Greater state power and state sovereignty were realities he had lived with for far longer than Hamilton, so they posed less of a problem in his mind. All the federal government needed were a few, well-defined group of powers, in order to assure the success of the federal government, and the United States as a whole. For Madison, the goal was the "least possible abridgement of state sovereignties." As far as the need to resolve Constitutional ambiguities through accumulation of

precedent, he preferred a United States where such ambiguities led not to greater power for the federal government, but greater assignment of certain powers and duties to the state governments. For Madison, the United States was far more a collection of individual states, and an entire nation only secondarily. He saw no reason why such a situation could not succeed. Hamilton, on the other hand, was of the exact opposite opinion. In order to succeed, the United States needed to stress its common identity, and not its continued existence as a collection of states, where the individual citizen's primary identification was with their state.

Chapter Five: Hamilton and Madison on Religion

Hamilton and Madison did not differ greatly in their opinions on religion, at least as regards the official role of government. Madison, as is well known, opposed much more openly and consistently, any attempt to create or support an official religion for the United States as a whole. He even, as I will show below, wanted to extend the protection of freedom of conscience to apply to the states as well, which would have conflicted with some state laws at the time.

As I have mentioned before, though, my goal in writing this dissertation is to show the underlying differences between Hamilton and Madison, rather than concentrating specifically the views of either. That sort of work has been done extensively already, and does not need to be repeated here. It is the underlying differences which I argue they had all along that led to their eventual political rivalry, and one of the topics on which they differed was religion, albeit not as sharply as in other areas.

Hamilton did display an underlying religious bent all of his life, far less so at the beginning, but nevertheless growing in intensity as he aged. There are few references to religion in Hamilton's early years, but that number increased dramatically towards the end of his life. For Hamilton, the importance of religion stemmed from his conviction that it provided a sense of order and continuity in life that could be found nowhere else. Thus we will see his quite visceral horrified reaction to the atheism of the

French Revolution. That, and the violence I mentioned above in Chapter Three, is what turned him away from supporting the French Revolution.

Madison did not display any overt religiosity in any of his writings throughout his life. He did, however, show a consistent, and strong, belief, in the necessity for religious freedom from any official religion, either in Virginia or the United States as a whole. His was an ongoing suspicion of religion, and indeed a great fear of any kind of official religion. Unlike Hamilton, Madison showed no disapproval of the atheism of the French Revolution. It just did not seem to bother him at all. Religion was just not necessary for order in society in his view.

One piece of research on Hamilton I do agree shows us an important aspect of his thought is Clement Fatovic's "Reason and Experience in Alexander Hamilton's Science of Politics. Fatovic argues Hamilton followed David Hume in emphasizing the limitations of human reason.

"I argue that even Hamilton's most far-reaching reforms were grounded in a Humean understanding of the limits of human rationality in explaining and controlling the world with the kind of certainty and mastery sought by many other Enlightenment-era thinkers. The Humean foundations of Hamilton's 'science of politics' suggest that an epistemology grounded in concrete experience is not necessarily committed to the status quo. In fact, because this science of politics is not wedded to any fixed ideas about what works best in politics, it can actually be open to significant innovation and experimentation."¹²³

¹²³ Clement Fatovic, "Reason and Experience in Alexander Hamilton's Science of Politics," *American Political Thought* 2, No.1 (2013): 2.

Fatovic includes as part of this argument an early work from Hamilton, which I will also discuss below, regarding a hurricane which struck the island he was living on. For Fatovic, this work is indicative of Hamilton's conviction from very early on in his life of the limitations humans live with.

“In one of his earliest writings, an uncharacteristically overwrought first-hand account of a deadly hurricane that ripped through his native St. Croix, Hamilton exhibited that characteristic sensitivity to the contingency of human life that would pervade his more mature reflections on politics. After describing the devastation inflicted by the storm in vivid terms sure to arouse the imagination, the young West Indian reflected on his own smallness and diffidence when confronted with so much ‘ruin and confusion on every side.’ . . . In calling upon the aid and mercy of God, the frightened youth was not simply making a flamboyant display of his piety. He was also expressing a developing awareness of the limits of human understanding.”¹²⁴

While as I said above, I agree with Fatovic's view of Hamilton as regards the limitations of human reason, the reason I will include the same early work of Hamilton's he discusses is that for me, it will begin the presentation of the underlying greater amount of preference for Christianity and its importance for supplying meaning and purpose to life I am convinced Hamilton had all along. Madison was not hostile to religion as such, but rather he was much less given over to religious sentiments than Hamilton, and was far more concerned, due to the established church in his home of Virginia, with religious freedom.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 12-13.

Michael J. Rosano focuses more on Hamilton's overall view of human nature, and the effect it had on his political thought.

“This analysis, by contrast, seeks to understand Hamilton on his own terms by interpreting and synthesizing his basic observations about human nature so as to define his conception of human nature and its vital relation to his political thought. His conception is predominately and even radically liberal, but it also reflects key features of Christian and classical republican thought. The relation between those conflicting aspects, in effect, defines his thought, reveals its assumptions, and poses urgent philosophical, moral, and political problems.”¹²⁵

Rosano argues Hamilton's views are the result of a complex mix of influences, ultimately fashioned into a unique whole in pursuit of his own goals for the United States.

“The Constitution is a republican solution to complex moral and political problems rooted in human nature and displayed throughout the history of government. Hamilton rejects classical republican and Christian principles in favor of Machiavelli's effectual truth, Hobbes's concept of power, Lockean liberty, and his own science of politics. Hamilton's liberal conception of human nature as passionately self-interested grounds his political science. But Hamilton's synthesis of alternatives in modern political thought displays its limits by depending on nobility and philanthropy. Classical and Christian virtues thus infuse his conception of human nature and bolster the Republic. Whether the spirits of liberty, nobility, philanthropy, and power can continue to harmonize as a chorus of the better angels of our nature is an open question. Americans have the right to alter their government according to the principles that seem likely to secure their happiness. But safeguarding the rights of individuals marching to the beat of their own drum requires more than vigilance. Civic deliberation about the best principles for today in the

¹²⁵ Michael J. Rosano, “Liberty, Nobility, Philanthropy, and Power in Alexander Hamilton's Conception of Human Nature,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47, No. 1 (2003): 61.

light of the principles that made government by the deliberation and choice of the people possible remains a condition of liberty."¹²⁶

As I mentioned above, Madison was not as concerned with religion himself throughout his life. I have read the collected writings of both and there just is not the same underlying religiosity with Madison as there is with Hamilton. As we will see, Madison was not horrified by the atheism espoused as part of the French Revolution as Hamilton was. He was, however, consistently throughout his life an opponent of official state religion, for reasons I will show below.

Thomas Lindsay argues, in regards to Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," that it reflects not only Madison's concern for religious freedom, but also that it shows his hostility to religion itself.

"I argue that the Memorial's explicit religious appeals are better understood as rhetoric than as expressions of Madison's conviction that politics is 'subordinate' to God's 'commands.' Moreover, I find Madison's thought hostile not only to religious establishments (as is well known) but also – contrary to the language of the Memorial and to its consensus interpretation – hostile, in important aspects, to revealed religion itself."¹²⁷

I myself do not find the same hostility to religion itself as Lindsay, but the point is Madison just did not express the same kind of faith in Christianity that Hamilton had.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 72-73.

¹²⁷ Thomas Lindsay, "James Madison on Religion and Politics: Rhetoric and Reality," *The American Political Science Review* 85, No. 4 (1991), 1321.

Vincent Munoz argues a slightly different point regarding Madison on religion than I do. For him, Madison's thought on the relationship between government and religion is one in which the government is supposed to not take any notice of religion or religious belief when interacting with citizens.

"I argue that Madison champions a 'religion-blind' constitution, a constitution that prohibits the state from taking cognizance of religion. The state, in Madison's view, may not classify citizens on the basis of religious beliefs or religious affiliation, which means that the state may neither privilege nor penalize religious institutions, religious citizens, or religiously motivated conduct as such."¹²⁸

While I do not disagree with Munoz, the point I will make below in regards to Madison is in connection with his overall expectation for the United States as a whole, not just as to how government treats religion in a legal sense.

I now turn to the writings of Hamilton and Madison themselves. As I mentioned above, as I have read the writings of both I have found a far greater expressed religiosity, albeit in different forms, throughout the writings of Hamilton than Madison. Like so many people, Hamilton did not overtly express his religious preferences throughout most of his life. Rather, they were part of his underlying understanding of what existence is like, and provided him with a sense of meaning and purpose for life itself. This greater religiosity can clearly be seen in the first excerpts from Hamilton's

¹²⁸ Vincent Phillip Munoz, "James Madison's Principle of Religious Liberty," *The American Political Science Review* 97, No. 1 (2003), 17.

works, a reflection following a hurricane which struck St. Croix, published in *The Royal Danish American Gazette* on September 6, 1772.

“Let the Earth rend. Let the planets forsake their course. Let the Sun be extinguished and the Heavens burst asunder. Yet what have I to dread? My staff can never be broken—in Omnip[o]tence I trusted.

He who gave the winds to blow, and the lightnings to rage—even him have I always loved and served. His precepts have I observed. His commandments have I obeyed—and his perfections have I adored. He will snatch me from ruin. He will exalt me to the fellowship of Angels and Seraphs, and to the fullness of never ending joys.”¹²⁹

And:

“Our distressed, helpless condition taught us humility and contempt of ourselves. The horrors of the night, the prospect of an immediate, cruel death—or, as one may say, of being crushed by the Almighty in his anger—filled us with terror. And every thing that had tended to weaken our interest with him, upbraided us in the strongest colours, with our baseness and folly. That which, in a calm unruffled temper, we call a natural cause, seemed then like the correction of the Deity. Our imagination represented him as an incensed master, executing vengeance on the crimes of his servants. The father and benefactor were forgot, and in that view, a consciousness of our guilt filled us with despair.

But see, the Lord relents. He hears our prayer. The Lightning ceases. The winds are appeased. The warring elements are reconciled and all things promise peace. The darkness is dispell'd and drooping nature revives at the approaching dawn. Look back Oh! my soul, look back and tremble. Rejoice at thy deliverance, and humble thyself in the

¹²⁹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume I: 1768-1778. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961, 34-39.

presence of thy deliverer. "¹³⁰

As I mentioned above, Hamilton was not an overtly religious person throughout most of his life, but one can see again and again the sort of religious references with him that one simply does not find with Madison. The event which does seem to have aroused his greatest amount of reflection on the importance of religion was the French Revolution. Hamilton was horrified by not only the violence and bloodshed which took place, but also by the proclamations of atheism that were prominent amongst those who led the Revolution. In a letter to an unknown correspondent from 1793, Hamilton expressed this negative, indeed visceral, reaction regarding this French undermining of the importance of religion.

"The cause of France is compared with that of America during its late revolution. Would to Heaven that the comparison were just. Would to heaven that we could discern in the Mirror of French affairs, the same humanity, the same decorum, the same gravity, the same order, the same dignity, the same solemnity, which distinguished the course of the American Revolution. Clouds & Darkness would not then rest upon the issue as they now do."¹³¹

And:

"When I find the doctrines of Atheism openly

¹³⁰ Ibid, 34-39.

¹³¹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XIV: February 1793 – June 1793. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, 473-476.

advanced in the Convention and heard with loud applauses—When I see the sword of fanaticism extended to force a political creed upon citizens who were invited to submit to the arms of France as the harbingers of Liberty—When I behold the hand of Rapacity outstretched to prostrate and ravish the monuments of religious worship erected by those citizens and their ancestors. When I perceive passion tumult and violence usurping those seats, where reason and cool deliberation ought to preside—

I acknowledge, that I am glad to believe, there is no real resemblance between what was the cause of America & what is the cause of France—that the difference is no less great than that between Liberty & Licentiousness. I regret whatever has a tendency to confound them, and I feel anxious, as an American, that the ebullitions of inconsiderate men among us may not tend to involve our Reputation in the issue."¹³²

One sees here Hamilton's connection of religion with social order and reason. Now, as I will argue below, Hamilton did not argue for any sort of official religion on the part of the United States, but rather for an ongoing understanding of, and reference to, religion as part of even official government activity. He was not exclusionary in terms of which specific religion, or at least we have no evidence of that, but rather he equated atheism, that is, a lack of religion, especially Christianity, as part of public life, with chaos and barbarism.

Further evidence of his rejection of the French Revolution comes from an essay he wrote regarding "The War in Europe" in 1796. For Hamilton, Christianity had reduced the level of violence and destruction

¹³² Ibid, 473-476.

practiced in early wars, such as those fought by the Roman Empire. For him, French rejection of Christianity was tantamount to a return to Roman barbarism and destruction.

“Every step of the progress of the present war in Europe has been marked with horrors. If the perpetration of them was confined to those who are the acknowledged instruments of despotic Power, it would excite less surprize—but when they are acted by those who profess themselves to be the Champions of the rights of man, they naturally occasion both wonder and regret. Passing by the extreme severities which the French have exercised in Italy, what shall we think of the following declaration of Jourdan to the inhabitants of Germany

Good God! is it then a crime for men to defend their own Government and Country? Is it a punishable offence in the Germans that they will not accept from the French what they offer as liberty, at the point of the bayonet? This is to confound all ideas of morality and humanity; it is to trample upon all the rights of man and nations. It is to restore the ages of Barbarism. According to the laws and practice of modern war, the peasantry of a Country, if they remain peaceably at home, are protected from other harm than a contribution to the necessities of the invading army. Those who join the armies of their Country and fight with them are considered and treated as other soldiers. But the present French Doctrine is, that they are to be treated as Rebels and Criminals. German patriotism is a heinous offence in the eyes of French Patriots. How are we to solve this otherwise than by observing that the French are influenced by the same spirit of Domination which governed the antient Romans! These considered themselves as having a right to be the Masters of the World and to treat the rest of mankind as their vassals.

How clearly is it proved <by> all <-> that the praise of a <-> world is justly due to Christianity. War, by the influence of the humane principles of that Religion, had been stripped of half its terrors. The French renounce christianity & they relapse

into Barbarism. War resumes the same hideous and savage form, which it wore in the ages of Roman and Gothic Violence."¹³³

Hamilton was far more comfortable with official public events involving religion than Madison. He even went so far to advocate, on more than one occasion, public proclamations and displays by government officials as a means of expressing, or at least trying to influence, the overall sense of the public will. When the French Directory refused to receive Charles Cotesworth Pinckney in 1797, Hamilton wrote to Timothy Pickering what he thought the United States should do.

"It is now ascertained that Mr Pinckney has been refused and with circumstances of indignity. What is to be done? The share I have had in the public administration added to my interest as a Citizen make me extremely anxious that at this delicate Crisis a course of conduct exactly proper may be adopted. I offer to your consideration without ceremony what appears to me such a course.

First. I would appoint a day of humiliation and prayer. In such a crisis this appears to me proper in itself and it will be politically useful to impress our nation that there is a serious state of things—to strengthen religious ideas in a contest which in its progress may require that our people may consider themselves as the defenders of their Country against Atheism conquest & anarchy. It is far from evident to me that the progress of the war may not call on us to defend our fire sides & our altars. And any plan which does not look forward to this as possible will in my opinion be a superficial one."¹³⁴

¹³³ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XX: January 1796 - March 1797. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 339-340.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 545.

In his speech writing duties for President Washington, Hamilton also displayed his comfort with a public role for the President in acknowledging and even promoting religiosity among American citizens. Below is a draft he wrote for President Washington in 1795. Note how Hamilton argues the United States should specifically be grateful to God for its favorable situation. For Hamilton, it is God's good will towards the United States that is responsible for the nation's well-being, and thus the nation as a whole should publicly give thanks. However, note the lack reference to any one kind of religion. It is simply that religious groups are "recommended," not commanded, to take part on a specific day.

"Amidst the calamities which afflict so many other nations [and trouble the sources of individual quiet security and happiness,] the present condition of the UStates affords much matter of consolation and satisfaction. Our exemption hitherto from the evils of foreign war, an increasing prospect of the continuance of that precious exemption—the great degree of internal tranquillity we have enjoyed, the recent confirmation of that tranquillity by the suppression of an insurrection which so wantonly threatened it—the happy course of our public affairs in general—the unexampled prosperity of all classes of our citizens—are circumstances which peculiarly mark our situation with [peculiar] indications of the Divine beneficence towards us. In such a state of things it becomes us in an especial manner as a People, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude to bow down before the Majesty of the Almighty to acknowledge our numerous obligations to him & to implore under a deep sense of his past goodness a continuance and confirmation of the blessings we experience. Deeply penetrated with this sentiment I George Washington President of the Ustates do recommend to all religious societies and denominations and to all persons whomsoever

within the U States to set apart and observe Thursday the 19th day of Feby next as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer and on that day to meet together & render their sincere and hearty thanks to the Great Ruler of Nations, for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a Nation; particularly for the possession of Constitutions of Government which unite & by their union establish Liberty with Order for the preservation of our peace foreign and domestic, for the seasonable check which has been given to a spirit of disorder in the suppression of the late Insurrection, and generally for the prosperous course of our affairs public and private; and at the same time humbly and fervently to beseech the kind Author of these blessings graciously to prolong them to us—to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to him for them—to teach us rightly to estimate their immense value—to preserve us from the wantonness of prosperity, from jeopardizing the advantages we enjoy by culpable or delusive projects—to dispose us to merit the continuance of his favours, by not abusing them, by our gratitude for them, and by a correspondent conduct as citizens and as men to render this country more & more a secure & propitious asylum for the unfortunate of other countries—to diffuse among us true & useful knowlege to diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality and Piety and finally to impart all the blessings we possess or ask for ourselves to the whole family of Mankind, that so Men may be happy & God glorified throughout the Earth.”¹³⁵

Even Hamilton's sense of public duty, and I argue even the quest for fame that Douglass Adair and Martin Harvey noted,¹³⁶ was in part motivated by his conviction of the absolute importance of religion for

¹³⁵ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVIII: January 1795 - July 1795. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973, 2-3.

¹³⁶ Douglass Adair and Martin Harvey, “Was Alexander Hamilton a Christian Statesman?” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 12, No. 2 (1955), 308-329.

organized civil society. Without it, society would fall apart, in his estimation. This is why, to the end of his life, he refrained from intentionally engaging in public behavior which might disqualify him for public service. I say “intentionally” because I am convinced his public letter attacking President John Adams was a blunder he did not fully appreciate the effect of until after he had issued it. Prior to that, though, including during the Quasi-War era, his thoughts explicitly included the need to keep himself available for public service, in part to defend religion. In 1795, he wrote to Robert Troup:

“Because there must be some public fools who sacrifice private to public interest at the certainty of ingratitude and obloquy—because my vanity whispers I ought to be one of those fools and ought to keep myself in a situation the best calculated to render service—because I dont want to be rich and if I cannot live in splendor in Town, with a moderate fortune moderately acquired, I can at least live in comfort in the country and I am content to do so.b . . .

The game to be played may be a most important one. It may be for nothing less than true liberty, property, order, religion and of course heads. I will try Troupe if possible to guard yours & mine. . . .

You are good enough to offer to stand between me and ostensibility. I thank you with all my soul. You cannot doubt that I should have implicit confidence in you but it has been the rule of my life to do nothing for my own emolument under<cover—what> I would not promulge I would avoid. This may be too great refinement. I know it is pride. But this pride makes it part of my plan to appear truly what I am. . . .

God bless you. Always Affectionately Yrs.¹³⁷”

¹³⁷ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVIII: January 1795 - July 1795. New York: Columbia University Press,

Note how Hamilton equates “true liberty” with not only “property,” but also “order, religion,” and even “heads.” For Hamilton, his lifelong religiosity manifested itself in a conviction that disavowal of religion and religiosity by any nation was a recipe for disaster. Note also his use of “God bless you,” something one simply does not find anywhere near as often with Madison.

Even more clear evidence of Hamilton's connection of the French Revolution with chaos because of the violence and rejection of Christianity came during the Quasi-War, and Hamilton's published series of articles entitled, “The Stand.” In number 3, written in 1798, he says:

“In reviewing the disgusting spectacle of the French revolution, it is difficult to avert the eye entirely from those features of it which betray a plan to disorganize the human mind itself, as well as to undermine the venerable pillars that support the edifice of civilized society. The attempt by the rulers of a nation to destroy all religious opinion, and to pervert a whole people to Atheism, is a phenomenon of profligacy reserved to consummate the infamy of the unprincipled reformers of France. The proofs of this terrible design are numerous and convincing.

The animosity to the Christian system is demonstrated by the single fact of the ridiculous and impolitic establishment of the decades, with the evident object of supplanting the Christian Sabbath. The inscription by public authority on the tombs of the deceased, affirming death to be an eternal sleep, witness the desire to discredit the belief of the immortality of the soul. The open profession of Atheism in the

Convention, received with acclamations; the honorable mention on its journals of a book professing to prove the nothingness of all religion;† the institution of a festival to offer public worship to a courtesan decorated with the pompous [title] of “Goddess of Reason;” the congratulatory reception of impious children appearing in the hall of the Convention to lisp blasphemy against the King of Kings; are among the dreadful proofs of a conspiracy to establish Atheism on the ruins of Christianity—to deprive mankind of its best consolations and most animating hopes—and to make a gloomy desert of the universe.”¹³⁸

As I mentioned above, though, even while stressing the importance of religion for civilized society, Hamilton did not show any strong preference for one form of religion over another, at least as far as public policy was concerned. His statements show a marked preference for religiosity among the citizenry, but not any kind of bigotry within the forms of organized religion. While not his own words, a letter written in 1794 from his sister-in-law Angelica shows a type of open-mindedness towards an otherwise quite unpopular, in England, variant of Christianity, Unitarianism. This, by the way, is a point of agreement between Hamilton and Madison, as we will see below.

“You will have the pleasure to receive this letter by Dr. Priestly, a man dear to virtue and to science. Without the advantage and satisfaction of his acquaintance, I revere him for his works, and take a particular interest that he should be well received in America. That happy country which seems reserved by Providence as an Assylum from the crimes and persecutions which make Europe the pity and disgrace of the

¹³⁸ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXI: April 1797 - July 1798. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 402.

age.

