

QUELLING THE WHISKEY REBELLION: TAKING A STAND FOR OUR FUTURE

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GUIDING QUESTION:

To what extent was the U.S. government's handling of the Whiskey Rebellion justified?

OVERVIEW

Using letters, historical drawings, and presidential proclamations, students will determine the process by which the federal government ended the Whiskey Rebellion. After reviewing a drawing of the *Famous whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania*, students will read excerpts of letters and proclamations from President George Washington, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Students will discuss which course of action recommended by the letters best suited the national government and its goal to create a stronger union in perpetuity.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Assess the motivations for the Whiskey Rebellion; and
- > Develop and defend an argument about the federal government's handling of the Whiskey Rebellion.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- > D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.
- > D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Albert Gallatin, Petition Against Excise, 1792 (excerpt)
Henry James, Editor, *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, Volume 1
HathiTrust Digital Library
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t0bv79v03&view=1up&seq=22>

Letter, Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, September 1, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693; Reel 032)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw2.032/>

Letter, Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, September 11, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693; Reel 102)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw437655/>

Letter, George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, September 7, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693; Reel 032)
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw2.032/?sp=319>

Letter, George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, September 15, 1792
Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0055>

Letter, Thomas Jefferson to George Washinton, September 9, 1792 (excerpt)
Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (Reel: 016)
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib006451>

Letter, Thomas Jefferson to George Washintgon, September 18, 1792
Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (Reel: 016)
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib006465>

Print, *Famous whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania*, 1794
Library of Congress (2002697745)
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697745/>

Proclamation, George Washington, September 15, 1792
The Papers of George Washington, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0058>

Proclamation, George Washington, September 25, 1794
The Avalon Project, Yale University
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/gwproc10.asp

Second Congress, "An Act for raising a farther sum of money for the protection of the frontiers, and for other purposes therein mentioned," Session 1, Chapter 27, May 2, 1792
Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/2nd-congress/session-1/c2s1ch27.pdf>

TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- > Whiskey Rebellion Background Information
- > Jefferson and Hamilton Comparison Chart
- > Government Action Packet A
- > Government Action Packet B

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Organize students into groups of four.
- > Make copies of Government Action Packet A for half the students and Government Action Packet B for the other half.
- > Print one copy of the Whiskey Rebellion Background Information sheet for teacher use.
- > Project the Jefferson and Hamilton Comparison Chart and the *Famous whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania* print in the front of the room.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE (30 MINUTES)

- > Project the *Famous whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania* print. Ask students to examine the print in quadrants to observe all the details and share what they see with their group members. Ask students to generate a list of questions they have about the image.
- > Read the Whiskey Rebellion Background Information and project the Jefferson and Hamilton Comparison Chart. Review the major points with students.
- > Return to analyze the print:
 - » *What groups are depicted in the print? What clues help you identify them? What are they doing in the print? Describe their actions.*
 - » *Can you see any words or text in the print? What does the text say? Why is it important?*
 - » *What do we know about the events surrounding the Whiskey Rebellion? Given what we know about the United States, why might a tax on liquor have been upsetting to Pennsylvanians?*
 - » *Who has the power to intervene when tensions escalate in political and economic matters in the United States?*
- > Explain that the Whiskey Rebellion was the first challenge to the new United States government after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Constitution replaced the much weaker Articles of Confederation.
- > Ask the students to select whether they support Hamilton or Jefferson's political philosophy. Require them to support their point of view with historical evidence.
- > Discuss the questions generated by the students while reviewing the print and other materials.

CONNECTIONS

Federalism—the division of power between the federal and state governments—is a key theme of American history. This book contains several lessons that consider this dynamic as it applies to land ownership rights for minority groups, school desegregation, and the federal amendment process. This struggle has been a key factor in establishing a more perfect union.