You my dear Brother will receive with distinguished kindness this worthy stranger, (if he whose breast teems with the love of mankind may anywhere be called a stranger) and make our country so dear to him as to cause him to forget that which he leaves at an advanced period of Life and which he has most ably served."¹³⁹

Hamilton further emphasized the importance of religion during his service as Inspector General for the Army. At first, he did not think Congress had authorized chaplains, and so wrote the Secretary of War to recommend Congress add them.

"There is no provision in the law for Chaplains. I am nevertheless deeply impressed with the importance of divine service among the troops, and have written on the subject to the S of War."¹⁴⁰

However, later, he did discover that Congress had authorized chaplains, and expressed the importance of filling these positions, not merely because he was simply carrying out the will of Congress, but also because he himself considered provision for religion as important even in the military.

"Application has been made to me on the Subject of Chaplains. I find by recurrence to the laws that four of these characters are provided for. This will furnish one to each

¹³⁹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVI: February 1794 - July 1794. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, 225.

¹⁴⁰ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXIV: November 1799 – June 1800. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, 37-38.

brigade. I doubt not you will feel with me strong motives which recommend the speedily going into these appointments. The Revd. Mr. Hill has been proposed by Col. Parker and I now offer him to you as a Candidate. It appears from the letter of Col. Parker that this Gentleman has been officiating in the character of Chaplain for some time."¹⁴¹

Hamilton did consider there to be some limits on what kind of religion would be appropriate. In a letter to William S. Smith in 1800, he objected to a potential chaplain candidate due to that individual's "enthusiasm." This is quite similar to his objection to the French Revolution as having gone out of control due to excessive human emotion.

"I can not say any thing relative to the claim of Captain White, having never been able to obtain from the S of War a definitive rule on the subject. I have just renewed my application relative to the point. The result as soon as known shall be communicated to you. Enthusiasm is certainly a very good thing, but religious enthusiasm is at least a dangerous instrument. From this, and some other circumstances which have come to my knowledge, I must decline authorizing you to employ the person you mention."¹⁴²

But when George Washington died, in addition to the military honors one would expect an Inspector General would arrange for a former President and Commanding General, Hamilton specifically wanted to include the services of a minister. To William North he wrote:

"I enclose to you some regulations relative to the funeral honors to be paid to our departed chief. They will govern generally in the celebration, altho' I have not

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 155-156.

¹⁴² Ibid, 320-321.

definitively adopted them.

The ceremonies will be performed in this city on Thursday next, and I should wish them to be performed in New York at the same time. If this is practicable you will immediately make the necessary arrangements for the purpose. You will draw the companies from the island, leaving only a sufficient number of men to manage the guard and concert measures with General Clarkson for bringing forward the uniform corps of volunteers and militia to take part in the scene. It will be proper likewise that the city should form part of the procession, and you will do what shall appear to you proper in reference to that idea. The half hour guns will be fired on the island, and the minute guns from the battery. The time is not sufficient for preparing a regular oration, but I should be happy if you could prevail on Doctor Moore or some other Clergyman to deliver a discourse suited to the occasion."¹⁴³

It is in his private life, though, that one can most clearly see his religious sentiments expressed, and just how important they were for his life, even if he did not express them publicly. His letters to his wife, Elizabeth, are especially full of the religious expressions which simply do not occur in similar letters by Madison. In 1797, his father-in-law, Philip Schuyler, had a bout of ill health, and so Hamilton wrote to her:

"I pray you, don't alarm yourself for you know how dangerous it will be in your situation and how much it is a duty should his case ever take a worse turn than we now apprehend to arm ourselves with Christian fortitude and resignation."¹⁴⁴

Also in 1797, when his eldest son Philip also was in bad health, he

¹⁴³ Ibid, 114-115.

¹⁴⁴ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXI: April 1797 - July 1798. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 51.

wrote:

"I am arrived here My Dear Eliza in good health but very anxious about my Dear Philip. I pray heaven to restore him and in every event to support you. . . . God bless my beloved and all My Dear Children."¹⁴⁵

One essential aspect of Hamilton's religious beliefs, already mentioned in regards to the negative influence he believed the French Revolution's emphasis on atheism would have on civilization, is the belief in an afterlife, which he clearly considered provided not only meaning and purpose, but also comfort and consolation, to human life. After one of his wife's sisters died in 1801, he wrote to Elizabeth:

"On Saturday, My Dear Eliza, your sister took leave of her sufferings and friends, I trust, to find repose and happiness in a better country.

Viewing all that she had endured for so long a time, I could not but feel a relief in the termination of the scene. She was sensible to the last and resigned to the important change.

Your father and mother are now calm. All is as well as it can be; except the dreadful ceremonies which custom seems to have imposed as indispensable in this pla<ce>, and which at every instant open anew the closing wounds of bleeding hearts. Tomorrow the funeral takes place. The day after I hope to set sail for N York.

I long to come to console and comfort you my darling Betsey. Adieu my sweet angel. Remember the duty of Christian Resignation. Ever Yrs."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 294-295.

¹⁴⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXV: July 1800 - April 1802. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, 348-349.

This idea of “Christian resignation” was one he used again and again in his correspondence with Elizabeth Hamilton. It is an aspect of his religiosity that appeared well before his son Philip was killed in a duel in 1801, but was clearly evident in his letters to people from whom he had received condolences after Philip’s death. To John Dickinson he wrote:

“I was not, My Dear Sir, insensible to the kind attention shewn me by your letter of the 30th. of November last. But till very lately the subject has been so extremely painful to me, that I have been under a necessity of flying from it as much as possible. Time and effort and occupation have at length restored the tranquillity of my mind, sufficiently to permit me to acknowledge the kindness of those friends who were good enough to manifest their sympathy in my misfortune.

Be assured, Sir, that consolation from you on such an occasion was particularly welcome to me, and that I shall always remember it with a grateful sense. The friendship of the wise and good rises in value, in proportion as we learn to form a just estimate of human character and opinion.

That estimate too has a tendency to reconcile us to the departure of those, who are dear to us, from a world, which holds out to virtue many snares, few very few supports or recompences. I do assure you, Sir, that as soon as the calm of Reason returned, this consideration had no small influence in disposing me to resign, with diminished regret, the eldest and brightest hope of my family. Happy those who deduce from it motives to seek in earnest a higher, and far more substantial, bliss, than can ever be found in this chequered, this ever varying scene!”¹⁴⁷

To Benjamin Rush he wrote, also on March 29, 1802:

“I felt all the weight of the obligation which I owed to you and to your amiable family, for the tender concern they

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 583.

manifested in an event, beyond comparison, the most afflicting of my life. But I was obliged to wait for a moment of greater calm, to express my sense of the kindness.

My loss is indeed great. The highest as well as the eldest hope of my family has been taken from me. You estimated him rightly—He was truly a fine youth. But why should I repine? It was the will of heaven; and he is now out of the reach of the seductions and calamities of a world, full of folly, full of vice, full of danger—of least value in proportion as it is best known. I firmly trust also that he has safely reached the haven of eternal repose and felicity.

You will easily imagine that every memorial of the goodness of his heart must be precious to me. You allude to one recorded in a letter to your son. If no special reasons forbid it, I should be very glad to have a copy of that letter."¹⁴⁸

Among those few expressions of his religious beliefs that we have in his papers to anyone other than immediate family, is his letter to Martha Washington after George Washington's death.

"I did not think it proper, Madam, to intrude amidst the first effusions of your grief. But I can no longer restrain my sensibility from conveying to you an imperfect expression of my affectionate sympathy in the sorrows you experience. No one, better than myself, knows the greatness of your loss, or how much your excellent heart is formed to feel it in all its extent. Satisfied that you cannot receive consolation, I will attempt to offer none. Resignation to the will of Heaven, which the practice of your life ensures, can alone alleviate the sufferings of so heart-rending an affliction.

There can be few, who equally with me participate in the loss you deplore. In expressing this sentiment, I may without impropriety allude to the numerous and distinguished marks of confidence and friendship, of which you have

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 583-584.

yourself been a Witness; but I cannot say in how many ways the continuance of that confidence and friendship was necessary to me in future relations.

Vain, however, are regrets. From a calamity, which is common to a mourning nation, who can expect to be exempt? Perhaps it is even a privilege to have a claim to a larger portion of it than others."¹⁴⁹

Even when faced with possible death, Hamilton expressed how he intended to behave based on his Christian beliefs. Now, the expressions he made did show a difference in the preparations he made and the sentiments he recorded between his upcoming duel with Aaron Burr and the earlier preparations he had made for other possible duels. One of Hamilton's flaws, perhaps his greatest, was his extraordinary concern for his personal honor. It is only a guess to say they were based on his family background (parents of uncertain marriage status), and lack of established family connections, but nevertheless the concern was there. We have several incidents recorded amongst his own papers where he felt the possibility of fighting a duel was his only choice. However, it is only with the last, his duel with Burr, that we have any strong religious sentiments tied directly to the upcoming event.

In a statement regarding the upcoming "interview," Hamilton wrote he was not eager to participate, due to the possibility of harming another human being, which he deplored due to his Christian beliefs.

¹⁴⁹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXIV: November 1799 – June 1800. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, 184-185.

“My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of Duelling, and it would even give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.”¹⁵⁰

To Elizabeth Hamilton he wrote:

“This letter, my very dear Eliza, will not be delivered to you, unless I shall first have terminated my earthly career; to begin, as I humbly hope from redeeming grace and divine mercy, a happy immortality.

If it had been possible for me to have avoided the interview, my love for you and my precious children would have been alone a decisive motive. But it was not possible, without sacrifices which would have rendered me unworthy of your esteem. I need not tell you of the pangs I feel, from the idea of quitting you and exposing you to the anguish which I know you would feel. Nor could I dwell on the topic lest it should unman me.

The consolations of Religion, my beloved, can alone support you; and these you have a right to enjoy. Fly to the bosom of your God and be comforted. With my last idea; I shall cherish the sweet hope of meeting you in a better world.”¹⁵¹

When, after the duel, Hamilton realized he was a dying man, his thoughts were of making a final expression of his religious beliefs. As is well known, he requested two different clergymen to give him communion as a final statement regarding his beliefs. I am including Benjamin Moore's statement to William Coleman so as to provide documentation of Hamilton's deep-seated beliefs. Much as the statement of a dying person

¹⁵⁰ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXVI: May 1, 1802 - October 23, 1804, Additional Documents 1774 - 1799, Addenda and Errata. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979, 278.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 293.

is taken quite seriously in the law, Hamilton's intention at this point of his life shows the intensity of his beliefs.

“Mr. Coleman,

The public mind being extremely agitated by the melancholy fate of that great man, Alexander Hamilton, I have thought it would be grateful to my fellow-citizens, would provide against misrepresentation, and, perhaps, be conducive to the advancement of the cause of religion, were I to give a narrative of some facts which have fallen under my own observation, during the time which elapsed between the fatal duel and his departure out of this world.

Yesterday morning, immediately after he was brought from Hoboken to the house of Mr. Bayard, at Greenwich, a message was sent informing me of the sad event, accompanied by a request from General Hamilton, that I would come to him for the purpose of administering the holy communion. I went; but being desirous to afford time for serious reflection, and conceiving that under existing circumstances, it would be right and proper to avoid every appearance of precipitancy in performing one of the most solemn offices of our religion, I did not then comply with his desire. At one o'clock I was again called on to visit him. Upon my entering the room and approaching his bed, with the utmost calmness and composure he said, 'My dear Sir, you perceive my unfortunate situation, and no doubt have been made acquainted with the circumstances which led to it. It is my desire to receive the communion at your hands. I hope you will not conceive there is any impropriety in my request.' He added, 'It has for some time past been the wish of my heart, and it was my intention to take an early opportunity of uniting myself to the church, by the reception of that holy ordinance.' I observed to him, that he must be very sensible of the delicate and trying situation in which I was then placed; that however desirous I might be to afford consolation to a fellow mortal in distress; still, it was my duty as a minister of the gospel, to hold up the law of God as

paramount to all other law; and that, therefore, under the influence of such sentiments, I must unequivocally condemn the practice which had brought him to his present unhappy condition. He acknowledged the propriety of these sentiments, and declared that he viewed the late transaction with sorrow and contrition. I then asked him, 'Should it please God, to restore you to health, Sir, will you never be again engaged in a similar transaction? and will you employ all your influence in society to discountenance this barbarous custom?' His answer was, 'That, Sir, is my deliberate intention.' I proceeded to converse with him on the subject of his receiving the Communion; and told him that with respect to the qualifications of those who wished to become partakers of that holy ordinance, my inquiries could not be made in language more expressive than that which was used by our Church. 'Do you sincerely repent of your sins past? Have you a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of the death of Christ? And are you disposed to live in love and charity with all men?' He lifted up his hands and said, 'With the utmost sincerity of heart I can answer those questions in the affirmative—I have no ill will against Col. Burr. I met him with a fixed resolution to do him no harm. I forgive all that happened.' I then observed to him, that the terrors of the divine law were to be announced to the obdurate and impenitent: but that the consolations of the Gospel were to be offered to the humble and contrite heart: that I had no reason to doubt his sincerity, and would proceed immediately to gratify his wishes. The Communion was then administered, which he received with great devotion, and his heart afterwards appeared to be perfectly at rest. I saw him again this morning, when with his last faltering words, he expressed a strong confidence in the mercy of God through the intercession of the Redeemer. I remained with him until 2 o'clock this afternoon, when death closed the awful scene—he expired without a struggle, and almost without a groan.

By reflecting on this melancholy event, let the humble believer be encouraged ever to hold fast that precious faith

which is the only source of true consolation in the last extremity of nature. Let the Infidel be persuaded to abandon his opposition to that gospel which the strong, inquisitive, and comprehensive mind of a Hamilton embraced, in his last moments, as the truth from heaven. Let those who are disposed to justify the practice of duelling, be induced, by this simple narrative, to view with abhorrence that custom which has occasioned in irreparable loss to a worthy and most afflicted family: which has deprived his friends of a beloved companion, his profession of one of its brightest ornaments, and his country of a great statesman and a real patriot. With great respect, I remain your friend and ser't,
Benjamin Moore."¹⁵²

So, all well and good. Hamilton had an underlying sense of religion that we can document from his earliest to his last days. He was convinced not only of the importance of religion in his own life, but also for the good of civilization as a whole. How did this affect his views of what the United States should be and become? This we can clearly see in his plan, expressed to James Bayard in 1802, for a "Christian Constitutional Society," in response to the threat he perceived of an American version of French Jacobinism and atheism.

"Neither are you to infer that any revolutionary result is contemplated. In my opinion the present Constitution is the standard to which we are to cling. Under its banners, *bona fide* must we combat our political foes—rejecting all changes but through the channel itself provides for amendments. By these general views of the subject have my reflections been guided. I now offer you the outline of the plan which they have suggested. Let an Association be formed to be denominated, "The Christian Constitutional Society." It's objects to be

¹⁵² Ibid, 314–317.

- 1st The support of the Christian Religion.
- 2nd The support of the Constitution of the United States.

...

Its Means.

1st The diffusion of information. For this purpose not only the Newspapers but pamphlets must be la[r]gely employed & to do this a fund must be created. 5 dollars annually for 8 years, to be contributed by each member who can really afford it, (taking care not to burden the less able brethren) may afford a competent fund for a competent time. It is essential to be able to disseminate *gratis* useful publications. Whenever it can be done, & there is a press, clubs should be formed to meet once a week, read the newspapers & prepare essays paragraphs &ct.

2nd The use of all lawful means in concert to promote the election of *fit men*. A lively correspondence must be kept up between the different Societies.

3rd The promoting of institutions of a charitable & useful nature in the management of Fœderalists. The populous cities ought particularly to be attended to. Perhaps it will be well to institute in such places 1st Societies for the relief of Emigrants—2nd. Academies each with one professor for instructing the different Classes of Mechanics in the principles of Mechanics

especially confidential & Elements of Chemistry. The cities have been employed by the Jacobins to give an impulse to the country. And it is believed to be an alarming fact, that while the question of Presidential Election was pending in the House of Rs. parties were organized in several of the Cities, in the event of there being no election, to cut off the leading Fœderalists & sieze the Government."¹⁵³

Notice the means mentioned by Hamilton. This is not an attempt to impose a nation-wide, official church or religion on all citizens. Nor is it an attempt to make laws for the mind, something we will see Madison was concerned with below. Rather, it is an attempt to influence the

¹⁵³ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXV: July 1800 - April 1802. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, 606-608.

population at large from a Christian-based point of view. Not only does it include dissemination of ideas Hamilton would have found acceptable, but it also includes charitable efforts to help the less fortunate. The goal here is to inculcate in the minds of the population an association between the Christian religion and not only good order, but also good acts.

What Madison would have thought of all this we do not know. As I have mentioned before, and will document below, his concerns were with preventing the imposition of any one form of religion, Christian or otherwise, on those who did not accept or want it. This is understandable due to his growing up in Virginia, with its established, tax-supported, church. I am saying nothing that has not already been well-documented before when I note that Madison loathed having an established church. It was a threat not only to freedom of thought, but political freedom as well. To William Bradford he wrote in 1774:

“If the Church of England had been the established and general Religion in all the Northern Colonies as it has been among us here and uninterrupted tranquility had prevailed throughout the Continent, It is clear to me that slavery and Subjection might and would have been gradually insinuated among us. Union of Religious Sentiments begets a surprizing confidence and Ecclesiastical Establishments tend to great ignorance and Corruption all of which facilitate the Execution of mischeivous Projects.”¹⁵⁴

Not only did an established church prevent freedom of thought and

¹⁵⁴ Hutchinson, William T., and William M.E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 1: 16 March 1751 - 16 December 1779. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962, 105.

political freedom, it also had a negative effect on the people themselves, in Madison's estimation. The lethargy it created in personal matters manifested itself in ethical and moral decline, not the positive effects those, such as Patrick Henry, argued having an established church would create.

“Poverty and Luxury prevail among all sorts: Pride ignorance and Knavery among the Priesthood and Vice and Wickedness among the Laity. This is bad enough But It is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical Hell conceived principle of persecution rages among some and to their eternal Infamy the Clergy can furnish their Quota of Imps for such business. This vexes me the most of any thing whatever. There are at this [time?] in the adjacent County not less than 5 or 6 well meaning men in close Gaol for publishing their religious Sentiments which in the main are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear talk or think of any thing relative to this matter, for I have squabbled and scolded abused and ridiculed so long about it, [to so lit]tle purpose that I am without common patience. So I l[leave you] to pity me and pray for Liberty of Conscience [to revive among us.]”¹⁵⁵

In fact, Madison argued not imposing any one type of religion on the population through an established church would create the positive effects proponents of an established church wanted. Also to William Bradford, who was from Pennsylvania, a state with no one established religion, he wrote in 1774:

“You are happy in dwelling in a Land where those inestimable privileges are fully enjoyed and public has long felt the good

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 106.

effects of their religious as well as Civil Liberty. Foreigners have been encouraged to settle among you. Industry and Virtue have been promoted by mutual emulation and mutual Inspection, Commerce and the Arts have flourished and I can not help attributing those continual exertions of Genius which appear among you to the inspiration of Liberty and that love of Fame and Knowledge which always accompany it. Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprize every expanded prospect.”¹⁵⁶

Madison’s “A Memorial and Remonstrance” contains his main thoughts and points regarding how he envisioned the United States should be regarding religion. His thought, as I have mentioned, centered on religious freedom, but there are multiple points he raises in that document that deserve especial attention and comment.

“Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, ‘that Religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.’ The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right.”¹⁵⁷

The American Revolution was fought, in part, to defend the “unalienable rights” of the colonists. Madison here adds to Jefferson’s “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” freedom of religion. This Lockean estimation of religion as among the rights which are unalienable

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 112-113.

¹⁵⁷ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 8: 10 March 1784 - 28 March 1786. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973, 299.

because doing so would negate the very reason for the existence of government, is in this instance Madison's addition to Locke's "Life, Liberty and Property" formulation for the basis of organized society.

"It is unalienable, because the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds cannot follow the dictates of other men: It is unalienable also, because what is here a right towards men, is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage and such only as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governour of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the General Authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign."¹⁵⁸

The right to freely choose what religion to follow and support is a duty which exists even before any government has been created, one which every human owes to the Creator. Madison here argues that governments that try to establish any one religion, and enforce recognition of it by the citizenry, are in fact trespassing on something owed to God, and not to any human government.

"We maintain therefore that in matters of Religion, no mans right is abridged by the institution of Civil Society and that Religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance. True it is, that no other rule exists, by which any question which may divide a Society, can be ultimately determined, but the will of the majority; but it is also true that the majority may trespass on the rights of the minority.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Because if Religion be exempt from the authority of the Society at large, still less can it be subject to that of the Legislative Body. The latter are but the creatures and vicegerents of the former. Their jurisdiction is both derivative and limited: it is limited with regard to the co-ordinate departments, more necessarily is it limited with regard to the constituents."¹⁵⁹

By definition, then, religion is beyond the ability of government to legislate. Government cannot legislate in matters concerning God or religion, because those are superior to government.

"The preservation of a free Government requires not merely, that the metes and bounds which separate each department of power be invariably maintained; but more especially that neither of them be suffered to overleap the great Barrier which defends the rights of the people. The Rulers who are guilty of such an encroachment, exceed the commission from which they derive their authority, and are Tyrants. The People who submit to it are governed by laws made neither by themselves nor by an authority derived from them, and are slaves."¹⁶⁰

Just as preservation of freedom and rights necessitates the division of power between the branches of government, so they depend on a division of power between the government and the rights of the people. Further, any attempt by government to legislate on religion turns the individuals responsible into dictators.

"Because it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 299-300.

the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it. Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other Religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other Sects? that the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever?"¹⁶¹

Harkening back to the Revolution again, and the reasons why Americans chose to fight, Madison compares this Remonstrance with the efforts to respond to what the colonists considered British threats to their rights. Just as the colonists had objected to British efforts, so those who object to this attempt to establish a church are following the same path.

"Because the Bill violates that equality which ought to be the basis of every law, and which is more indispensable, in proportion as the validity or expediency of any law is more liable to be impeached. If 'all men are by nature equally free and independent,' all men are to be considered as entering into Society on equal conditions; as relinquishing no more, and therefore retaining no less, one than another, of their natural rights. Above all are they to be considered as retaining an 'equal title to the free exercise of Religion according to the dictates of Conscience.' Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to embrace, to profess and to observe the Religion which we believe to be of divine origin, we cannot deny an equal freedom to those whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us. If this freedom be abused, it is an offence against God, not against man: To God, therefore, not to man, must an account of it be rendered."¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 300.

¹⁶² Ibid.

The only one who need be concerned with enforcing “correct” religious belief is God, not any government or government official, and in fact is an example of government intruding on matters only God can adequately judge.

“Because the Bill implies either that the Civil Magistrate is a competent Judge of Religious Truth; or that he may employ Religion as an engine of Civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension falsified by the contradictory opinions of Rulers in all ages, and throughout the world: the second an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation.”¹⁶³

Further, Christianity specifically has always considered itself as “not of this world,” and separate from secular authorities. So, having an established, government-approved and supported, church contradicts the faith of those who do profess it, and creates the impression amongst those who do not that Christianity would not survive without official sanction.

“Because the establishment proposed by the Bill is not requisite for the support of the Christian Religion. To say that it is, is a contradiction to the Christian Religion itself, for every page of it disavows a dependence on the powers of this world: it is a contradiction to fact; for it is known that this Religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them, and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence. Nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a Religion not invented by human policy, must have pre-existed and been supported, before it was established by human policy. It is moreover to weaken in those who profess this Religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence and the patronage of its Author; and to foster in those who still

¹⁶³ Ibid, 301.

reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies to trust it to its own merits."¹⁶⁴

Madison also calls attention to the history of official churches. They do not have a good track record as regards individual rights. In fact, they have often been the sources of oppression. Not only that, once again Madison argues they have a negative effect on individual ethics and morality, not the positive effects argued for by supporters of official religions.

"Because experience witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of Religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution. Enquire of the Teachers of Christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest lustre; those of every sect, point to the ages prior to its incorporation with Civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive State in which its Teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall. On which Side ought their testimony to have greatest weight, when for or when against their interest?"¹⁶⁵

One of the enticements to emigrate to Virginia has been, Madison argues, the freedom to worship as one chose. If that is taken away, Virginia will lose that attractiveness to potential immigrants, and will also tend to drive away people who currently do live in Virginia, thus weakening the state in each way.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

“Because the proposed establishment is a departure from that generous policy, which, offering an Asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every Nation and Religion, promised a lustre to our country, and an accession to the number of its citizens. What a melancholy mark is the Bill of sudden degeneracy? Instead of holding forth an Asylum to the persecuted, it is itself a signal of persecution. It degrades from the equal rank of Citizens all those whose opinions in Religion do not bend to those of the Legislative authority. Distant as it may be in its present form from the Inquisition, it differs from it only in degree. The one is the first step, the other the last in the career of intolerance. The magnanimous sufferer under this cruel scourge in foreign Regions, must view the Bill as a Beacon on our Coast, warning him to seek some other haven, where liberty and philanthropy in their due extent, may offer a more certain repose from his Troubles.

Because it will have a like tendency to banish our Citizens. The allurements presented by other situations are every day thinning their number. To superadd a fresh motive to emigration by revoking the liberty which they now enjoy, would be the same species of folly which has dishonoured and depopulated flourishing kingdoms.”¹⁶⁶

Madison argues religious conflicts all-too-easily become violent, and so every effort needs to be made to avoid them, especially by not establishing one religion as official, because that would by definition put all the others in a subservient situation.

“Because it will destroy that moderation and harmony which the forbearance of our laws to intermeddle with Religion has produced among its several sects. Torrents of blood have been spilt in the old world, by vain attempts of the secular arm, to extinguish Religious discord, by proscribing all difference in Religious opinion. Time has at length revealed the true remedy. Every relaxation of narrow and rigorous policy, wherever it has been tried, has been found to assuage the disease. The American Theatre has exhibited proofs that equal and compleat liberty, if it does not wholly eradicate it, sufficiently destroys its malignant influence on the health and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 302.

prosperity of the State. If with the salutary effects of this system under our own eyes, we begin to contract the bounds of Religious freedom, we know no name that will too severely reproach our folly. At least let warning be taken at the first fruits of the threatened innovation. The very appearance of the Bill has transformed 'that Christian forbearance, love and charity,' which of late mutually prevailed, into animosities and jealousies, which may not soon be appeased. What mischiefs may not be dreaded, should this enemy to the public quiet be armed with the force of a law?"¹⁶⁷

He also argues laws which are unpopular and unacceptable to large groups of citizens, even if they do not constitute a majority of the population, weaken overall respect for laws in general. Such a law would be resented by many, who would then learn to treat other laws with contempt as well. This would lead to contempt for government itself, and create far more difficulty than it is worth.

"Because attempts to enforce by legal sanctions, acts obnoxious to so great a proportion of Citizens, tend to enervate the laws in general, and to slacken the bands of Society. If it be difficult to execute any law which is not generally deemed necessary or salutary, what must be the case, where it is deemed invalid and dangerous? And what may be the effect of so striking an example of impotency in the Government, on its general authority?"¹⁶⁸

Finally, a violation of the right of freedom of religion is a violation of all other rights, at least in essence. If the right to a free choice regarding religion can be violated, what cannot? All rights must be protected, lest any of them be transgressed. Just as it is necessary to protect the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 302-303.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 303.

freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and other liberties, so it is necessary to protect freedom of religion.

“Because finally, “the equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his Religion according to the dictates of conscience” is held by the same tenure with all our other rights. If we recur to its origin, it is equally the gift of nature; if we weigh its importance, it cannot be less dear to us; if we consult the ‘Declaration of those rights which pertain to the good people of Virginia, as the basis and foundation of Government,’ it is enumerated with equal solemnity, or rather studied emphasis. Either then, we must say, that the Will of the Legislature is the only measure of their authority; and that in the plenitude of this authority, they may sweep away all our fundamental rights; or, that they are bound to leave this particular right untouched and sacred: Either we must say, that they may controul the freedom of the press, may abolish the Trial by Jury, may swallow up the Executive and Judiciary Powers of the State; nay that they may despoil us of our very right of suffrage, and erect themselves into an independent and hereditary Assembly or, we must say, that they have no authority to enact into law the Bill under consideration.”¹⁶⁹

Madison noted in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, in which he enclosed the Remonstrance, that clergy opposition to the proposed establishment had already occurred among those whose religion was not made official. Madison approved of this, not because of the envy and fear it showed between the sects, but rather because it was a convenient, and effective means of preventing passage of the bill.

“The opposition to the general assessment gains ground. At the *instance of some of its adversaries I drew up the remonstrance* herewith inclosed. It has been *sent thro' the medium of confidential persons in a number of the upper county[s]* and I am told will be pretty extensively signed. The

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 304.

presbyterian clergy have at length espoused the side of the opposition, being moved either by a *fear of their laity* or a *jealousy of the episcopalians*. The mutual hatred of these sects has been much inflamed by the late act incorporating the latter. *I am far from being sorry for it as a coalition between them could alone endanger our religious rights and a tendency to such an event had been suspected.*"¹⁷⁰

During the debate over ratifying the Constitution in Virginia's ratifying convention, Madison argued that the lack of a bill of rights specifically enumerating the freedom of religion was not necessary, ironically in response to criticism regarding such a lack from Patrick Henry, who had been a supporter of the establishment bill Madison had opposed. What good would a bill of rights do against a majority, Madison argued. What was needed was what the United States already had, a multiplicity of different religions and sects, each of whom could be counted upon to oppose any efforts to establish one or another of them as official.

"The honorable member has introduced the subject of religion. Religion is not guarded - there is no bill of rights declaring that religion should be secure. Is a bill of rights a security for religion? would the bill of rights in this state exempt the people from paying for the support of one particular sect, if such sect were exclusively established by law? If there were a majority of one sect, a bill of rights would be a poor protection for liberty. Happily for the states, they enjoy the utmost freedom of religion. This freedom arises from that multiplicity of sects, which pervades America, and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 345.

For where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one sect to oppress and persecute the rest. Fortunately for this commonwealth, a majority of the people are decidedly against any exclusive establishment - I believe it to be so in the other states. There is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion. Its least interference with it would be a most flagrant usurpation. I can appeal to my uniform conduct on this subject, that I have warmly supported religious freedom. It is better that this security should be depended upon from the general legislature, than from one particular state. A particular state might concur in one religious project. But the United States abound in such a variety of sects, that it is a strong security against religious persecution, and is sufficient to authorise a conclusion, that no one sect will ever be able to out-number or depress the rest."¹⁷¹

Now of course Madison did eventually see the need to add a Bill of Rights to the Constitution, and was instrumental in their writing and passage. Further, we have several of his comments in the House of Representatives by which to gauge his understanding of, most importantly on the subject of religion, the 1st Amendment.

"Mr. Madison said he apprehended the meaning of the words to be, that congress should not establish a religion, and enforce the legal observation of it by law, nor compel men to worship God in any manner contrary to their conscience;"¹⁷²

In addition to protection from the federal government for religious freedom, Madison wanted state governments to be similarly prohibited.

¹⁷¹Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 11: 7 March 1788 - 1 March 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 130-131.

¹⁷²Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790, with a supplement 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 339.

As the minutes of the House of Representatives from August 17, 1789 note:

“Tucker moved to strike out, ‘No state shall infringe the equal rights of conscience, nor the freedom of speech, or of the press, nor of the right of trial by jury in criminal cases.’

MR. MADISON Conceived this to be the most valuable amendment on the whole list; if there was any reason to restrain the government of the United States from infringing upon these essential rights, it was equally necessary that they should be secured against the state governments; he thought that if they provided against the one, it was as necessary to provide against the other, and was satisfied that it would be equally grateful to the people.”¹⁷³

Madison was, like Hamilton, accepting of other religions besides Protestant Christianity, and not hostile to them. Just as Hamilton welcomed Unitarians, so did Madison. As he wrote to George Nicholas in 1793:

“Mr. Toulmin will either hand you this, or see you in consequence of it. He is lately from England, and very warmly recommended to me by Mr. Maury our Consul at Liverpool as meriting particular attention. His primary object in visiting Kentucky is to procure a knowledge of the Country for the information of his friends in England who have an eye to America as a more eligible portion of the Earth than their native spot is at present. His next object is of a more personal nature. His partiality to our Country makes him anxious to settle in it: and as he is not likely to find a Religious Society with which he could connect himself as a Minister professing the Unitarian System taught by Priestly & others, he wishes to see if there be any prospect of his establishing himself an an instructor of youth in classical knowledge and other branches of liberal education; for which he is probably well qualified. Any friendly offices you may find it convenient to render him will be of much service to him in his plans, and will moreover

¹⁷³ Ibid, 344.

be acknowledged by Dear Sir Your mo: Obedt. hble servt."¹⁷⁴

Further, he was also accepting of Roman Catholics, and saw them as no threat to republican government. In a speech in the House of Representatives on January 1, 1795, he is noted as saying:

"He did not approve the ridicule attempted to be thrown out on the Roman Catholics. In their religion, there was nothing inconsistent with the purest republicanism. In Switzerland, about one half of the Cantons were of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Some of the most democratical Cantons were so; Cantons, where every man gave his vote for a Representative. Americans had no right to ridicule Catholics. They had, many of them, proved good citizens, during the revolution."¹⁷⁵

So, as regards religion, how do Hamilton and Madison compare? I do not see any overt conflict in the writings we have, although it does appear possible that Hamilton's "Christian Constitutional Society" idea might have, had he lived longer, and had such idea even taken off, been the source of potential conflict. Hamilton did not specifically call for any official recognition of Christianity, though, but rather simply for the dissemination of ideas which would no doubt have supported a religious, rather than an atheistic, approach to public life.

Both were, as I have noted, accepting of religious groups outside of the majority Protestant sects. What differentiates the two is the much

¹⁷⁴ Mason, Thomas A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 15: 24 March 1793 - 20 April 1795. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985, 139-140.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 432-433.

greater religious sense that Hamilton had throughout his life, and his much greater negative response to the French Revolution because of its disavowal of religion. Madison did not turn against France until after Napoleon had taken power, and thus turned France away from the republican experiment.

Hamilton, while not showing any preference for an official church of any kind, nevertheless believed strongly, at least towards the end of his life, that religion was an absolute necessity for the success of the American republic. He saw no trouble at all having religion in government, such as military chaplains, and official calls for days of religious expression by even the President himself. Too much religious "enthusiasm" was a bad thing, though, and he did not show any support for non-standard, or extreme, varieties of religion. Religion was an essential support of order, continuity, meaning and purpose for all humans, and even a republic such as the United States needed to have religion as part of its public life, although an official church was never mentioned as essential by him.

Madison was convinced religion was best left up to the individual sects, both in terms of the success of the United States as a whole, and also as a means of keeping religion from having too much influence in public life. He had, after all, grown up in a colony, later state, which had had an official religion, and so was far more concerned with the negative

effects he saw official religions as having. For Madison, the danger was not in a lack of religion in public life, as with Hamilton, but rather one of official religions as a barrier to political freedom, and thus the success of a republic built on freedom. Madison wanted religion left up to the reason and conscience of each individual, and saw no reason to have it included in official public life. It could only be a danger to the success of the American republic, and not an asset, again in stark contrast to Hamilton.

Chapter Six: Hamilton and Madison on Federal Government Involvement in the Economy

Of all the areas on which Hamilton and Madison came into conflict beginning in the 1790's, the issue of whether, and how much, the federal government should involve itself in the economy is one of the more clear examples of how, as I argue, they had underlying differences of opinion all along. Both Hamilton and Madison displayed their later preferences regarding economic involvement well before the Constitution was in place, as I will document below. I am convinced the differences we will see regarding the economy were issues they simply did not discuss before their eventual break.

For Hamilton, we will see it is not only appropriate, but indeed essential, that specifically the federal government take an active role in the economy. There is for him a danger in not having the federal government involve itself in the economy, as only the federal government can take the actions he sees as necessary for the survival and success of the United States. A strictly free market is neither desirable nor possible for Hamilton, as individual initiative will just not lead to the successful economy that can provide the people of the United States with the wealth that will convince them to continue support the American republican experiment.

Madison also valued a role for the federal government in the

economy, but not in the same ways, and not to the same degree, as Hamilton. One area in which he saw a drastically different role for the federal government in the economy was to use economic relations with other countries as a weapon, especially through the use of embargoes against countries he felt the United States had legitimate grievances with. The role Madison saw as a valuable addition to the eventual success of the United States was, as I will show below, was in encouraging agriculture, not manufacturing, as Hamilton wanted.

I mentioned in Chapter Four that I would not discuss Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* as part of the issue of Constitutional interpretation, but such a discussion is of course essential when dealing with the question of the economy. So, I will include that below, but the differences of opinion between Hamilton and Madison are evident before that document came to light. Well before the Constitution was written, Hamilton argued for the appropriateness, indeed necessity, of government involvement in the economy through regulation. In *The Continentalist* No. V, from 1782, he wrote:

“The vesting Congress with the power of regulating trade ought to have been a principal object of the confederation for a variety of reasons. It is as necessary for the purposes of commerce as of revenue. There are some, who maintain, that trade will regulate itself, and is not to be benefitted by the encouragements, or restraints of government. Such persons will imagine, that there is no need of a common directing power. This is one of those wild speculative paradoxes, which have grown into credit among us, contrary to the uniform practice and sense of the most

enlightened nations. Contradicted by the numerous institutions and laws, that exist every where for the benefit of trade, by the pains taken to cultivate particular branches and to discourage others, by the known advantages derived from those measures, and by the palpable evils that would attend their discontinuance—it must be rejected by every man acquainted with commercial history. Commerce, like other things, has its fixed principles, according to which it must be regulated; if these are understood and observed, it will be promoted by the attention of government, if unknown, or violated, it will be injured—but it is the same with every other part of administration.

To preserve the ballance of trade in favour of a nation ought to be a leading aim of its policy.”¹⁷⁶

Clearly this is not an argument in favor of laissez faire, nor even of the much more free market options preferred by Adam Smith. Just as with government, Hamilton argues there are laws which govern the economy. Also, Hamilton did not want to leave the issue of regulation to the state governments, as that was precisely one of the main problems he saw with the Articles of Confederation. The United States needs specific federal government involvement in the economy in order to achieve the best results. The states are only parts of a whole.

“Perhaps it may be thought, that the power of regulation will be left placed in the governments of the several states, and that a general superintendence is unnecessary. If the states had distinct interests, were unconnected with each other, their own governments would then be the proper and could be the only depositaries of such a power; but as they are parts of a whole with a common interest in trade, as in other things, there ought to be a common direction in that as in all other matters. It is easy to conceive, that many cases may occur, in which it would

¹⁷⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume III: 1782-1786. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, 75-76.

be beneficial to all the states to encourage, or suppress a particular branch of trade, while it would be detrimental to either to attempt it without the concurrence of the rest, and where the experiment would probably be left untried for fear of a want of that concurrence.

No mode can be so convenient as a source of revenue to the United States. It is agreed that imposts on trade, when not immoderate, or improperly laid, is one of the most eligible species of taxation. They fall in a great measure upon articles not of absolute necessity, and being partly transferred to the price of the commodity, are so far imperceptibly paid by the consumer. It is therefore that mode which may be exercised by the fœderal government with least exception or disgust. Congress can easily possess all the information necessary to impose the duties with judgment, and the collection can without difficulty be made by their own officers.

They can have no temptation to abuse this power, because the motive of revenue will check its own extremes."¹⁷⁷

Hamilton does agree with Madison that the most convenient form of taxation is tariffs. However, he shows he was consistent throughout his political life in the United States in having an overriding preference for the United States' well-being as a whole, rather than that of any one state. For him, the states are rather like jealous siblings, afraid someone will get more than they. Hamilton's goals for the United States did include "greatness," one of his departures from classical republican thought, and a "great" people thinks beyond the narrow self-interest of any one sector to reach for more than mere survival or mediocrity. I am convinced this was the result of his not growing up in one state or another, but rather the Caribbean.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid*, 78.

“It is too much characteristic of our national temper to be ingenious in finding out and magnifying the minutest disadvantages, and to reject measures of evident utility even of necessity to avoid trivial and sometimes imaginary evils. We seem not to reflect, that in human society, there is scarcely any plan, however salutary to the whole and to every part, by the share, each has in the common prosperity, but in one way, or another, and under particular circumstances, will operate more to the benefit of some parts, than of others. Unless we can overcome this narrow disposition and learn to estimate measures, by their general tendency, we shall never be a great or a happy people, if we remain a people at all.”¹⁷⁸

Hamilton argued there were dangers inherent in a lack of federal government oversight of the economy. There would be a lack of money that might otherwise be available. The government itself would not have the power and revenue necessary for any government to exist, and this would be an ongoing threat to the continuation of the Union between the states. Overall, he argued that government oversight of the economy would lead to increased prosperity for all Americans.

“Let us see what will be the consequences of not authorising the Fœderal Government to regulate the trade of these states.

Besides the want of revenue and of power, besides the immediate risk to our independence, the danger of all the future evils of a precarious union, besides the deficiency of a wholesome concert and provident superintendence to advance the general prosperity of trade, the direct consequence will be, that the landed interest and the labouring poor will in the first place fall a sacrifice to the trading interest, and the whole eventually to a bad system of policy, made necessary by the want of such regulating power.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*, 82.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid*, 99.

Further, the people of the United States need protection which only the federal government can provide, specifically the poor and those whose primary wealth consists in land. They need protection, Hamilton argued, precisely from “the trading interest.” As we will see below, this is quite similar to a point Madison raised as well. Hamilton saw a need for regulation to protect workers and farmers. Overall, a lack of regulation would, in Hamilton’s estimation, have negative effects for the United States as a whole. The states are not even mentioned as possible sources of this protection. Only the federal government can do this, across the entirety of the United States.

“The influence of these evils will be, to render landed property fluctuating and less valuable, to oppress the poor by raising the prices of necessaries, to injure commerce by encouraging the consumption of foreign luxuries, by increasing the value of labor, by lessening the quantity of home productions, enhancing their prices at foreign markets, of course, obstructing their sale and enabling other nations to supplant us.”¹⁸⁰

However, government oversight of the economy, especially through taxation, requires keeping in mind the good of the entirety of society, and not privileging any one or more sector to the detriment of the rest. Taxation needs to be apportioned well, in order to create good order. Also, anyone who thinks taxation can be avoided simply does not, according to Hamilton, have a good understanding of the realities of

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*, 100.

human life. Human life requires government, government requires well-compensated people to administer it, and administration requires revenue, which can only be obtained through taxation. Taxation will bring benefits, though, such as increased safety from attack, both at home from other countries, and also increased safety abroad for the United States' trade with foreign lands. Both are absolutely necessary in Hamilton's estimation, and the need for both will never cease.

“The great art is to distribute the public burthens well and not suffer them, either first, or last, to fall too heavily upon parts of the community; else distress and disorder must ensue. A shock given to any part of the political machine vibrates through the whole.”

...

“But perhaps the class is more numerous than those, who not unwilling to bear their share of public burthens, are yet averse to the idea of perpetuity, as if there ever would arrive a period, when the state would cease to want revenues and taxes become unnecessary. It is of importance to unmask this delusion and open the eyes of the people to the truth. It is paying too great a tribute to the idol of popularity to flatter so injurious and so visionary an expectation. The error is too gross to be tolerated any where, but in the cottage of the peasant; should we meet with it in the senate house, we must lament the ignorance or despise the hypocrisy, on which it is ingrafted. Expence is in the present state of things entailed upon all governments. Though if we continue united, we shall be hereafter less exposed to wars by land, than most other countries; yet while we have powerful neighbours on either extremity, and our frontier is embraced by savages, whose alliance they may without difficulty command, we cannot, in prudence, dispense with the usual precautions for our interior security. As a commercial people, maritime power must be a primary object of our attention, and a navy cannot be created or maintained without ample revenues. The nature of our popular constitutions requires a numerous magistracy, for whom competent provision must be made; or we may be

certain our affairs will always be committed to improper hands; and experience will teach us, that no government costs so much as a bad one.

We may preach till we are tired of the theme, the necessity of disinterestedness in republics, without making a single proselyte. The virtuous declaimer will neither persuade himself nor any other person to be content with a double mess of porridge, instead of a reasonable stipend for his services. We might as soon reconcile ourselves to the Spartan community of goods and wives, to their iron coin, their long beards, or their black broth. There is a total dissimulation in the circumstances, as well as the manners, of society among us; and it is as ridiculous to seek for models in the simple ages of Greece and Rome, as it would be to go in quest of them among the Hottentots and Laplanders.

The public, for the different purposes, that have been mentioned, must always have large demands upon its constituents, and the only question is whether these shall be satisfied by annual grants perpetually renewed—by a perpetual grant once for all or by a compound of permanent and occasional supplies. The last is the wisest course. The Fœderal Government should neither be independent nor too much dependent. It should neither be raised above responsibility or controul, nor should it want the means of maintaining its own weight, authority, dignity and credit. To this end permanent funds are indispensable, but they ought to be of such a nature and so moderate in their amount, as never to be inconvenient. Extraordinary supplies can be the objects of extraordinary grants; and in this salutary medium will consist our true wisdom."¹⁸¹

Hamilton even argued that there should be differences in taxation according to overall wealth, something which is still contentious even today. Nevertheless, the idea does appear in his sentiments regarding “the rich” again and again throughout his life.

“The rich must be made to pay for their luxuries; which is the only proper way of taxing their superior wealth.”¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *ibid*, 100-103.

¹⁸² *ibid*, 104.

As always with Hamilton, he expressed his concern for strengthening and preserving the Union. He argued again and again for the need to support and emphasize the importance of the federal government. For Hamilton, the danger was NOT an overly-powerful federal government, but rather the centrifugal effects of, in his estimation, overly-powerful states. The United States needs to create a sense of national loyalty, NOT state-centered loyalties. Greatness, including safety and prosperity, is possible for Hamilton ONLY in the Union, and not in smaller republics, such as individual states, or the smaller confederations others had called for the United States to split into in the years prior to ratification of the Constitution. Only a federal government with sufficient power can achieve these worthwhile ends, which Hamilton argues will benefit everyone across the United States.

“The reason of allowing Congress to appoint its own officers of the customs, collectors of taxes, and military officers of every rank, is to create in the interior of each state a mass of influence in favour of the Fœderal Government. The great danger has been shown to be, that it will not have power enough to defend itself and preserve the union, not that it will ever become formidable to the general liberty. A mere regard to the interests of the confederacy will never be a principle sufficiently active to curb the ambition and intrigues of different members. Force cannot effect it: A contest of arms will seldom be between the common sovereign and a single refractory member; but between distinct combinations of the several parts against each other. A sympathy of situations will be apt to produce associates to the disobedient. The application of force is always disagreeable, the issue uncertain. It will be wise to obviate the necessity of it, by interesting such a number of individuals

in each state in support of the Fœderal Government, as will be counterpoised to the ambition of others; and will make it difficult for them to unite the people in opposition to the just and necessary measures of the union.

There is something noble and magnificent in the perspective of a great Fœderal Republic, closely linked in the pursuit of a common interest, tranquil and prosperous at home, respectable abroad; but there is something proportionably diminutive and contemptible in the prospect of a number of petty states, with the appearance only of union, jarring, jealous and perverse, without any determined direction, fluctuating and unhappy at home, weak and insignificant by their dissensions, in the eyes of other nations. Happy America! if those, to whom thou hast intrusted the guardianship of thy infancy, know how to provide for thy future repose; but miserable and undone, if their negligence or ignorance permits the spirit of discord to erect her banners on the ruins of thy tranquility!¹⁸³

While not an official part of his visions for the federal government itself, Hamilton did help propose a “manufacturing society.” For him, increasing manufacturing in the United States was central to his goals of American independence and greatness. Improving the diversity of occupations and kinds of business would also help pay off the Public Debt, which all-too-often he has been erroneously accused of wanting to make permanent. For Madison, however, manufacturing was an evil he expected to eventually make its way to the United States, but he feared and dreaded it as a threat to republican simplicity and virtue. Hamilton displayed no such apprehensions, though. To William Duer he wrote in 1791:

¹⁸³ *ibid*, 105-106.

"I send you herewith a plan for a manufacturing Society in conformity to the Ideas we have several times conversed about.

...

The more I have considered the thing, the more I feel persuaded that it will equally promote the Interest of the adventurers & of the public and will have an excellent effect on the Debt."¹⁸⁴

In the *Prospectus of the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures*, Hamilton stressed the need for the United States to focus on prosperity. While not necessarily opposed to virtue, prosperity was for Hamilton vital for the continued existence of the United States. For political perfection to be attained in the United States, Hamilton argued wealth was necessary, and the United States needed manufacturing in order to acquire wealth. He did mention the usefulness, at the time, of the public debt as a resource, a source of capital, to help in expanding and diversifying the economy through encouraging manufacturing.

"The establishment of Manufactures in the United States when maturely considered will be found to be of the highest importance to their prosperity. It is an almost self evident proposition that that community which can most completely supply its own wants is in a state of the highest political perfection. And both theory and experience conspire to prove that a nation (unless from a very peculiar coincidence of circumstances) cannot possess much active wealth but as the result of extensive manufactures.

...

The last objection disappears in the eye of those who are aware how much may be done by a proper application

¹⁸⁴ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume VIII: February 1791 - July 1792. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 300-301.

of the public Debt. Here is the resource which has been hitherto wanted. And while a direction of it to this object may be made a mean of public prosperity and an instrument of profit to adventurers in the enterprise, it, at the same time, affords a prospect of an enhancement of the value of the debt; by giving it a new and additional employment and utility."¹⁸⁵

Of all of Hamilton's thoughts and works on economic matters, his massive *Report on the Subject of Manufactures* is the most important, not only because of the breadth of subjects he covers, but also because it is his single most comprehensive statement regarding what he thought was right for the United States. That it provoked yet another conflict with Madison shows us yet again the differences in expectations between these two vital Founders to understand.

From the beginning of the Report, he stresses several points he considers to be reasons why the United States needs to add manufacturing to what was then an overwhelmingly agricultural economy. Again, the goal behind his policy proposals is the continued independence of the United States through increasing its overall power by adding manufacturing to its economy. Having an economy based primarily on agricultural exports to other countries is a weakness, and the United States should increase its domestic market in order to improve its economy.

¹⁸⁵ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume IX: August 1791 – December 1791. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 144-145.

“The Secretary of the Treasury in obedience to the order of ye House of Representatives, of the 15th day of January 1790, has applied his attention, at as early a period as his other duties would permit, to the subject of Manufactures; and particularly to the means of promoting such as will tend to render the United States, independent on foreign nations, for military and other essential supplies. And he there [upon] respectfully submits the following Report.

The expediency of encouraging manufactures in the United States, which was not long since deemed very questionable, appears at this time to be pretty generally admitted. The embarrassments, which have obstructed the progress of our external trade, have led to serious reflections on the necessity of enlarging the sphere of our domestic commerce: the restrictive regulations, which in foreign markets abridge the vent of the increasing surplus of our Agricultural produce, serve to beget an earnest desire, that a more extensive demand for that surplus may be created at home: And the complete success, which has rewarded manufacturing enterprise, in some valuable branches, conspiring with the promising symptoms, which attend some less mature essays, in others, justify a hope, that the obstacles to the growth of this species of industry are less formidable than they were apprehended to be; and that it is not difficult to find, in its further extension; a full indemnification for any external disadvantages, which are or may be experienced, as well as an accession of resources, favourable to national independence and safety.”¹⁸⁶

Manufacturing is a source of outlets for agricultural products, so the two are not incompatible. Agriculture is pre-eminent, of course, but there is no reason not to add manufacturing. Hamilton's statements regarding agriculture do show the same republican virtue emphasis that Madison

¹⁸⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume X: December 1791 - January 1792. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, 230-231.

stressed in his arguments, but for Hamilton, manufacturing is not the threat Madison feared.

“It ought readily to be conceded, that the cultivation of the earth—as the primary and most certain source of national supply—as the immediate and chief source of subsistence to man—as the principal source of those materials which constitute the nutriment of other kinds of labor—as including a state most favourable to the freedom and independence of the human mind—one, perhaps, most conducive to the multiplication of the human species—has *intrinsically a strong claim to pre-eminence over every other kind of industry.*

But, that it has a title to any thing like an exclusive predilection, in any country, ought to be admitted with great caution. That it is even more productive than every other branch of Industry requires more evidence, than has yet been given in support of the position. That its real interests, precious and important as without the help of exaggeration, they truly are, will be advanced, rather than injured by the due encouragement of manufactures, may, it is believed, be satisfactorily demonstrated. And it is also believed that the expediency of such encouragement in a general view may be shewn to be recommended by the most cogent and persuasive motives of national policy.

It has been maintained, that Agriculture is, not only, the most productive, but the only productive species of industry. The reality of this suggestion in either aspect, has, however, not been verified by any accurate detail of facts and calculations; and the general arguments, which are adduced to prove it, are rather subtil and paradoxical, than solid or convincing.”¹⁸⁷

Manufacturing is, for Hamilton, just as productive as agriculture, which differentiated Hamilton from many other thinkers of his time.

“The foregoing suggestions are *not designed to inculcate an opinion that manufacturing industry is more productive than that of Agriculture.* They are intended rather to shew that the reverse of this proposition is not ascertained;

¹⁸⁷ Ibid , 236.

that the general arguments which are brought to establish it are not satisfactory; and consequently that a supposition of the superior productiveness of Tillage ought to be no obstacle to listening to any substantial inducements to the encouragement of manufactures, which may be otherwise perceived to exist, through an apprehension, that they may have a tendency to divert labour from a more to a less profitable employment.

It is extremely probable, that on a full and accurate development of the matter, on the ground of fact and calculation, it would be discovered that there is no material difference between the aggregate productiveness of the one, and of the other kind of industry; and that the propriety of the encouragements, which may in any case be proposed to be given to either ought to be determined upon considerations irrelative to any comparison of that nature."¹⁸⁸

There is a need for society to have, as Hamilton argues, a proper division of labor in order to have the best possible economy.

"It has justly been observed, that there is scarcely any thing of greater moment in the œconomy of a nation, than the proper division of labour. The seperation of occupations causes each to be carried to a much greater perfection, than it could possible acquire, if they were blended."¹⁸⁹

Having manufacturing will help the United States in another way, through attracting immigrants.

"If it be true then, that it is the interest of the United States to open every possible [avenue to] emigration from abroad, it affords a weighty argument for the encouragement of manufactures; which for the reasons just assigned, will have the strongest tendency to multiply the inducements to it."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, 245-246.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, 249.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*, 254.

Increasing the number of occupations is beneficial, because it leads to greater innovation throughout society.

“The spirit of enterprise, useful and prolific as it is, must necessarily be contracted or expanded in proportion to the simplicity or variety of the occupations and productions, which are to be found in a Society. It must be less in a nation of mere cultivators, than in a nation of cultivators and merchants; less in a nation of cultivators and merchants, than in a nation of cultivators, artificers and merchants.”¹⁹¹

The United States does need to take care to be self-sufficient as regards its food supply, and also its raw materials used in the manufacturing sector Hamilton wants.

“It is a primary object of the policy of nations, to be able to supply themselves with subsistence from their own soils; and manufacturing nations, as far as circumstances permit, endeavor to procure, from the same source, the raw materials necessary for their own fabrics. This disposition, urged by the spirit of monopoly, is sometimes even carried to an injudicious extreme. It seems not always to be recollected, that nations, who have neither mines nor manufactures, can only obtain the manufactured articles, of which they stand in need, by an exchange of the products of their soils; and that, if those who can best furnish them with such articles are unwilling to give a due course to this exchange, they must of necessity make every possible effort to manufacture for themselves, the effect of which is that the manufacturing nations abridge the natural advantages of their situation, through an unwillingness to permit the Agricultural countries to enjoy the advantages of theirs, and sacrifice the interests of a mutually beneficial intercourse to the vain project of *selling every thing and buying nothing*.”¹⁹²

Reliance solely on agriculture, though, has been a disadvantage for the United States thus far, and will only continue to be so if manufacturing

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, 256.

¹⁹² *ibid*, 257-258.

is not added. Demand for agricultural products overseas is not reliable and is thus not a good source of money which can be relied upon at all times.

“But it is also a consequence of the policy, which has been noted, that the foreign demand for the products of Agricultural Countries, is, in a great degree, rather casual and occasional, than certain or constant. To what extent injurious interruptions of the demand for some of the staple commodities of the United States, may have been experienced, from that cause, must be referred to the judgment of those who are engaged in carrying on the commerce of the country; but it may be safely assumed, that such interruptions are at times very inconveniently felt, and that cases not unfrequently occur, in which markets are so confined and restricted, as to render the demand very unequal to the supply.

Independently likewise of the artificial impediments, which are created by the policy in question, there are natural causes tending to render the external demand for the surplus of Agricultural nations a precarious reliance. The differences of seasons, in the countries, which are the consumers make immense differences in the produce of their own soils, in different years; and consequently in the degrees of their necessity for foreign supply. Plentiful harvests with them, especially if similar ones occur at the same time in the countries, which are the furnishers, occasion of course a glut in the markets of the latter.”¹⁹³

Especially given how fast the United States population is growing, if it continues to rely solely on agriculture, that vast increase of people, all working in farming, will only lead to an ever greater supply, which will eventually lead to an over-abundance. Manufacturing will help ease that by providing an outlet other than exports for American farm products.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 258-259.

“Considering how fast and how much the progress of new settlements in the United States must increase the surplus produce of the soil, and weighing seriously the tendency of the system, which prevails among most of the commercial nations of Europe; whatever dependence may be placed on the force of natural circumstances to counteract the effects of an artificial policy; there appear strong reasons to regard the foreign demand for that surplus as too uncertain a reliance, and to desire a substitute for it, in an extensive domestic market.

To secure such a market, there is no other expedient, than to promote manufacturing establishments. Manufacturers who constitute the most numerous class, after the Cultivators of land, are for that reason the principal consumers of the surplus of their labour.”¹⁹⁴

Hamilton further argues manufacturing will actually help give farmers an incentive to improve their lands, since they will have to find ways to deal with the movement of workers from farming to industry.

“This idea of an extensive domestic market for the surplus produce of the soil is of the first consequence. It is of all things, that which most effectually conduces to a flourishing state of Agriculture. If the effect of manufactories should be to detach a portion of the hands, which would otherwise be engaged in Tillage, it might possibly cause a smaller quantity of lands to be under cultivation but by their tendency to procure a more certain demand for the surplus produce of the soil, they would, at the same time, cause the lands which were in cultivation to be better improved and more productive. And while, by their influence, the condition of each individual farmer would be meliorated, the total mass of Agricultural production would probably be increased. For this must evidently depend as much, if not more, upon the degree of improvement; than upon the number of acres under culture.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 259.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 259-260.

Manufacturing also leads to different, new, industries, such as mining, thus providing even more diversification and strength to the economy overall.

“It merits particular observation, that the multiplication of manufactories not only furnishes a Market for those articles, which have been accustomed to be produced in abundance, in a country; but it likewise creates a demand for such as were either unknown or produced in inconsiderable quantities. The bowels as well as the surface of the earth are ransacked for articles which were before neglected. Animals, Plants and Minerals acquire an utility and value, which were before unexplored.

The foregoing considerations seem sufficient to establish, as general propositions, That it is the interest of nations to diversify the industrious pursuits of the individuals, who compose them—That the establishment of manufactures is calculated not only to increase the general stock of useful and productive labour; but even to improve the state of Agriculture in particular; certainly to advance the interests of those who are engaged in it. There are other views, that will be hereafter taken of the subject, which, it is conceived, will serve to confirm these inferences.”¹⁹⁶

Hamilton and Madison did both, at various points in their careers, mention a preference for free trade among all nations. However, both also noted that other countries, such as Great Britain, did not follow that practice, so both argued that the United States could not rely on free trade at that time. The United States was simply not on equal terms with any country in Europe at that point.

“If the system of perfect liberty to industry and commerce were the prevailing system of nations—the arguments which dissuade a country in the predicament of the United States, from the zealous pursuits of manufactures

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 260-261.

would doubtless have great force. It will not be affirmed, that they might not be permitted, with few exceptions, to serve as a rule of national conduct. In such a state of things, each country would have the full benefit of its peculiar advantages to compensate for its deficiencies or disadvantages. If one nation were in condition to supply manufactured articles on better terms than another, that other might find an abundant indemnification in a superior capacity to furnish the produce of the soil. And a free exchange, mutually beneficial, of the commodities which each was able to supply, on the best terms, might be carried on between them, supporting in full vigour the industry of each. And though the circumstances which have been mentioned and others, which will be unfolded hereafter render it probable, that nations merely Agricultural would not enjoy the same degree of opulence, in proportion to their numbers, as those which united manufactures with agriculture; yet the progressive improvement of the lands of the former might, in the end, atone for an inferior degree of opulence in the mean time: and in a case in which opposite considerations are pretty equally balanced, the option ought perhaps always to be, in favour of leaving Industry to its own direction.

But the system which has been mentioned, is far from characterising the general policy of Nations. [The prevalent one has been regulated by an opposite spirit.]

The consequence of it is, that the United States are to a certain extent in the situation of a country precluded from foreign Commerce. They can indeed, without difficulty obtain from abroad the manufactured supplies, of which they are in want; but they experience numerous and very injurious impediments to the emission and vent of their own commodities. Nor is this the case in reference to a single foreign nation only. The regulations of several countries, with which we have the most extensive intercourse, throw serious obstructions in the way of the principal staples of the United States.

In such a position of things, the United States cannot exchange with Europe on equal terms; and the want of reciprocity would render them the victim of a system, which should induce them to confine their views to Agriculture and refrain from Manufactures. A constant and encreasing necessity, on their part, for the commodities of Europe, and only a partial and occasional demand for their own, in return, could not but expose them to a state of impoverishment,

compared with the opulence to which their political and natural advantages authorise them to aspire."¹⁹⁷

Hamilton further mentions an issue which would continue to be controversial throughout most of the history of the United States, that of "internal improvements," but in a way which shows he completely approved of them. Internal improvements, like manufacturing, would in his estimation, only make things better for Americans. He also argued the sooner the United States was independent of Europe economically, the better.

"Remarks of this kind are not made in the spirit of complaint. 'Tis for the nations, whose regulations are alluded to, to judge for themselves, whether, by aiming at too much they do not lose more than they gain. 'Tis for the United States to consider by what means they can render themselves least dependent, on the combinations, right or wrong of foreign policy.

It is no small consolation, that already the measures which have embarrassed our Trade, have accelerated internal improvements, which upon the whole have bettered our affairs. To diversify and extend these improvements is the surest and safest method of indemnifying ourselves for any inconveniences, which those or similar measures have a tendency to beget. If Europe will not take from us the products of our soil, upon terms consistent with our interest, the natural remedy is to contract as fast as possible our wants of her."¹⁹⁸

Hamilton did show an influence from classical republican thought in his estimation that even if manufacturing is encouraged by government, most people will nevertheless still desire to be farmers, due to the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 262-263.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 264-265.

independence of that occupation which was taken for granted at that time.

“But it does, by no means, follow, that the progress of new settlements would be retarded by the extension of Manufactures. The desire of being an independent proprietor of land is founded on such strong principles in the human breast, that where the opportunity of becoming so is as great as it is in the United States, the proportion will be small of those, whose situations would otherwise lead to it, who would be diverted from it towards Manufactures. And it is highly probable, as already intimated, that the accessions of foreigners, who originally drawn over by manufacturing views would afterwards abandon them for Agricultural, would be more than equivalent for those of our own Citizens, who might happen to be detached from them.”¹⁹⁹

Overall, for Hamilton there is an ongoing need for government involvement in the economy. Laissez faire is simply not possible in his view of human nature. Government involvement is necessary for the improvement of society, as, for instance, habit and imitation all-too-often lead to a fear of innovation. People will often simply not risk their own resources in order to make improvements, and so government needs to step in and provide the source of innovation. This is for Hamilton a never-ending positive role for government, as a means of improving the economy over time. Government involvement leads to risk-taking that would not otherwise occur.

Plus, the United States had an especially strong need for government at its beginning, because it needed to overcome already

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 265-266.

established industries in other countries. Nascent industries in the United States simply could not effectively compete with much more established manufacturers elsewhere, if for no other reason than the support those industries already received from their own governments. Thus, the United States needed to do the same. Government support of manufacturing in other countries was, in Hamilton's estimation, the single greatest barrier to growth of industry in the United States.

"The remaining objections to a particular encouragement of manufactures in the United States now require to be examined.

One of these turns on the proposition, that Industry, if left to itself, will naturally find its way to the most useful and profitable employment: whence it is inferred, that manufactures without the aid of government will grow up as soon and as fast, as the natural state of things and the interest of the community may require.

Against the solidity of this hypothesis, in the full latitude of the terms, very cogent reasons may be offered. These have relation to—the strong influence of habit and the spirit of imitation—the fear of want of success in untried enterprises—the intrinsic difficulties incident to first essays towards a competition with those who have previously attained to perfection in the business to be attempted—the bounties premiums and other artificial encouragements, with which foreign nations second the exertions of their own Citizens in the branches, in which they are to be rivalled.

Experience teaches, that men are often so much governed by what they are accustomed to see and practice, that the simplest and most obvious improvements, in the [most] ordinary occupations, are adopted with hesitation, reluctance and by slow gradations. The spontaneous transition to new pursuits, in a community long habituated to different ones, may be expected to be attended with proportionably greater difficulty. When former occupations ceased to yield a profit adequate to the subsistence of their followers, or when there was an absolute deficiency of employment in them, owing to the

superabundance of hands, changes would ensue; but these changes would be likely to be more tardy than might consist with the interest either of individuals or of the Society. In many cases they would not happen, while a bare support could be ensured by an adherence to ancient courses; though a resort to a more profitable employment might be practicable. To produce the desirable changes, as early as may be expedient, may therefore require the incitement and patronage of government.

The apprehension of failing in new attempts is perhaps a more serious impediment. There are dispositions apt to be attracted by the mere novelty of an undertaking—but these are not always those best calculated to give it success. To this, it is of importance that the confidence of cautious sagacious capitalists both citizens and foreigners, should be excited. And to inspire this description of persons with confidence, it is essential, that they should be made to see in any project, which is new, and for that reason alone, if, for no other, precarious, the prospect of such a degree of countenance and support from government, as may be capable of overcoming the obstacles, inseparable from first experiments.

The superiority antecedently enjoyed by nations, who have preoccupied and perfected a branch of industry, constitutes a more formidable obstacle, than either of those, which have been mentioned, to the introduction of the same branch into a country, in which it did not before exist. To maintain between the recent establishments of one country and the long matured establishments of another country, a competition upon equal terms, both as to quality and price, is in most cases impracticable. The disparity in the one, or in the other, or in both, must necessarily be so considerable as to forbid a successful rivalship, without the extraordinary aid and protection of government.

But the greatest obstacle of all to the successful prosecution of a new branch of industry in a country, in which it was before unknown, consists, as far as the instances apply, in the bounties premiums and other aids which are granted, in a variety of cases, by the nations, in which the establishments to be imitated are previously introduced. It is well known (and particular examples in the course of this report will be cited) that certain nations grant bounties on the exportation of particular commodities, to enable their own workmen to undersell and supplant all competitors, in the

countries to which those commodities are sent. Hence the undertakers of a new manufacture have to contend not only with the natural disadvantages of a new undertaking, but with the gratuities and remunerations which other governments bestow. To be enabled to contend with success, it is evident, that the interference and aid of their own government are indispensable."²⁰⁰

Individual initiative, while lauded by Hamilton, was for the reasons he mentioned above, just not enough, given the particular circumstances the United States found itself in at the time he submitted his report to Congress. The only resource available was for the United States to mimic the business-encouraging behavior of Europeans.

"Whatever room there may be for an expectation that the industry of a people, under the direction of private interest, will upon equal terms find out the most beneficial employment for itself, there is none for a reliance, that it will struggle against the force of unequal terms, or will of itself surmount all the adventitious barriers to a successful competition, which may have been erected either by the advantages naturally acquired from practice and previous possession of the ground, or by those which may have sprung from positive regulations and an artificial policy. This general reflection might alone suffice as an answer to the objection under examination; exclusively of the weighty considerations which have been particularly urged."²⁰¹

In a time of primary reliance on specie for use as money, and given its general scarcity in the United States, what options were available to provide the capital essential for the creation and maintenance of a manufacturing economy? The public debt, specifically the securities of the United States, can be used as money, due to the reliable value

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 266-268.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 269.

Hamilton argued such securities would have in the minds of those exchanging them.

“Public Funds answer the purpose of Capital, from the estimation in which they are usually held by Monied men; and consequently from the Ease and dispatch with which they can be turned into money. This capacity of prompt convertibility into money causes a transfer of stock to be in a great number of Cases equivalent to a payment in coin. And where it does not happen to suit the party who is to receive, to accept a transfer of Stock, the party who is to pay, is never at a loss to find elsewhere a purchaser of his Stock, who will furnish him in lieu of it, with the Coin of which he stands in need. Hence in a sound and settled state of the public funds, a man possessed of a sum in them can embrace any scheme of business, which offers, with as much confidence as if he were possessed of an equal sum in Coin.”²⁰²

Hamilton emphasized the “utility” of making such use of the debt. However, again in contrast to a common misunderstanding of Hamilton, he did not argue that the more debt, existing in perpetuity, the better. This was for him only a temporary measure, to provide a means by which greater economic exchange across the United States could be encouraged in the short-term. He very clearly argues not only for an eventual reduction in the debt, but also for its eventual retirement. His arguments echo classical republican virtue in decrying the accumulation of too much debt over time.

“There are respectable individuals, who from a just aversion to an accumulation of Public debt, are unwilling to concede to it any kind of utility, who can discern no good to alleviate the ill with which they suppose it pregnant; who cannot be persuaded that it ought in any sense to be viewed

²⁰² Ibid, 277.

as an increase of capital lest it should be inferred, that the more debt the more capital, the greater the burthens the greater the blessings of the community.

But it interests the public Councils to estimate every object as it truly is; to appreciate how far the good in any measure is compensated by the ill; or the ill by the good, Either of them is seldom unmixed.

Neither will it follow, that an accumulation of debt is desirable, because a certain degree of it operates as capital. There may be a plethora in the political, as in the Natural body; There may be a state of things in which any such artificial capital is unnecessary. The debt too may be swelled to such a size, as that the greatest part of it may cease to be useful as a Capital, serving only to pamper the dissipation of idle and dissolute individuals: as that the sums required to pay the Interest upon it may become oppressive, and beyond the means, which a government can employ, consistently with its tranquility, to raise them; as that the resources of taxation, to face the debt, may have been strained too far to admit of extensions adequate to exigencies, which regard the public safety.

Where this critical point is, cannot be pronounced, but it is impossible to believe, that there is not such a point. And as the vicissitudes of Nations beget a perpetual tendency to the accumulation of debt, there ought to be in every government a perpetual, anxious and unceasing effort to reduce that, which at any time exists, as fast as shall be practicable consistently with integrity and good faith.

Reasonings on a subject comprehending ideas so abstract and complex, so little reducible to precise calculation as those which enter into the question just discussed, are always attended with a danger of running into fallacies. Due allowance ought therefore to be made for this possibility. But as far as the Nature of the subject admits of it, there appears to be satisfactory ground for a belief, that the public funds operate as a resource of capital to the Citizens of the United States, and, if they are a resource at all, it is an extensive one."²⁰³

Hamilton was not an advocate for government control of the economy, though. That much is clear from his statements. For him, the

²⁰³ Ibid, 282-283.

free competition between businesses would have many desirable outcomes, such as the elimination of monopolies, and the reduction in price of commodities to the lowest point possible. So, Hamilton argued government encouragement, but not control, of manufacturing would in the long run benefit the people at large. Even agriculture, often seen as antagonistic to manufacturing, would benefit, as lower prices for manufactured goods would result in increased personal wealth even for farmers. This is a consistent theme with Hamilton, that government exists for the benefit of the people.

"The internal competition, which takes place, soon does away every thing like Monopoly, and by degrees reduces the price of the Article to the *minimum* of a reasonable profit on the Capital employed. This accords with the reason of the thing and with experience.

Whence it follows, that it is the interest of a community with a view to eventual and permanent oeconomy, to encourage the growth of manufactures. In a national view, a temporary enhancement of price must always be well compensated by a permanent reduction of it.

It is a reflection, which may with propriety be indulged here, that this eventual diminution of the prices of manufactured Articles; which is the result of internal manufacturing establishments, has a direct and very important tendency to benefit agriculture. It enables the farmer, to procure with a smaller quantity of his labour, the manufactured produce of which he stands in need, and consequently increases the value of his income and property."²⁰⁴

Hamilton also echoed the sentiments of many of his contemporaries, as well as people today, in expressing concern for the

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 286-287.

United States' balance of trade with other countries. Showing a more mercantilist aspect to his thought, he emphasized that manufacturing would lead to a richer nation overall, and a better (i.e., positive) balance of trade with other countries. Agriculture alone cannot supply this benefit to the United States, though.

“From these circumstances collectively, two important inferences are to be drawn, one, that there is always a higher probability of a favorable balance of Trade, in regard to countries in which manufactures founded on the basis of a thriving Agriculture flourish, than in regard to those, which are confined wholly or almost wholly to Agriculture; the other (which is also a consequence of the first) that countries of the former description are likely to possess more pecuniary wealth, or money, than those of the latter.”²⁰⁵

In stark contrast to an emphasis on a lack of wealth being necessary for republican virtue, as found in other writers, Hamilton stressed the need for wealth in order to achieve the best possible sort of political arrangements. In order for the supply of specie in the United States to increase, there would need to exist a more well-rounded economy than what was current. Manufacturing would lead to wealth, and wealth to strengthened independence and security from other nations.

He pointed to the United States' inability to supply itself during the Revolutionary War as illustrative of the problems the country would continue to face if it did not develop manufacturing as soon as possible. For Hamilton, the United States had been altogether too reliant on

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 289.

supplies and other forms of assistance from France in gaining its independence from Great Britain. Specifically, the United States needed a Navy, which unfortunately, following classical republican doctrine, had been completely disbanded after the end of the Revolution. In any case, it is historically the case that French victories at sea enabled joint French/American victories on land such as Yorktown.

“But the uniform appearance of an abundance of specie, as the concomitant of a flourishing state of manufacture<s> and of the reverse, where they do not prevail, afford a strong presumption of their favourable operation upon the wealth of a Country.

Not only the wealth; but the independence and security of a Country, appear to be materially connected with the prosperity of manufactures. Every nation, with a view to those great objects, ought to endeavour to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply. These comprise the means of *Subsistence habitation clothing and defence*.

The possession of these is necessary to the perfection of the body politic, to the safety as well as to the welfare of the society; the want of either, is the want of an important organ of political life and Motion; and in the various crises which await a state, it must severely feel the effects of any such deficiency. The extreme embarrassments of the United States during the late War, from an incapacity of supplying themselves, are still matter of keen recollection: A future war might be expected again to exemplify the mischiefs and dangers of a situation, to which that incapacity is still in too great a degree applicable, unless changed by timely and vigorous exertion. To effect this change as fast as shall be prudent, merits all the attention and all the Zeal of our Public Councils; 'tis the next great work to be accomplished.

The want of a Navy to protect our external commerce, as long as it shall Continue, must render it a peculiarly precarious reliance, for the supply of essential articles, and must serve to strengthen prodigiously the arguments in favour of manufactures.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 290-291.

Why is this important for the United States? Why encourage manufacturing? Because doing so will help “establish *substantial* and *permanent order*.” Again and again with Hamilton we see an overriding emphasis on, and concern with, the tenuous nature of the continued existence of the United States. This recommendation regarding manufacturing is only one means by which Hamilton is convinced the United States will succeed in the long run.

“It is a truth as important as it is agreeable, and one to which it is not easy to imagine exceptions, that every thing tending to establish *substantial* and *permanent order*, in the affairs of a Country, to increase the total mass of industry and opulence, is ultimately beneficial to every part of it. On the Credit of this great truth, an acquiescence may safely be accorded, from every quarter, to all institutions & arrangements, which promise a confirmation of public order, and an augmentation of National Resource.”²⁰⁷

Now is a critical moment for Hamilton. The United States needs to act immediately if it is to survive. Doing so will also lead to an increase in foreign investment in the United States, which will lead to an increased supply of specie, and improvement in the wealth of all Americans.

“If then, it satisfactorily appears, that it is the Interest of the United states, generally, to encourage manufactures, it merits particular attention, that there are circumstances, which Render the present a critical moment for entering with Zeal upon the important business. The effort cannot fail to be materially seconded by a considerable and encreasing influx of money, in consequence of foreign speculations in the

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 294.

funds—and by the disorders, which exist in different parts of Europe."²⁰⁸

In an argument once again quite similar to one of Madison's, as we will see below, the government of the United States must act to create a domestic market, because other nations' governments already do this. The goal of this policy is again the well-being of the American people.

"Considering a monopoly of the domestic market to its own manufacturers as the reigning policy of manufacturing Nations, a similar policy on the part of the United states in every proper instance, is dictated, it might almost be said, by the principles of distributive justice; certainly by the duty of endeavouring to secure to their own Citizens a reciprocity of advantages."²⁰⁹

One way to achieve these goals is to impose tariffs on foreign goods, which need to be higher in the case of goods from some foreign competitor to domestic manufacturers.

"The true way to conciliate these two interests, is to lay a duty on foreign *manufactures* of the material, the growth of which is desired to be encouraged, and to apply the produce of that duty by way of bounty, either upon the production of the material itself or upon its manufacture at home or upon both. In this disposition of the thing, the Manufacturer commences his enterprise under every advantage, which is attainable, as to quantity or price, of the raw material: And the Farmer if the bounty be immediately to him, is enabled by it to enter into a successful competition with the foreign material; if the bounty be to the manufacturer on so much of the domestic material as he consumes, the operation is nearly the same; he has a motive of interest to prefer the domestic Commodity, if of equal quality, even at a higher price than the foreign, so long

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 295.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 297.

as the difference of price is any thing short of the bounty which is allowed upon the article."²¹⁰

Another option is to pay bounties for certain goods, although this option is much more problematic for Hamilton than tariffs. They are beneficial only when an industry is very young, and are frequently a source of jealousy. Still, there are benefits to the country as a whole from bounties, in his estimation. I myself am of the opinion that Hamilton shows here in his opinions on bounties that he himself was far more high-minded, and personally focused on the common good rather than his own self-interest, than other people were then, or now. He just never shows the malevolent calculation so many have characterized him as having. That bounties could be a source of corruption seems not to have even occurred to him.

"The continuance of bounties on manufactures long established must almost always be of questionable policy: Because a presumption would arise in every such Case, that there were natural and inherent impediments to success. But in new undertakings, they are as justifiable, as they are oftentimes necessary.

There is a degree of prejudice against bounties from an appearance of giving away the public money, without an immediate consideration, and from a supposition, that they serve to enrich particular classes, at the expence of the Community.

But neither of these sources of dislike will bear a serious examination. There is no purpose, to which public money can be more beneficially applied, than to the acquisition of a new and useful branch of industry; no Consideration more valuable than a permanent addition to the general stock of productive labour.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 300-301.

As to the second source of objection, it equally lies against other modes of encouragement, which are admitted to be eligible. As often as a duty upon a foreign article makes an addition to its price, it causes an extra expence to the Community, for the benefit of the domestic manufacturer. A bounty does no more: But it is the Interest of the society in each case, to submit to a temporary expence, which is more than compensated, by an increase of industry and Wealth, by an augmentation of resources and independence; & by the circumstance of eventual cheapness, which has been noticed in another place.”²¹¹

It is with his argument in favor of the Constitutionality of his proposals that we come to the heart of the disagreement between Hamilton and Madison on the question of government involvement in the economy. There is an enormous divide between the two on this issue, and each individual's arguments on this point show a continuation of his preferences prior to the existence of the Constitution. For Hamilton, one cannot include all the details of what the federal government is permitted to do within the Constitution itself. This is once again indicative of his willingness to construe far, far more latitude into the Constitution regarding the powers of the federal government.

It is his appeal to the “*general welfare*” clause as the source for the Constitutionality of his proposals which so infuriated Madison, as we shall see below. Hamilton argues, in response to objections like Madison's, that this is not a power for the federal government to just do whatever it wants.

²¹¹ Ibid, 301-302.

There is a limit, and it is that only actions may be taken that benefit the United States as a whole, and not any one part or state.

It is important to note, though, that Hamilton makes essentially the same argument as Madison, that “all” those who wrote the Constitution were in agreement, and had clear, unambiguous expectations as to how it would be interpreted and carried out, since as he says, it is “doubtless” that his interpretation is the correct one. This argument has been commented on frequently in Madison’s case, but we see the same claim with Hamilton as well. I find the claim by both to be dubious at best. Neither can legitimately claim to have known the minds of all the other individuals who took part in writing the Constitution. Neither can lay claim to exclusive expertise in determining, once and for all, the meaning of its many passages which admit of more than one interpretation. I argue both had clear ideas of his own, but could not possibly be the one, final, source regarding the expectations all the other authors had.

“A Question has been made concerning the Constitutional right of the Government of the United States to apply this species of encouragement, but there is certainly no good foundation for such a question. The National Legislature has express authority “To lay and Collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the *Common defence and general welfare*” with no other qualifications than that ‘all duties, imposts and excises, shall be *uniform* throughout the United states, that no capitation or other direct tax shall be laid unless in proportion to numbers ascertained by a census or enumeration taken on the principles prescribed in the Constitution,’ and that ‘no tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any state.’ These three qualifications excepted, the power to *raise*

money is plenary, and indefinite; and the objects to which it may be appropriated are no less comprehensive, than the payment of the public debts and the providing for the common defence and "general Welfare." The terms '*general Welfare*' were doubtless intended to signify more than was expressed or imported in those which Preceded; otherwise numerous exigencies incident to the affairs of a Nation would have been left without a provision. The phrase is as comprehensive as any that could have been used; because it was not fit that the constitutional authority of the Union, to appropriate its revenues shou'd have been restricted within narrower limits than the '*General Welfare*' and because this necessarily embraces a vast variety of particulars, which are susceptible neither of specification nor of definition.

It is therefore of necessity left to the discretion of the National Legislature, to pronounce, upon the objects, which concern the general Welfare, and for which under that description, an appropriation of money is requisite and proper. And there seems to be no room for a doubt that whatever concerns the general Interests of learning of Agriculture of Manufactures and of Commerce are within the sphere of the national Councils as far as regards an application of Money. The only qualification of the generality of the Phrase in question, which seems to be admissible, is this—That the object to which an appropriation of money is to be made be *General* and not *local*; its operation extending in fact, or by possibility, throughout the Union, and not being confined to a particular spot.

No objection ought to arise to this construction from a supposition that it would imply a power to do whatever else should appear to Congress conducive to the General Welfare. A power to appropriate money with this latitude which is granted too in *express terms* would not carry a power to do any other thing, not authorised in the constitution, either expressly or by fair implication."²¹²

In bemoaning the influence of state-centered opinions and loyalties, Hamilton as always displays his much-more national focus for the United States.

²¹² Ibid, 302-304.

“Here, however, as in some other cases, there is cause to regret, that the competency of the authority of the National Government to the good, which might be done, is not without a question. Many aids might be given to industry; many internal improvements of primary magnitude might be promoted, by an authority operating throughout the Union, which cannot be effected, as well, if at all, by an authority confined within the limits of a single state.

But if the legislature of the Union cannot do all the good, that might be wished, it is at least desirable, that all may be done, which is practicable. Means for promoting the introduction of foreign improvements, though less efficaciously than might be accomplished with more adequate authority, will form a part of the plan intended to be submitted in the close of this report.”²¹³

Hamilton had even more in mind for federal government involvement in the economy. Beyond encouraging manufacturing, he wanted for the federal government, taking a cue from a step already taken by individual states, to have a role in inspecting goods to ensure their quality. Far before the creation of the federal government agencies we take for granted today, Hamilton saw a need for consumer protection by the federal government. These inspections would, in his view, prevent fraud, improve quality, and more firmly establish the reputations of American goods.

Also, he argued for a much greater involvement by the federal government in financial exchanges, both to make such possible in the first place, and also to ease the process by which they would occur. Hamilton

²¹³ Ibid, 308.

desired an expansion in the supply of money, especially paper money, and argued for the need for such paper to be good in every state.

“Judicious regulations for the inspection of manufactured commodities.

This is not among the least important of the means, by which the prosperity of manufactures may be promoted. It is indeed in many cases one of the most essential. Contributing to prevent frauds upon consumers at home and exporters to foreign countries—to improve the quality & preserve the character of the national manufactures, it cannot fail to aid the expeditious and advantageous Sale of them, and to serve as a guard against successful competition from other quarters. The reputation of the flour and lumber of some states, and of the Pot ash of others has been established by an attention to this point. And the like good name might be procured for those articles, wheresoever produced, by a judicious and uniform system of Inspection; throughout the ports of the United States. A like system might also be extended with advantage to other commodities.

The facilitating of pecuniary remittances from place to place is a point of considerable moment to trade in general, and to manufactures in particular; by rendering more easy the purchase of raw materials and provisions and the payment for manufactured supplies. A general circulation of Bank paper, which is to be expected from the institution lately established will be a most valuable mean to this end. But much good would also accrue from some additional provisions respecting inland bills of exchange. If those drawn in one state payable in another were made negotiable, everywhere, and interest and damages allowed in case of protest, it would greatly promote negotiations between the Citizens of different states, by rendering them more secure; and, with it the convenience and advantage of the Merchants and manufacturers of each.”²¹⁴

Internal improvements, especially, were an issue Hamilton regarded as needing national supervision. On their own, each state would focus solely on its own good, and their efforts would probably be not only

²¹⁴ Ibid, 309-310.

wasteful due to repetition, but also counter-productive by coming into conflict with other states' efforts.

“The symptoms of attention to the improvement of inland Navigation, which have lately appeared in some quarters, must fill with pleasure every breast warmed with a true Zeal for the prosperity of the Country. These examples, it is to be hoped, will stimulate the exertions of the Government and the Citizens of every state. There can certainly be no object, more worthy of the cares of the local administrations; and it were to be wished, that there was no doubt of the power of the national Government to lend its direct aid, on a comprehensive plan. This is one of those improvements, which could be prosecuted with more efficacy by the whole, than by any part or parts of the Union. There are cases in which the general interest will be in danger to be sacrificed to the collision of some supposed local interests. Jealousies, in matters of this kind, are as apt to exist, as they are apt to be erroneous.”²¹⁵

Hamilton showed he was in favor of, and willing to have, the Treasury take action to help stabilize the economy when needed. This is yet again indicative of Hamilton's much greater vision for the federal government's involvement in the economy than Madison. In regards to a potential early bank panic, he wrote to William Seton in 1792 that he was willing to have the Treasury assist a prominent bank, in order to fend off the effects of what he considered unprincipled economic behavior by others.

“I feel great satisfaction in knowing from yourself, that your institution rejects the idea of coalition with the new project, or rather Hydra of projects.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 310-311.

I shall labour to give what has taken place a turn favourable to *another* Union; the propriety of which is as you say clearly illustrated by the present state of things.

It is my wish that the Bank of New York may, by all means, continue to receive deposits from the Collector, in the paper of the Bank of the U States, and that they may also receive payment for the Dutch Bills in the same paper. This paper may either be remitted to the Treasurer or remain in the Bank as itself shall deem most expedient. I have explicitly directed the Treasurer to forbear drawing on the Bank of New York, without special direction from me. And my intention is to leave you in possession of all the money you have or may receive 'till I am assured that the present storm is effectually weathered.

Every body here sees the propriety of your having refused the paper of the Bank of the United States in such a crisis of your affairs.

Be Confidential with me. If you are pressed, whatever support may be in my power shall be afforded. I consider the public interest as materially involved in aiding a valuable institution like yours to withstand the attacks of a confederated host of frantic and I fear, in too many instances, unprincipled gamblers."²¹⁶

Hamilton even had in mind a role for the federal government as regards what we now call social programs, when and where those would be necessary. In a report sent to the Speaker of the House from 1792, he wrote:

“The establishment of one or more marine Hospitals in the United States is a measure desirable on various accounts. The interests of humanity are concerned in it, from its tendency to protect from want and misery, a very useful, and, for the most part, a very needy class of the Community. The interests of navigation and trade are also concerned in it, from the protection and relief, which it is calculated to afford to the same class; conducing to attract and attach seamen to the country.

²¹⁶ *ibid*, 562-563.

A fund for the purpose may, it is presumed, be most conveniently derived from the expedient suggested in the above mentioned Memorial, namely, a contribution by the mariners and seamen of the United States, out of their wages to be regulated by law.

The rate of the contribution may be ten cents per month for each mariner or seamen, to be reserved, pursuant to articles, by masters of vessels, and paid to the collectors of districts, to which the vessels respectively belong. Effectual regulations for this purpose may, without difficulty be devised. The benefit of the fund ought to extend, not only to disabled and decrepid seamen, but to the widows and children of those who may have been killed or drowned, in the course of their service as seamen.

It will probably be found expedient, besides the reception and accomodation of the parties entitled, at any hospital which may be instituted to authorize the granting pensions, in aid of those who may be in condition, partly to procure a subsistence from their own labor. There may be cases, in which this mode of relief may be more accommodating to the individuals, and, at the same time, more œconomical."²¹⁷

Notice the suggestion that a tax be levied, out of individual incomes, for the benefit of others. Now, the tax would be paid by those within a specific profession for the benefit of others in that profession, but this clearly shows that Hamilton thought of roles for the federal government that far exceeded the opinions of others of his time. Some people needed to be helped in order to be safe from want and misery, help that government could offer. Not only were the sailors to be protected, but also their wives and children. However, there were limits to

²¹⁷ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cooke, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XI: February 1792 - June 1792. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, 295.

what he felt government, and he in his official capacity as Treasury Secretary, could do.

“I regret much every embarrassment which is experienced by the Mercantile Body—whether arising from the public operations, from accidental and unavoidable causes, or from a spirit of enterprise beyond the Capital which is to support it. That valuable class of Citizens forms too important an organ of the general weal not to claim every practicable and reasonable exemption and indulgence.

I do not perceive however that I can at the present moment contribute to this end otherwise than by encouraging the Bank to continue its aids as liberally as shall be consistent with its safety under an assurance that I shall for some time to come forbear drafts upon them as much as shall be practicable. The deposits of the Government will during this period be proportionably considerable.

In making this declaration, I confide in the prudence of the Directors not to overstrain the faculties of the Bank by which the Institution and the public Interest might both suffer.”²¹⁸

Again, the goal for Hamilton behind all of his preferences for government involvement in the economy is the good of the people at large. Beyond helping to create better economic conditions, he argued government needed to be active to protect the people from various dangers, such as the “rich and powerful,” and “caballers, intriguers, and demagogues.” He also showed he was far more concerned about the possibility of anarchy than tyranny. Writing as “Tully” in 1794, he said:

“If it were to be asked, What is the most sacred duty and the greatest source of security in a Republic? the answer would be, An inviolable respect for the Constitution and

²¹⁸ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cook, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XIV: February 1793 - June 1793. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, 283-284.

Laws—the first growing out of the last. It is by this, in a great degree, that the rich and powerful are to be restrained from enterprises against the common liberty—operated upon by the influence of a general sentiment, by their interest in the principle, and by the obstacles which the habit it produces erects against innovation and encroachment. It is by this, in a still greater degree, that caballers, intriguers, and demagogues are prevented from climbing on the shoulders of faction to the tempting seats of usurpation and tyranny.

Were it not that it might require too lengthy a discussion, it would not be difficult to demonstrate, that a large and well organized Republic can scarcely lose its liberty from any other cause than that of anarchy, to which a contempt of the laws is the high road."²¹⁹

In the draft he wrote for George Washington's address, which I include here because the document at this point does reflect only Hamilton's ideas, and not Washington's, Hamilton argues it is "natural" to have a bureaucracy dedicated to taking care of not just manufacturing, but agriculture as well. Agriculture is so important that government "has" to oversee it to ensure the well-being of the country. Damage could potentially be done to agriculture due to a lack of oversight, and further, government action would, in Hamilton's estimation, result in greater strength, opulence, and happiness for the country as a whole.

I want to call attention to Hamilton's use of that word, "opulence." He uses it frequently in his writings, and it shows one of the ways in which Hamilton departed from a strictly classical understanding of the needs of a republic. In contrast to the classical emphasis on simplicity, even

²¹⁹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., and Jacob E. Cook, assoc. ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XVII: August 1794 – December 1794. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, 159.

poverty, Hamilton argues for the need for greater wealth among the population as a whole in order for the United States to survive and thrive.

Hamilton also argues the need for the federal government to have a role in education, such as a national university and a national military academy. There are other schools, but he states they simply do not have enough money at this point to meet the needs of the nation. Also, the national university would attract students from all over the country, which would bring the United States closer together, as the students would receive a common education and experience that they would take back to their homes, and thus cause that national perspective to be more widely diffused throughout the country. The military academy would also provide a national point of view to those who serve in the military, rather than retaining a state-centered view, such as with state militia-only service.

He states his fear of a nation "subdivided," a notion which once again shows that he, in marked contrast to so many of his contemporaries, understood the United States to be one whole, and not a collection of states which just happen to have been gathered into one. As became clear over time, the view of the United States as a collection of states gathered together, or confederated, was one which persisted for decades, and was put to rest (for the most part) only by the Civil War.

Another point he raises, which proved to be quite controversial, is

his call for a United States navy. After the end of the Revolutionary War, the United States had sold off its ships. However, if the United States wants to continue the commerce it has already established with other nations, it needs to protect it with a navy. The United States should remain neutral as regards the conflicts between other nations, of course, but nevertheless needs its own navy in order to induce other countries to actually respect that neutrality, as the United States was already learning in its attempt to stay out of the wars between Great Britain and France. This is yet another point on which he and Madison actually agreed more than they disagreed.

Further, in regards to pay for public servants, Hamilton argues that appeals to republican virtue are pointless. If the United States wants qualified individuals, it has to pay sufficiently well to attract and retain them. Not paying well limits public service to the rich. Hamilton again and again pointed out the limits of the republican virtue ideal. Humans do have selfish motives, which cannot be overcome by high-minded appeals alone. This is in fact quite similar to Madison's views of human nature in *The Federalist*.

Hamilton, again in reference to the United States' relations with Great Britain, shows his far greater focus on building up the United States, rather than maintaining an intimate relationship with Great Britain, as Elkins and McKittrick depict him. He wanted to reduce the United States'

dependence on Great Britain, something encouraging manufacturing would help, because depending on Great Britain would be a threat to American security. Specifically, as regards manufacturing, war-related industries need to be encouraged and built up to keep the United States safe. Publicly-owned industries should be avoided, but may be necessary if private industry cannot supply something absolutely necessary for defense.

“That among the objects of labour and industry, Agriculture considered with reference either to individual or national welfare is first in importance may safely be affirmed without derogating from the just and real value of any other branch. It is indeed the best basis of the prosperity of every other. In proportion as nations progress in population and other circumstances of maturity this truth forces itself more & more upon the conviction of Rulers and makes the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage and care. Institutions for promoting it sooner or later grow up supported by the public purse—and the fruits of them when judiciously conceived and directed have fully justified the undertaking. Among these none have been found of greater utility than BOARDS composed of proper characters charged with collecting and communicating information and enabled to stimulate enterprise and experiment by premiums and honorary rewards. These have been found very cheap instruments of immense benefits. They serve to excite a general spirit of discovery & improvement to stimulate invention to excite new & useful experiments—and accumulating in one center the skill and improvement of every part of the nation they spread it thence over the whole nation at the same time promoting new discovery and diffusing generally the knowlege of all the discoveries which are made.

In the U States hitherto no such institution has been essayed though perhaps no country has stronger motives to it. Agriculture among us is certainly in a very imperfect state. In much of those parts where there have been early settlements the soil impoverished by an unskilful tillage yields

but a scanty reward for the labour bestowed upon it, and leaves its possessors under strong temptation to abandon it and emigrate to distant regions more fertile because they are newer and have not yet been exhausted by an unskilful use. This is every way an evil. The undue dislocation of our population from this cause promotes neither the strength the opulence nor the happiness of our Country. It strongly admonishes our national Councils to apply as far as may be practical by natural & salutary means an adequate Remedy. Nothing appears to [be] so unexceptionable & likely to be more efficacious than the institution of a Board of Agriculture with the views I have mentioned & with a moderate fund towards executing them. After mature reflection I am persuaded it is difficult to render our country a more precious and general service than by such an institution.

I will however observe that if it be thought expedient the objects of the Board may be still more comprehensive. It may embrace the encouragement of the mechanic and manufacturing arts by means analogous to those for the improvement of Agriculture & with an eye to the introduction from abroad of useful machinery &c. Or there may be separate Boards one charged with one object the other with the other.

I have heretofore suggested the expediency of establishing a national university and a Military Academy. The vast utility of both these measures presses so seriously and so constantly upon my mind that I cannot forbear with earnestness to repeat the recommendation.

The Assembly to which I address myself will not doubt that the extension of science and knowledge is an object primarily interesting to our national welfare. To effect this is most naturally the care of the particular local jurisdictions into which our country is subdivided as far as regards those branches of instruction which ought to be universally diffused and it gives pleasure to observe that new progress is continually making in the means employed for this end. But can it be doubted that the General Government would with peculiar propriety occupy itself in affording nutriment to those higher branches of science which though not within the reach of general acquisi[tion] are in their consequences and relation, productive of general advantage? Or can it be doubted that this great object would be materially advanced by a University erected on that broad basis to which the national resources are most adequate & so liberally

endowed as to command the ablest professors in the several branches of liberal knowledge? It is true and to the honor of our Country that it offers many colleges and Academies highly respectable and useful—but the funds upon which they are established are too narrow to permit any of them to be an adequate substitute for such an institution as is contemplated & to which they would be excellent auxiliaries. Amongst the motives to such an institution the assimilation of the principles opinions manners and habits of our countrymen by drawing from all quarters our youth to participate in a common Education well deserves the attention of Government. To render the people of this Country as homogeneous as possible must lend as much as any other circumstance to the permanency of the Union & prosperity.

The eligibleness of a Military Academy depends on that evident maxim of policy which requires every nation to be prepared for war while cultivating peace and warns it against suffering the military spirit & military knowledge wholly to decay. However particular instances superficially viewed may seem exceptions it will not be doubted by any who have attentively considered the subject that the military art is of a complicated and comprehensive nature, that it demands much previous study as well as practice and that the possession of it in its most improved state is always of vast importance to the security of a Nation. It ought therefore to be a principal care of every Government however pacific its general policy to preserve and cultivate indeed in proportion as the policy of a Country is pacific & it is little liable to [be] called to practice the rules of the Military Art does it become the duty of the Government to take care by proper institutions that it be not lost. A Military Academy instituted on proper principles would serve to secure to our country though within a narrow sp[h]ere a solid fund of military information which would always be ready for national emergencies & would facilitate the diffusion of Military knowledge as those emergenc[i]es might require.

A systematic plan for the creation of a moderate navy appears to me recommended by very weighty considerations. An active external Commerce demands a naval power to protect it—Besides the dangers from War in which a state is a party. It is a truth which our Experience has confirmed that the most equitable and sincere neutrality is not sufficient to exempt a state from the depredations of other nations at war with each other. It is essential to induce

them to respect that neutrality that there shall be an organised force ready to vindicate the national flag. This may even prevent the necessity of going into war by discouraging from those insults and infractions of right which sometimes proceed to an extreme that leave no alternative. The U States abound in Materials. Their Commerce fast increasing must proportionably augment the number of their seamen and give us rapidly the means of a naval power respectable if not great. Our relative situation likewise for obvious reasons would render a moderate force very influential more so perhaps than a much greater in the hands of any other power. It is submitted as well deserving consideration whether it will not be prudent immediately and gradually to provide and lay up magazines of Ship Timber and to build & equip annually on[e] or more ships of force as the developpement of resources shall render convenient & practicable—so that a future War of Europe, if we escape the present storm may not find our Commerce in the defenceless situation in which the present found it.

There is a subject which has dwelt long & much upon my mind which I cannot omit this opportunity of suggesting. It is the compensations to our public Officers; especially those in the most important stations. Every man acquainted [with] the expence even of the most frugal plan of living in our great cities must be sensible of their inadequateness. The impolicy of such defective provision seems not to have been sufficiently weighed.

No plan of governing is well founded which does not regard man as a compound of selfish and virtuous passions. To expect him to be wholly guided by the latter would be as great an error as to suppose him wholly destitute of them. Hence the necessity of adequate rewards for those services of which the Public stand in need. Without them the affairs of a nation are likely to get sooner or later into incompetent or unfaithful hands. If their own private wealth is to supply in the candidates for public Office the deficiency of public liberality then the sphere of those who can be candidates especially in a country like ours is much narrowed and the chance of a choice of able as well as upright men much lessened. Besides that it would be repugnant to the first principles of our government to exclude men from the public trusts because their talents & virtues however conspicuous are unaccompanied by wealth. If the rewards of the Government are scanty those who have talents without

wealth & are too virtuous to abuse their stations cannot accept public offices without a sacrifice of interest which in ordinary time may hardly be justified by their duty to themselves and their families. If they have talents without virtue they may indeed accept offices to make a dishonest & improper use of them. The tendency then is to transfer the management of public affairs to wealthy but incapable hands or to hands which if capable are as destitute of integrity as of wealth. For a time particular circumstances may prevent such a course of things and hitherto the inference has not been verified in our experience. But it is not the less probable that time will prove it to be well founded. In some Government men have many allurements to office exclusive of pecuniary rewards—but from the nature of our government pecuniary reward is the only aliment to the interested passion, which public men who are not vicious can expect. If then it be essential to the prosperous course of every Government that it shall be able to command the services of its most able & most virtuous citizens of every class, it follows that the compensations which our Government allows ought to be revised & materially increased. The character & success of Republican Government appear absolutely to depend on this policy.

Congress have repeatedly directed their attention to the encouragement of manufactures, and have no doubt promoted them in several branches. The object is of two much importance not to assure a continuance of their efforts in every way which shall appear proper & conducive to the end. But in the present state of our Country we cannot expect that our progress in some essential branches will be as expeditious as the public welfare demands—particularly in reference to security & defence in time of War. This reflection is the less pleasing when it is remembered how large a proportion of our supply the course of our Trade derives from a single nation. It appears very desirable that at least with a view to security and defence some measures more efficacious than have heretofore been adopted should be taken. As a general rule manufactories carried on upon public account are to be avoided. But every general rule may admit of exceptions. Where the state of things in our Country leaves little expectation that certain branches of manufacture will for a great length of time be sufficiently cultivated—when these are of a nature to be essential to the furnishing and equipping of the troops and ships of war of

which we stand in need—are not establishments on the public account, to the *extent of the public demand* for supply, recommended by very strong considerations of national policy? Ought our country to be dependent in such cases upon foreign supply precarious because liable to be interrupted? [If the necessary Supplies should be procured in this mode at great expense in time of Peace—will not the Security and independence arising from it very amply compensate? Institutions of this Kind commensurate only with our peace Establishments, will in time of War be easily extended in proportion to the public exigencies. And they may even perhaps be rendered contributory to the Supply of our citizens at large so as greatly to mitigate the privations arising from the interruption of trade. The idea at least is worthy of the most serious consideration. If adopted, the plan ought of course to exclude all those branches which may be considered as already established in our Country, and to which the efforts of individuals appear already as likely to be Speedily adequate.

A reinforcement of the existing provisions for discharging our public Debt was mentioned in my address at the opening of the last Session. Congress took Some preliminary steps, the maturing of which will no doubt engage their zealous attention during the present. I will only add, that it will afford me heartfelt Satisfaction to concur in such auxiliary measures as will ascertain to our country, the prospect of a Speedy extinguishment of the Debt. Prosperity may have Cause to regret, if, from any motive, intervals of tranquility are left unemployed, for accelerating this valuable end."²²⁰

There are some limits on what government should do, according to Hamilton. There is such a thing as an “excess of regulation,” but how to determine what is a good idea and what not? For Hamilton, one needs the appropriate kind of administrators, men of “sound judgement,” and NOT what Hamilton referred to as “theorists,” which as is well-known, was

²²⁰ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XX: January 1796 - March 1797. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, 382-388.

what he called Jefferson, Madison, and others who shared their opinions on government. Hamilton enunciates an Aristotelian argument in arguing for a “medium,” and not “general principles,” to determine how government should act. Once the Federalists had lost the election of 1800, and Democratic-Republican policies were put into place by the Jefferson Administration, Hamilton wrote in *The Examination Number XI* from 1802:

“It is certainly possible to do too much as well as too little; to embarrass, if not defeat the good which may be done, by attempting more than is practicable; or to overbalance that good by evils accruing from an excess of regulation. Men of business know this to be the case in the ordinary affairs of life: how much more must it be so, in the extensive and complicated concerns of an Empire? To reach and not to pass the salutary medium is the province of sound judgment: To miss the point will ever be the lot of those who, enveloped all their lives in the mists of theory, are constantly seeking for an ideal perfection which never was and never will be attainable in reality. It is about this medium, not about general principles, that those in power in our government have differed; and to experience, not to the malevolent insinuations of rivals, must be the appeal, whether the one or the other description of persons have judged most accurately. Yet discerning men may form no imperfect opinion of the merits of the controversy between them, by even a cursory view of the distinctions on which it has turned.”²²¹

With James Madison what we really see is a difference of opinion with Hamilton in degree. In so many ways, their conflicts reflected not a vast gulf of different principles, but rather different priorities. There were

²²¹ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, volume XXV: July 1800 - April 1802. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, 514-515.

some issues on which they differed markedly, but these are the exception. Sadly, each interpreted the other's actions in the worst manner possible. Fear, rather than giving the benefit of the doubt, ruled both. Like Hamilton, Madison also saw the need for the federal government to have the power to regulate trade during the time of the Articles of Confederation. For Madison, the states simply cannot effectively regulate trade by themselves. There needed to be a common overseer of trade for the United States, just like other countries had.

Again like Hamilton, Madison argued that free trade with other countries would be the ideal, but it was just not possible at that time, due to the policies of other governments. Given that reality, the United States needed to enact similar policies to protect itself. A tariff would be the best option for not only controlling trade, giving the United States leverage in negotiations with other countries, and equally important, paying off the debt owed to other countries. To James Monroe he wrote in 1785:

“Viewing in the abstract the question whether the power of regulating trade, to a certain degree at least, ought to be vested in Congress, it appears to me not to admit of a doubt, but that it should be decided in the affirmative. If it be necessary to regulate trade at all, it surely is necessary to lodge the power, where trade can be regulated with effect, and experience has confirmed what reason foresaw, that it can never be so regulated by the States acting in their separate capacities. They can no more exercise this power separately, than they could separately carry on war, or separately form treaties of alliance or Commerce. The nature of the thing therefore proves the former power, no less than

the latter, to be within the reason of the foederal Constitution. Much indeed is it to be wished, as I conceive, that no regulations of trade, that is to say, no restrictions or imposts whatever, were necessary. A perfect freedom is the System which would be my choice. But before such a system will be eligible perhaps for the U. S. they must be out of debt; before it will be attainable, all other nations must concur in it."²²²

With Madison more so than Hamilton, though, we see the notion of using trade with other countries as a weapon. Other than in *The Federalist*, Hamilton does not mention this as an option for the federal government. With Madison, especially in his non-official papers, this idea occurs comes up far more often. The United States must be able to, for instance, "extort redress" from other countries. Again to Monroe in the same letter as above he wrote:

"What is to be done? Must we remain passive victims to foreign politics; or shall we exert the lawful means which our independence has put into our hands, of extorting redress? The very question would be an affront to every Citizen who loves his Country. What then are those means? Retaliating regulations of trade only. How are these to be effectuated? only by harmony in the measures of the States. How is this harmony to be obtained? only by an acquiescence of all the States in the opinion of a reasonable majority."²²³

At first, Madison wanted amendments to be made to the Articles of Confederation. He did not initially want a quite different form of government, which the Constitution eventually was. However, the

²²² Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 8: 10 March 1784 - 28 March 1786. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973, 333-334.

²²³ *ibid*, 334.

“machinations” of Great Britain needed to be dealt with, and only a stronger federal government could do that.

“But let us not sacrifice the end to the means: let us not rush on certain ruin in order to avoid a possible danger. I conceive it to be of great importance that the defects of the foederal system should be amended, not only because such amendments will make it better answer the purpose for which it was instituted, but because I apprehend danger to its very existence from a continuance of defects which expose a part if not the whole of the empire to severe distress. The suffering part, even when the minor part, can not long respect a Government which is too feeble to protect their interest; But when the suffering part come to be the major part, and they despair of seeing a protecting energy given to the General Government, from what motives is their allegiance to be any longer expected. Should G. B. persist in the machinations which distress us; and seven or eight of the States be hindered by the others from obtaining relief by foederal means, I own, I tremble at the anti-foederal expedients into which the former may be tempted.”²²⁴

Not just Great Britain needs to be dealt with, but also some American citizens are behaving in ways contrary to the nation’s best interest. Specifically, Madison identifies the “mercantile interest” as being far too closely aligned with Great Britain than the United States. We saw this above with Hamilton’s concern with the “trading interest.” Madison identifies the continued animosity towards Great Britain as a resource which could be made use of in order to counteract the baleful influence of the merchants and Great Britain.

“Add to all this that the mercantile interest which has taken the lead in rousing the public attention of other States, is in

²²⁴ *ibid*, 334-335.

this so exclusively occupied in British Commerce that what little weight they have will be most likely to fall into the opposite scale. The only circumstance which promises a favorable hearing to the meditated proposition of Congs. is that the power which it asks is to be exerted agst. G. B, and the proposition will consequently be seconded by the animosities which still prevail in a strong degree agst. her."²²⁵

The malignant influence of Great Britain is something that was clearly much more on Madison's mind than Hamilton's, although Hamilton did decry a lack of American ability to deal on more equal terms with other countries. He was just far more concerned about BOTH France and Great Britain than Madison was. In any case, we see again and again in Madison's writings a focus on dealing specifically with Great Britain, and he hoped that the people at large would become fed up with the ways in which Great Britain was treating the United States, thus agreeing to give the federal government more power. His home state of Virginia was especially recalcitrant in Madison's estimation, mainly due to the recovery in the prices it was receiving for its farm exports. Madison was especially afraid that Great Britain's ultimate goal was to effect a disunion of the United States. To Thomas Jefferson he wrote in 1785:

"The machinations of G. B. with regard to Commerce have produced much distress and noise in the Northern States, particularly in Boston, from whence the alarm has spread to New York & Philada. Your correspondence with Congs. will no doubt have furnished you with full information on this head. I only know the General fact, and that the sufferers are every where calling for such augmentation of the power of Congress as may effect relief. How far the Southern States &

²²⁵ *ibid*, 336.

Virginia in particular will join in this proposition cannot be foreseen. It is easy to foresee that the circumstances which in a confined view distinguish our situation from that of our brethren, will be laid hold of by the partizans of G. B. by those who are or affect to be jealous of Congress, and those who are interested in the present course of business, to give a wrong bias to our Councils. If any thing should reconcile Virga. to the idea of giving Congress a power over her trade, it will be that this power is likely to annoy G. B. against whom the animosities of our Citizens are still strong. They seem to have less sensibility to their commercial interests; which they very little understand, and which the mercantile class here have not the same motives if they had the same capacity to lay open to the public, as that class have in the States North of us. The price of our Staple since the peace is another cause of inattention in the planters to the dark side of our commercial affairs. Should these or any other causes prevail in frustrating the scheme of the Eastern & Middle States of a general retaliation on G. B. I tremble for the [event]. A majority of the states deprived of a regular remedy for their distresses by the want of a fœderal spirit in the minority must feel the strongest motives to some irregular experiments. The dan[ger] of such a crisis makes me surmise that the policy of Great Britain results as much from the hope of effecting a breach in our confederacy as of monopolising our trade."²²⁶

To George Washington in 1785 he expressed his conclusion that the reason behind the states' refusal to grant the federal government more control over commerce came down to simple fear. Madison showed his classical education by comparing the situation the United States was in to that of the Greek city-states just prior to their conquest by Macedonia. Like the Greek confederation, Madison thought the United States was in danger because it had not granted its general government enough power to effectively deal with foreign countries.

²²⁶ *ibid*, 344.

“Your favour of the 30. Novr. was received a few days ago. This would have followed much earlier the one which yours acknowledges had I not wished it to contain some final information relative to the commercial propositions. The discussion of them has consumed much time, and though the absolute necessity of some such general system prevailed over all the efforts of its adversaries in the first instance, the stratagem of limiting its duration to a short term has ultimately disappointed our hopes. I think it better to trust to further experience and even distress, for an adequate remedy, than to try a temporary measure which may stand in the way of a permanent one, and must confirm that transatlantic policy which is founded on our supposed distrust of Congress and of one another. Those whose opposition in this case did not spring from illiberal animosities towards the Northern States, seem to have been frightened on one side at the idea of a perpetual & irrevocable grant of power, and on the other flattered with a hope, that a temporary grant might be renewed from time to time, if its utility should be confirmed by the experiment. But we have already granted perpetual & irrevocable powers of a much more extensive nature than those now proposed and for reasons not stronger than the reasons which urge the latter. And as to the hope of renewal, it is the most visionary one that perhaps ever deluded men of sense. Nothing but the peculiarity of our circumstances could ever have produced those sacrifices of sovereignty on which the fœderal Government now rests. If they had been temporary, and the expiration of the term required a renewal at this crisis, pressing as the crisis is, and recent as is our experience of the value of the confederacy, sure I am that it would be impossible to revive it. What room have we then to hope that the expiration of temporary grants of commercial powers would always find a unanimous disposition in the States, to follow their own example. It ought to be remembered too that besides the caprice, jealousy, and diversity of opinions, which will be certain obstacles in our way, the policy of foreign nations may hereafter imitate that of the Macedonian Prince who effected his purposes against the Grecian confederacy by gaining over a few of the leading men in the smaller members of it.”²²⁷

²²⁷ *ibid*, 438-439.

In contrast to Hamilton, where most of our sources of his ideas come from his writings, with Madison we fortunately also have a wealth of his thoughts given through his speeches in the Continental Congress, the legislature of Virginia, and also the Congress of the United States. As regards the question of direct taxation by the federal government, even during his service in the Continental Congress, Madison stressed the need for the federal government to have the power of directly taxing the people, rather than that of sending requisitions to the states, in order to have better control of the United States' economy. Specifically, the federal government needed to be able to pay the country's debts, most especially those owed overseas, but could only do so if it had the ability to levy taxes without state interference.

“My honorable friend seems to think that we ought to spare the present generation, and throw our burthens upon posterity. I will not contest the equity of this reasoning, but I must say that good policy as well as views of œconomy, strongly urge us even to distress ourselves to comply with our most solemn engagements. We must make effectual provision for the payment of the interest of our public debts. In order to do justice to our creditors, and support our credit and reputation; we must lodge power some where or other for this purpose.”²²⁸

While not stressing the issue as much as Hamilton, Madison also expressed a greater fear of state power than federal power. This once

²²⁸ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 11: 7 March 1788 - 1 March 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 124.

again shows the differences between the two were quite often more ones of degree than of differing principles. From the same speech in the Continental Congress as above, Madison expressed his conviction that the federal government needed to have the ability to “suppress” state power if necessary.

“I do not thoroughly comprehend the reasoning of my honorable friend, when he tells us, that the federal government will predominate, and that the state interest will be lost; when at the same time he tells us, that it will be a faction of seven states. If seven states will prevail as *states*, I conceive that state influence will prevail. If state influence under the present feeble government has prevailed, I think that a remedy ought to be introduced by giving the general government power to suppress it.”²²⁹

Both Madison and Hamilton wanted the United States to remain neutral in the ongoing European conflicts, most notably those between France and Great Britain. Both argued in favor of the United States building and maintaining a navy in order to enforce its neutrality, as both Great Britain and France had interfered with American shipping because the United States simply did not have a naval force with which to protect itself. Madison, in stark contrast to Hamilton, though, did not like having to have a standing military establishment. He nevertheless saw the need for one, given the realities of how other countries treated the United States.

“He supposed that my argument with respect to a future war between Great-Britain and France was fallacious. The other

²²⁹ *ibid*, 124-125.

nations of Europe have acceded to that neutrality while Great-Britain opposed it. We need not expect in case of such a war, that we should be suffered to participate of the profitable emoluments of the carrying trade, unless we were in a respectable situation. Recollect the last war. Was there ever a war in which the British nation stood opposed to so many nations? All the belligerent nations in Europe, with nearly one half of the British empire, were united against it. Yet that nation, though defeated, and humbled beyond any previous example, stood out against this. From her firmness and spirit in such desperate circumstances, we may divine what her future conduct may be. I did not contend that it was necessary for the United States to establish a navy for that sole purpose, but instanced it as one reason out of several, for rendering ourselves respectable. I am no friend to naval or land armaments in time of peace, but if they be necessary, the calamity must be submitted to. Weakness will invite insults. A respectable government will not only intitle us to a participation of the advantages which are enjoyed by other nations, but will be a security against attacks and insults. It is to avoid the calamity of being obliged to have large armaments that we should establish this government. The best way to avoid danger, is to be in a capacity to withstand it."²³⁰

Madison's efforts in regards to creating a stronger union through government involvement in the economy did not stop when he helped achieve his goal of ratifying the Constitution. As he began his service in the House of Representatives, Madison again stressed the imperative that the United States put its finances in order. Madison still wanted as much free trade as possible, but given the continued reality of tariff usage by other countries, he again argued in favor of not only the necessity, but the utility as well, of the United States making use of tariffs.

²³⁰ *ibid*, 125.

“The union, by the establishment of a more effective government having recovered from the state of imbecility, that heretofore prevented a performance of its duty, ought, in its first act, to revive those principles of honor and honesty that have too long lain dormant.

The deficiency in our treasury has been too notorious to make it necessary for me to animadvert upon that subject. Let us content our selves with endeavouring to remedy the evil. To do this a national revenue must be obtained; but the system must be such an one, that, while it secures the object of revenue, it shall not be oppressive to our constituents: Happy it is for us that such a system is within our power; for I apprehend that both these objects may be obtained from an impost on articles imported into the United States.

In pursuing this measure, I know that two points occur for our consideration. The first, respects the general regulation of commerce, which in my opinion ought to be as free as the policy of nations will admit. The second, relates to revenue alone, and this is the point I mean more particularly to bring into the view of the committee.”²³¹

Madison, in contrast with Hamilton, argued for the need to focus more on current revenue concerns than promoting manufactures. Here is in fact a very important point to understand in regards to the differences the two had, and the effects those differences had on the United States. Manufacturing was simply not as important for Madison as it was for Hamilton. He did assume manufacturing would eventually be added to a more diversified American economy, but in so many ways he dreaded that eventuality, given his conviction that a more manufacturing-based economy would be a threat to the republican virtue on which the United

²³¹ Hobson, Charles F., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790, with a supplement 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 65.

States ultimately depended.

“It was my view to restrain the first essay on this subject principally to the object of revenue, and make this rather a temporary expedient than any thing permanent. I see however, that there are strong exceptions against deciding immediately on a part of the plan, which I had the honor to bring forward, as well as against an application to the resources mentioned in the list of articles just proposed by the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

I presume, that however much we may be disposed to promote domestic manufactures, we ought to pay some regard to the present policy of obtaining revenue.”²³²

Madison did consistently display his more nationalistic preferences by urging others in the nascent Congress of the United States to focus on the common needs of the country as a whole, rather than just the needs of their individual states.

“I am sensible that there is great weight in the observation that fell from the hon. gentleman from South-Carolina, (Mr. Tucker) That it will be necessary on the one hand, to weigh and regard the sentiments of the gentlemen from the different parts of the United States; but on the other hand, we must limit our consideration on this head, and notwithstanding all the deference and respect we pay to those sentiments, we must consider the general interest of the union, for this is as much every gentleman's duty to consider as is the local or state interest—and any system of impost that this committee will adopt, must be founded on the principles of mutual concession.”²³³

While nowhere near as convinced of their importance as Hamilton, Madison did not completely oppose the encouragement of manufacturing by the federal government, now that such power had

²³² *ibid*, 69.

²³³ *ibid*, 70.

been granted to Congress by the Constitution. Nevertheless, he once again expressed his preference for a free market, rather than extensive government control of the economy.

“There is another consideration. The states that are most advanced in population and ripe for manufactures, ought to have their particular interest attended to in some degree. While these states retained the power of making regulations of trade, they had the power to protect and cherish such institutions; by adopting the present constitution they have thrown the exercise of this power into other hands—they must have done this with an expectation, that those interests would not be neglected here.

I am afraid, Sir, on the one hand, that if we go fully into a discussion of the subject, we shall consume more time than prudence would dictate to spare; on the other hand, if we do not develop it and see the principles on which we mutually act, we shall subject ourselves to great difficulties. I beg leave therefore to state the grounds on which my opinion with respect to the matter under consideration is founded, namely, whether our present system should be a temporary or permanent one? In the first place, I own myself the friend to a very free system of commerce, and hold it as a truth, that commercial shackles are generally unjust, oppressive and impolitic—it is also a truth, that if industry and labour are left to take their own course, they will generally be directed to those objects which are the most productive, and this in a more certain and direct manner than the wisdom of the most enlightened legislature could point out. Nor do I think that the national interest is more promoted by such restrictions, than that the interest of individuals would be promoted by legislative interference directing the particular application of its industry.”²³⁴

Madison also thought the federal government should take similar steps to encourage agriculture, in which he argued the United States

²³⁴ *ibid*, 70-71.

already had advantages over other countries, in order to counter-balance the advantages European countries had in manufacturing.

“In my opinion, it would be proper also, for gentlemen to consider the means of encouraging the great staple of America, I mean agriculture, which I think may justly be stiled the staple of the United States; from the spontaneous productions which nature furnishes, and the manifest preference it has over every other object of emolument in this country. If we compare the cheapness of our land with that of other nations, we see so decided an advantage in that cheapness, as to have full confidence of being unrivaled; with respect to the object of manufacture, other countries may and do rival us; but we may be said to have a monopoly in agriculture. The possession of the soil and the lowness of its price, give us as much a monopoly in this case, as any nation or other parts of the world have in the monopoly of any article whatever; but, with this advantage to us, that it cannot be shared nor injured by rivalship.

If my general principle is a good one, that commerce ought to be free, and labour and industry left at large to find its proper object, the only thing which remains, will be to discover the exceptions that do not come within the rule I have laid down. I agree with the gentleman from Pennsylvania, that there are exceptions, important in themselves and claim the particular attention of the committee: Altho the freedom of commerce would be advantageous to all the world, yet, in some particulars, one nation might suffer, to benefit others, and this ought to be for the general good of society.”²³⁵

In addition to actions he believed the federal government needed to take to involve itself in the economy due to the policies of other governments, Madison argued there were other exceptions to an overall policy of free trade that would be necessary. Tariffs are one, but also where tariffs have been used to help create businesses, the federal

²³⁵ *ibid*, 71-72.

government needs to continue to protect them, since they are dependent upon government aid. In keeping with his republican virtue focus, Madison also sees a role for sumptuary laws, in order to encourage appropriate civic virtue amongst the citizens. Embargoes during war are another case, as well as protections for defense-related industries.

But, in contrast to Hamilton, Madison argued these sorts of protections are not as important as many think. The experiences the United States had during the Revolutionary War are not as clear a lesson for Madison as for Hamilton. Mainly, he was not as convinced of the need for federally-protected defense-related industries if they were too expensive. He argued that, even in war, the United States would be able to obtain supplies from abroad. Finally, Madison introduces an income-based argument in favor of tariffs, as being a just way to tax the rich instead of the poor, since the amount of tax paid would be in proportion to the differing levels of consumption by those two groups.

“Duties laid on imported articles may have an effect which comes within the idea of national prudence; It may happen that materials for manufactures may grow up without any encouragement for this purpose; it has been the case in some of the states, but in others, regulations have been provided and have succeeded in producing some establishment, which ought not to be allowed to perish, from the alteration which has taken place: It would be cruel to neglect them and divert their industry to other channels, for it is not possible for the hand of man to shift from one employment to another, without being injured by the change. There may be some manufactures, which being once formed, can advance toward perfection without any adventitious aid, while others for want of the fostering hand of

government will be unable to go on at all. Legislative attention will therefore be necessary to collect the proper objects for this purpose, and this will form an other exception to my general principle.

I observe that a sumptuary prohibition is within the view of some of the proposed articles and forms another exception; I acknowledge that I do not in general think any great national advantage arises from restrictions passed on this head, because as long as a distinction in point of value subsists, sumptuary duties in some form or other will prevail and take effect.

Another exception is embargoes in time of war; these may necessarily occur and shackle the freedom of commerce; but the reasons for this are so obvious, that it renders any remark unnecessary.

The next exception that occurs, is one on which great stress is laid by some well informed men, and this with great plausibility. That each nation should have within itself, the means of defence independent of foreign supplies: That in whatever relates to the operation of war, no state ought to depend upon a precarious supply from any part of the world: There may be some truth in this remark, and therefore it is proper for legislative attention. I am though, well persuaded that the reasoning on this subject has been carried too far. The difficulties we experienced a few years ago, of obtaining military supplies, ought not to furnish too much in favour of an establishment which would be difficult and expensive; because our *national* character is now established and recognized throughout the world, and the laws of war favor *national* exertion more than intestine commotion, so that there is good reason to believe that when it becomes necessary, we may obtain supplies from abroad as readily as any other nation whatsoever. I have mentioned this because I think I see something among the enumerated articles that seems to favor such policy.

The impost laid on trade for the purpose of obtaining revenue, may likewise be considered as an exception; so far therefore as revenue can be more conveniently and certainly raised by this, than any other method without injury to the community, and its operation will be in due proportion to the consumption, which consumption is generally proportioned to the circumstances of individuals, I think sound policy dictates to use this mean; but it will be necessary to confine our attention at this time peculiarly to the object of revenue,

because the other subject involves some intricate questions, to unravel which we perhaps are not prepared."²³⁶

Again, though, Madison did argue there were exceptions to his preference for free trade, but how to identify them would be left up to an examination of whether or not they were necessary for the common good. Specifically, any tariff, being a tax, should be apportioned to the ability of those affected by it to actually pay. He identified different effects of tariffs on variously the poor and the rich, and decried what he considered unjust amounts expected out of either.

“In the first point of view we may consider the effect it will have on the different descriptions of people throughout the United States, I mean different descriptions as they relate to property. I readily agree, that in itself a tax would be unjust and oppressive that did not fall on the citizens according to their degree of property and ability to pay it; were it therefore this single article which we were about to tax, I should think it indispensable that it should operate equally agreeably to the principle I have just mentioned. But in order to determine whether a tax on salt is just or unjust, we must consider it as part of a system, and judge of the operation of this system as if it was but a single article; if this is found to be unequal it is also unjust. Now, examine the preceding articles, and consider how they affect the rich, and it will be found that they bear more than a just proportion according to their ability to pay—by adding this article we shall rather equalise the disproportion than encrease it, if it is true, as has been often mentioned, that the poor will contribute more of this tax than the rich.”²³⁷

It was the differences among the states as regards economic regulation that led Madison to consider it necessary for the federal

²³⁶ *ibid*, 72-73.

²³⁷ *ibid*, 85-86.

government to step in. In some cases, the states did not have any regulations at all on various points, such as tariff collection, while others specifically prohibited any state official from enforcing federal regulations. So, it became necessary in Madison's opinion for the federal government to establish its own means, and the officials to carry them out, in order for any tariff to be collected. Thus, it is in this case precisely the states' refusal to take action that caused the federal government to establish a bureaucracy it might not have had to otherwise, had it been able to rely on state officials to collect the tariff.

However, Madison clearly mentions below a major point of disagreement with Hamilton, that of encouraging manufacturing by the federal government. Far from there being a pressing need for such action, Madison specifically identified any such decision as "premature."

In a letter to Edmund Pendleton from 1789 he wrote:

"The House of Reps. is still occupied with the impost. It is a subject which is not very simple in itself; and is rendered not a little difficult by the diversity of State regulations—by the total want of regulations in several States—by the case of R. Island and N. Carolina; and by the law of Virginia disqualifying State officers, Judiciary as well as others, from executing federal functions. The latter circumstance seems to threaten additional delay, since it may require some special provision of a Judiciary nature for cases of seizure &c; until the Judiciary department can be systematically arranged; and may even then oblige the fedl. Legislature to extend its provisions farther than might otherwise be necessary. In settling the rate of duties the ideas of different quarters Nn. & Southn. Eastern & Western, do not entirely accord: but the difficulties are adjusted as easily as could be well expected. If the duties should be raised too high, the error will proceed as

much from the popular ardor to throw the burden of revenue on trade, as from the premature policy of stimulating manufactures."²³⁸

Elkins and McKittrick, in their *The Age of Federalism*, have, as I have discussed in the Introduction to this work, characterized the main difference between Hamilton and Madison as following from the different preferences each had as regards France and Great Britain, the two "superpowers" of the day. I have taken issue with that, but there is some evidence that, at least in Madison's case, he did indeed have a preference for France, but only up until the time Napoleon took over. This preference for France was at first based on gratitude for help during the Revolution, but then after the French Revolution it was based on support for a kindred republican state. The effect of this support did, while it lasted, give him a reason to support federal government involvement in the economy in favor of relations with France. For Madison, this was in part supported by his conviction that the public at large wanted France to have privileges other countries did not.

"Some gentlemen have seemed to call in question the policy of discriminating between nations in commercial alliance with the United States, and those with whom no treaties exist; for my own part, I am well satisfied that there are good and substantial reasons for making it; in the first place, it may not be unworthy of consideration, that the public sentiments of America will be favourable to such discrimination. I am sure with respect to that part from which I came, it will not be a pleasing ingredient in your laws, if they find foreigners of every nation put on a footing with those in alliance with us. There is

²³⁸ *ibid*, 89.

another reason which perhaps is more applicable to some parts of the union than to others; one of the few nations with which America has formed commercial connections has relaxed considerably in that rigid policy it before pursued, not so far to be sure as America could wish, with respect to opening her ports to our trade, but she has permitted our ready built ships a sale, and entitles them to the same advantage, when owned by her own citizens, as if they had been built in France, subjecting the sale to a duty of 5 per cent. The British market receives none; the disabilities of our ships to trade with their colonies continue even if they are purchased by the subjects of Great-Britain. Of consequence they cannot be sold without a considerable loss; nay so cautious are they to prevent the advantages we naturally possess, that they will not suffer a British ship to be repaired in America, beyond a certain proportion of her value; they even will not permit our vessels to be repaired in their ports."²³⁹

Sometimes for Madison, the need for federal government involvement in the economy comes from, as in the case with Great Britain, where the free market has not resulted in the optimal situation, due to previous political influences. In the case of these "unnatural" situations, it is appropriate for the federal government to correct the situation by various means. These "political advantages" given to some but not other countries will, in Madison's estimation, lead to greater economic exchange in those instances, correcting what he argues was a disproportionate amount of influence by Great Britain. Also, it would lead to other nations being more willing to make favorable trade agreements with the United States, in order to increase the amount of business with the United States.

²³⁹ *ibid*, 97-98.

“There are also other considerations which ought to be taken into view. From artificial or adventitious causes the commerce between America and Great Britain exceeds what may be considered its natural boundary. I find from an examination of the accounts of tonnage for the three large states of Massachusetts, Virginia, and South Carolina, that the tonnage of nations in alliance with us holds no proportion with that of Great Britain, or of the United States. This is a proof, that a very small direct commerce takes place between those countries and this; that there is less of direct intercourse than would naturally be if those extraneous and adventitious causes did not prevent it; such as, the long possession of our trade, their commercial regulations calculated to retain it, their similarity of language and manners, their conformity of laws and other circumstances, all these concurring has made their commerce with us more extensive than their natural situation would require it to be. I would wish therefore to give such political advantages to those nations as might enable them to gain their proportion of our direct trade from the nation who has acquired more than is naturally her due. From this view of the subject, I am led to believe it would be good policy to make the proposed discrimination between them. Is it not also of some importance, that we should enable nations in treaty with us to draw some advantage from our alliance, and thereby impress those powers that have hitherto neglected to treat with us, with the idea that advantages are to be gained by a reciprocity of friendship? If we give every thing equally to those who have or have not formed treaties, surely we do not furnish to them any motive for courting our connection.”²⁴⁰

The United States simply cannot have an overall, blanket policy of free trade, at least at this point in its history, according to Madison. The other countries of the world just do not follow that line of reasoning, and so the US must behave in a similar manner. When it is in the United States' interest, it can follow a free market approach, but when it is not, it must nevertheless follow its interest, and not the principle of free trade.

²⁴⁰ *ibid*, 98.

“I am a friend to free commerce, and at the same time a friend to such regulations as are calculated to promote our own interest, and this on national principles. The great principle of interest is a leading one with me, and yet my combination of ideas on this head, leads me to a very different conclusion from that made by the gentleman from New-York (Mr. Lawrance). I wish we were under less necessity than I find we are to shackle our commerce with duties, restrictions and preferences; but there are cases in which it is impossible to avoid following the example of other nations in the great diversity of our trade.”²⁴¹

In some ways, though, Madison wanted to have the federal government direct commerce just as much as Hamilton, but in a different direction. He argued for the need to have the federal government counteract powerful interests and individuals in society. Especially, the federal government needed to behave in ways to overcome established wealth, which would lead to greater equality amongst citizens.

“I beg leave to remark in answer to a train of ideas which the gentleman last up has brought into view, that although interest will in general operate effectually to produce political good, yet there are causes in which certain factitious circumstances may divert it from its natural channel, or throw or retain in an artificial one. Have we not been exercised on this topic for a long time past? Or why has it been necessary to give encouragement to particular species of industry, but to turn the stream in favor of an interest that would not otherwise succeed? But laying aside the illustration of these causes so well known to all nations, where cities, companies, or opulent individuals engross the business from others, by having had an uninterrupted possession of it, or by the extent of their capitals being able to destroy a competition; let us proceed to examine what ought to be our conduct on this principle, upon the present occasion. Suppose two commercial cities, one possessed of enormous capitals and long habits of business, whilst the other is possessed of superior

²⁴¹ *ibid*, 99.

natural advantages, but without that course of business and chain of connections which the other has, is it possible in the nature of things, that the latter city should carry on a successful competition with the former? Thus it is with nations; and when we consider the vast quantities of our produce sent to the different parts of Europe, and the great importations from the same places, that almost all of this commerce is transacted thro' the medium of British ships and British merchants, I cannot help conceiving that, from the force of habit and other conspiring causes, that nation is in possession of a much greater proportion of our trade than she naturally is intitled to. Trade then being restrained to an artificial channel, is not so advantageous to America as a direct intercourse would be; it becomes therefore the duty of those to whose care the public interest and welfare are committed, to turn the tide to a more favorable direction."²⁴²

In an argument similar to one of Hamilton's in favor of encouraging manufactures, Madison argues the federal government needs to counteract old habits leading to more trade with some countries than with others.

"I cannot, from this view of the subject, be persuaded to believe that every part of our trade flows in those channels which would be most natural and profitable to us, or those which reason would dictate to us, if we were unincumbered of old habits, and other accidental circumstances that hurry us along."²⁴³

Madison did agree with Hamilton on the need for a navy, given the United States' interest in foreign commerce via its own ships. Otherwise, the United States would have to rely on the ships of other countries, and would lose out on much of the wealth flowing from that business. Also, he argued it would be a good thing for the United States to have its own

²⁴² *ibid*, 100.

²⁴³ *ibid*, 100.

commercial ships, because they would supply the sailors it would need for a navy in case of a war. Overall, giving preferences to some but not other countries, combined with merchant shipping, would lead in Madison's opinion, to greater safety for the United States.

"The more the subject has been examined the greater necessity there appears for discrimination. If it is expedient for America to have vessels employed in commerce at all, it will be proper that she have enough to answer all the purposes intended; to form a school for seamen, to lay the foundation of a navy, and to be able to support itself against the interference of foreigners. I do not think there is much weight in what has been observed relative to the duty we are about to lay in favor of American vessels, being a burthen on the community, and particularly oppressive to some parts; but if there were, it may be a burthen of that kind which will ultimately save us from one that is greater.

I consider that an acquisition of maritime strength is essential to this country; if ever we are so unfortunate as to be engaged in war, what but this can defend our towns and cities upon the sea-coast? Or what but this can enable us to repel an invading enemy? Those parts which are said to bear an undue proportion of the burthen of the additional duty on foreign shipping, are those that will be the most exposed to the operations of a depredatory war, and require the greatest exertions of the union in their defence; if therefore some little sacrifice is made by them to obtain this important object, they will be peculiarly rewarded for it in the hour of danger. Granting a preference to our own navigation will insensibly bring it forward to that perfection so essential to American safety; and though it may produce some little inequality at first, it will soon ascertain its level, and become uniform throughout the union. A higher duty will become necessary on these principles, as well as on those of discrimination; the preference we give to foreign nations in alliance over those not in treaty, will tend to encrease the trade of our allies, but it will also enable our own shipping to carry on lower terms, than that nation who is in possession of such an unnatural proportion of commerce."²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ *ibid*, 101-102.

Madison ties the importance of republican virtue to the idea of a free market, which is actually a departure in many ways from earlier writers on the subject. For Madison, though, a free market is in his view essential for the success of the United States' experiment in republican government. However, the farming lifestyle is the best, indeed essential, way of making a living to help create the republican virtues needed. Manufacturing can only be done in cities, which are anathema to the independence and self-reliance necessary for a republican lifestyle. Writing for the *National Gazette* in 1792, he said:

“A PERFECT theory on this subject would be useful, not because it could be reduced to practice by any plan of legislation, or ought to be attempted by violence on the will or property of individuals: but because it would be a monition against empirical experiments by power, and a model to which the free choice of occupations by the people, might gradually approximate the order of society.

The best distribution is that which would most favor *health*, *virtue*, *intelligence* and *competency* in the *greatest number* of citizens. It is needless to add to these objects, *liberty* and *safety*. The first is presupposed by them. The last must result from them.

The life of the husbandman is pre-eminently suited to the comfort and happiness of the individual. *Health*, the first of blessings, is an appurtenance of his property and his employment. *Virtue*, the health of the soul, is another part of his patrimony, and no less favored by his situation. *Intelligence* may be cultivated in this as well as in any other walk of life. If the mind be less susceptible of polish in retirement than in a croud, it is more capable of profound and comprehensive efforts. Is it more ignorant of some things? It has a compensation in its ignorance of others. *Competency* is more universally the lot of those who dwell in the country, when liberty is at the same time their lot. The extremes both of want and of waste have other abodes.

'Tis not the country that peoples either the Bridewells or the Bedlams. These mansions of wretchedness are tenanted from the distresses and vices of overgrown cities."²⁴⁵

Again and again Madison emphasized that agriculture, rather than manufacturing, was the path to the independence, happiness and public liberty for everyone that classical republican virtue offered. To help achieve this goal, he did approve of government involvement in the economy. For Madison, there was no need to promote manufacturing, with its baleful effects on virtue, but government could employ itself profitably by promoting farming.

"The class of citizens who provide at once their own food and their own raiment, may be viewed as the most truly independent and happy. They are more: they are the best basis of public liberty, and the strongest bulwark of public safety. It follows, that the greater the proportion of this class to the whole society, the more free, the more independent, and the more happy must be the society itself.

In appreciating the regular branches of manufacturing and mechanical industry, their tendency must be compared with the principles laid down, and their merits graduated accordingly. Whatever is least favorable to vigor of body, to the faculties of the mind, or to the virtues or the utilities of life, instead of being forced or fostered by public authority, ought to be seen with regret as long as occupations more friendly to human happiness, lie vacant.

The several professions of more elevated pretensions, the merchant, the lawyer, the physician, the philosopher, the divine, form a certain proportion of every civilized society, and readily adjust their numbers to its demands, and its circumstances."²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Rutland, Robert A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, 244-245.

²⁴⁶ *ibid*, 246.

Madison was not always entirely consistent on this point, though. He did sometimes support government actions taken on behalf of manufacturing. If it came down to the continued existence of an already established industry, he was willing to make exceptions.

“Mr. Madison thought it was worthy of consideration, whether it would not be expedient to make an exception in favour of white cotton goods. He understood there was a manufactory of some consequence established in this country, whose business it was to print these white cottons, and if this exception was not made, this additional duty might go to the destruction of it. Indeed as the printing of this article added as he was informed, two-thirds to its value, it might be considered as a raw material. He believed this manufactory was carried on by persons who came from foreign countries. If their manufactory succeeded, it might induce others to follow them, to exercise their several professions amongst us, which could not fail to be of advantage to the country; but if the present manufactory should be destroyed by one of our laws bearing hard upon its proprietors, it would have quite a contrary effect. He owned he was not much acquainted with the manufactory in question, nor had he made much calculation upon the subject; but, from the face of it, it seemed to require an exception. He therefore made the motion.”²⁴⁷

Even though, as I have shown above, Hamilton and Madison did have underlying differences in their expectations for the United States, specifically in this case on what, if any, role the federal government would have in the economy, in more ways they were actually quite similar rather than having dramatic differences of opinion. As I mentioned above, it really is just too bad that all the individuals from that time that I am have

²⁴⁷ Stagg, J.C. A., et.al, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volume 16: 27 April 1795 - 27 March 1797. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, 496-497.

read just did not give each other the benefit of the doubt, and immediately attributed the different preferences each had to some kind of betrayal of the American Revolution, rather than just understanding that intelligent people of good will can and do quite often come to different conclusions regarding the questions of the day.

Between the two, Madison is more hesitant than Hamilton to have the federal government involve itself extensively in the economy, but this is a difference in degree, and not principle. Both wanted the new federal government to correct the problems that had occurred under the Articles of Confederation. Just how to do so, and what underlying Constitutional support for any actions taken, were the areas on which they differed.

Both agreed on the need for tariffs, but Madison was, as we have seen, much more interested in using these to achieve not only the goal of revenue for the federal government, but also as a tool for use in foreign relations. He clearly wanted to shift the United States' economy away from primary trade with Great Britain towards a much more diversified situation, especially by giving France greater benefits. Hamilton seemed much more content with the trade situation with Great Britain, but clearly wanted the United States to become more independent over time through expanding its own manufacturing base.

The goal both had at all times, though, does show them to have been in essential ways far more similar than different. Each was

concerned with, and proposed policies based on, the good of the American people as a whole. That they were unable to see this in each other, and give each other the benefit of the doubt, is an all-too-common tragic reality in American life which continues still to this day.

Republicanism for both Hamilton and Madison mandated government focus on the common good. However, they had different ideas about whether, to what extent, and what kinds of federal government activity were necessary to help the American republican experiment succeed. For Hamilton, that focus on the common good required the federal government take a widespread active role in the economy in order to provide a good standard of living for the American people. That way, the people would accept, and continue to support, the American republic. Further, this necessary, and good, federal government involvement in the economy required taxation. It would be through taxes that the United States could be effectively protected from threats at home and abroad, plus it would achieve respectability with other countries. For Hamilton, these need to be addressed for any kind of country, including a republic, to succeed.

Very different from Madison, Hamilton again and again included "Greatness" as one of his goals for the United States. Indeed, he listed greatness as one of the absolute vital necessities in order for the American republican experiment to succeed. Only in a large, wealthy, great

republic could America survive and thrive. This is of course a departure from classical republican theory on Hamilton's part, but as we have seen, both departed from classical theory at various times.

With Madison, we see such a departure in his emphasis on a free market, with as little government regulation as possible, as necessary for the American republican experiment to succeed. Also, Madison did see a good, indeed vital, role for the federal government in the economy, but to encourage agriculture, not manufacturing as Hamilton wanted. The agricultural life was, far more for Madison than Hamilton, the best way to encourage the kind of civic virtue among citizens which would help the American republic succeed.

Interestingly, both Hamilton and Madison saw an important role for the federal government in the economy in order to counteract powerful economic interests within the United States itself with goals contrary to the common good. Hamilton identified the "trading interest," while Madison spoke of the "mercantile interest" as not having interests always in accordance with the good of the United States as a whole. That both agreed on the value of federal government involvement in the economy on this subject shows that their differences were not absolute, and it is simply too bad they could not see they had points on which they were in agreement.

Conclusion

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.” – H.P. Lovecraft²⁴⁸

As I conclude this dissertation I will focus on the overall implications for republicanism of the differing points of view Hamilton and Madison had. As I mentioned above, there is no one definitive definition of the word “republic,” and so what it means for the United States to be a republic has been a source of constant debate throughout its history. The differences Hamilton and Madison had will help highlight that debate, as both were pivotal figures in the early history of the United States, and their influence has continued to this day. This dissertation has expanded the comparison of Hamilton and Madison into new areas that have not been as fully explored before. As I stated before, this is my original contribution to the literature on Hamilton, Madison, Constitutional interpretation, and the early history of the United States republic.

In Chapter One, I reviewed the history of the idea of a republic, beginning with Polybius and continuing up until the time of Hamilton and Madison. My approach followed, for the most part, the presentation from J.G.A. Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment*. My approach differed slightly from his, though, in that I included some individual thinkers he does not.

In Chapter Two I compared Hamilton and Madison on the issue of slavery. Hamilton was a documented opponent of slavery since service in the Army

²⁴⁸ Lovecraft, H.P. “Supernatural Horror in Literature,” <http://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/essays/shil.aspx>, accessed November 1, 2015.

during the Revolution. He also was active in the New York Manumission society to the end of his life. Madison, on the other hand, while he disliked slavery, and even expressed a desire to have as little to do with it as possible, did not take any overt action to oppose slavery throughout his life. Only late in life did he offer a rather tepid support for the idea of resettling voluntarily freed slaves in Africa. Also, Hamilton did not display any bias towards blacks, considering them to be just as competent as whites. He did not express any reservations or fears regarding freed slaves living alongside other Americans. Madison, though, was convinced to the end of his life that blacks and whites could not live together successfully.

In Chapter Three I compared Hamilton and Madison on the issue of how the United States should position itself between the two major powers of the early period of American history, France and Great Britain. As I showed, Hamilton had a staunch focus on the well-being of the United States. He was concerned about the influence of both major powers, and the influence of Europe in general, rather than having a preference for one over the other. Madison, though, was more attached to republicanism, as he understood it, than to France. He supported connections with France as a way of counterbalancing the influence of Great Britain, but once France had left its experiment in republicanism behind for the rule of Napoleon, he treated France no differently than any other foreign country.

In Chapter Four I compared Hamilton and Madison on the issue of

Constitutional interpretation. Their differences of opinion existed even during the time they worked together on *The Federalist*, as Hamilton and Madison's opinions during that time showed sharply different expectations. Neither departed from the other in later years, because neither understood they had conflicting views all along. That they did not realize this only shows that they simply did not have an in-depth discussion of their expectations for the future of the United States.

In Chapter Five compared Hamilton and Madison on the issue of religion. Madison, as is well known, was an ardent defender of individual religious freedom throughout his adult life. He did not express any strong religious beliefs of his own at any point in his life. His focus was not on personal piety, but rather on freedom from religion. He even tried to have the protections from official religion in the United States Constitution extended to limit the state governments as well as the federal government during the time Congress was writing the Bill of Rights. Hamilton was similarly not given to religious expressions during most of his life, but he did show some religious reflections when young and still living in the Caribbean. However, as he aged, especially after leaving public office, he showed greater and greater interest in religion. He expressed his thoughts on Christianity in writing more and more during the late 1790s and early 1800s. Finally, as he lay dying, he wanted to receive Communion.

In Chapter Six I compared Hamilton and Madison on the issue of federal government involvement in the economy. Both showed their later preferences

before the Constitution was ratified, so again, neither genuinely departed from the other in later years. Hamilton showed his strong preference for government regulation of various aspects of the economy all along, and Madison, while favoring regulation in some ways, was nowhere near as eager to involve the federal, rather than state, government in economic matters.

Overall, the conflict between Hamilton and Madison is just one example of the difficulty in even defining the word “republic” precisely. I mentioned John Adams’ letter to Mercy Warren in my Introduction, and how many different types of governments have been described as republics over history, and so it is not really possible to clearly identify any one kind of government as “the” one and only way to think of what a republic should be like. The problem Adams identified has not changed in the years since, so what can we take away from the material I have presented here?

First it is important to understand that both Hamilton and Madison considered themselves republicans, and both were unalterably committed to the success of the United States as one, unified nation. Clearly, though, they had different ideas of what the United States would be like. I included the quote from H.P. Lovecraft at the beginning of this Conclusion, though, to begin to present my main contention as to what I think is the single most important implication for republicanism to take away from Hamilton and Madison’s disagreements.

Both Hamilton and Madison considered their expectations for the United

States as “the” one, correct and best vision for the United States. That they could not give each other the benefit of the doubt when their differences became apparent is, I argue, the result of the “fear of the unknown” Lovecraft cited. The United States was a very young country, that no one knew for sure whether or not it was going to succeed, and neither could accept the reality of anyone having a conflicting point of view of their own. Still to this day there is the completely unreasonable expectation among people of many different ideologies that theirs is the only possible way for the United States to survive and thrive. In that regard, sadly, nothing has changed since Hamilton and Madison.

The simple reality is, there have demonstrably been a wide variety of different visions for the United States over time, and with the single exception of the issue of slavery, the United States has managed to survive, and thrive enormously, for over two centuries, without any major internal conflict or bloodshed. This desire for unanimity is simply unreasonable, counter-productive, and unattainable. There are many different ways of thinking about what a republic should be, and many different ways a country can find to survive and thrive. The United States has not finished, if that is even possible, defining the meaning of a republic, at least in its own case. The political process, which again has worked in almost all eras of the history of the United States without major violence and bloodshed, is the only peaceful alternative, so why not simply continue to make use of that in order to “define the republic?”

Far too many look to the Founders for a coherent vision for the United

States. If nothing else, this dissertation will, I hope, help to dispel that misconception. So many want the Founders to have had a coherent understanding of, and vision for, the United States, as a group. They simply did not. However, the influence of the Founders is vast, though not in regards to their agreements. Rather, it is their disagreements that have proven to be of lasting influence, which for instance initially resulted in the first two political parties in the United States, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. The notion of having different political parties, to express and represent different underlying expectations for the United States, has not gone away, and why should it?

I entitled this dissertation "Defining the Republic" initially because each of Hamilton and Madison had, in his own way, a definition. Their definitions differed, though, as I have shown. Such disagreements are inevitable. Humans are simply not capable of unanimity. In order for any country to succeed, it must find ways to resolve those differences of opinion, at least for a period of time, in a peaceful manner. While not perfect, if indeed any such standard of perfection is possible, the political process is far preferable to violence and bloodshed. It is to the political process that I argue the United States needs to look to "define the republic," at least for any one moment in time.

Hamilton and Madison's fear of each other, though, is an example of the major impediment to meaningful resolution, for any period of time, of disagreements over what the republic of the United States should be like. If

people cannot recognize that disagreements do NOT mean the other person, or group, is going to destroy the country through the potential enactment of their policy preferences, conflicts like the Civil War are the only option left to provide a resolution. Fear simply cannot be allowed to govern the nation's political choices in all but a few circumstances.

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ABSTRACT**DEFINING THE REPUBLIC**

by

WILLIAM J. NICHOLS**May 2016****Advisor:** Dr. Jeffrey Grynviski**Major:** Political Science (Political Theory)**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

The “Great Divergence” between Alexander Hamilton and James Madison is one of the most well-known events in the early history of the United States. Together, Hamilton and Madison wrote most of *The Federalist*, and each was pivotal in securing the acceptance of the Constitution in their state ratifying conventions. That within just a few years of the establishment of the new form of government each had worked so hard to achieve, they became bitter political enemies, is an often remarked upon, but little studied event.

In this dissertation I compare Hamilton and Madison on several different topics, and show they all along had underlying differences of opinion as to what they expected the United States would eventually be like. That they “diverged” is not the result of a change by either individual after the Constitution was ratified, but rather the result of unspoken and unexplored assumptions each had long before they worked together on *The Federalist*.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was born and raised in Iowa. I attended the University of Iowa, where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. In the years since, I have earned a Master of Arts in Political Science at Marquette University, and an additional Master of Arts due to the time I was in the PhD program in Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I have been extremely fortunate the faculty of the Department of Political Science, and the Administration of Wayne State University, have allowed me to transfer to Wayne State in order to complete my PhD.