ACTIVITY TWO (30 MINUTES)

- › Remind students that both Jefferson and Hamilton served in President George Washington's cabinet. Explain that these issues came to light as the administration looked for ways to pay off the assumed state Revolutionary War debts when Congress passed an excise tax on distilled spirits (alcohol, like whiskey, which was made from grain).
- › Organize students into groups of four students each. Distribute Government Action Packet A to half of the groups and Government Action Packet B to the other half.
- › Direct students to analyze the six documents in their packet and complete the chart on the cover.
- › Encourage groups to re-examine questions they developed in activity one. Which ones have been answered?
- › Encourage groups to apply their new knowledge and research open questions.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- › Conduct a class discussion asking the students to answer the guiding question: *To what extent was the federal government's handling of the Whiskey Rebellion justified?*
- › Conduct a class discussion focusing the guiding question while asking the students to argue for the opposite action they would have supported at the time.
- › Write a response to one of the letters in the Government Action Packet from the perspective of another Founding Father, a Pennsylvania farmer, or an American from another state at the time.

STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING THE FOLLOWING FOR AN NHD PROJECT

- › *The Federalist Papers*
- › The Washington Papers
- › Washington's Farewell Address/Two-Party System
- › The Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to:

WWW.NHD.ORG/250

WHISKEY REBELLION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1791, the United States was a brand new nation. The federal government recently enacted their new constitution. The Whiskey Rebellion marked the first major challenge to the new federal government. President George Washington faced protests from the American people and feuds among his cabinet members.

Alexander Hamilton served as Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton desired a strong central government backed by a solid financial foundation. He proposed that the nation assume (take on) debts incurred by states during the American Revolution, and tax the American people to pay those debts. Hamilton felt the country needed solid credit to continue to grow.

Not everyone agreed with Hamilton's plan. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Speaker of the House of Representatives James Madison vehemently opposed this plan. Both Jefferson and Madison felt the tax gave too much control to the federal government and favored the wealthy over farmers.¹ Even President Washington hesitated to accept Hamilton's ideas.²

The U.S. Congress passed the Tariff of 1792, which placed a tax on spirits, or liquor, produced in the United States. When news of the tax hit western Pennsylvania, residents protested the tax and refused to pay it. The tax specifically targeted farmers who produced crops, like corn, rye, and grain, which in turn, are distilled to produce whiskey. Already struggling financially, the farmers felt the weight of the tax rested on them and feared it would drive them to financial ruin.

Washington attempted to peacefully resolve the issue, but the farmers demanded the repeal of the tax. Washington issued a proclamation in September 1792. Hamilton demanded federal intervention to collect the tax and end the riots. Jefferson urged the president to rethink the tax and its effects on the new nation. Washington often found himself in the middle of the ongoing feud between Hamilton and Jefferson. By December 1793, Jefferson resigned from his position, believing Washington sided with Hamilton too often. Washington and Hamilton continued to deal with the protests in western Pennsylvania.

In 1794, the protests against the tax turned violent. Protesters set fire to the home of John Neville, a local tax collector. Washington sent in the militia to end the rioting. They rounded up 150 men who were tried for treason, but evidence and lack of witnesses meant few were prosecuted for their part in the rioting. John Mitchell and Philip Weigel, found guilty of treason, were later pardoned by Washington.

¹ Jefferson and Madison finally agreed to support the taxes after Hamilton agreed to set the location of the nation's capital along the Potomac River. The capital moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

² Washington supported the bill only after he spoke with representatives in the states and heard their opinion on the tax.

WHISKEY REBELLION BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CON'T)

The Whiskey Rebellion marked the first time the U.S. Constitution and the federal government were tested. The events proved that the federal government did have the ability and the power to keep order. Jefferson and others felt that government intervention and military force set a dangerous precedent.³ Hamilton helped to end the rebellion and in 1795 resigned his cabinet post. The whiskey tax remained in effect, though, it proved to be extremely hard to collect from farmers.

Jefferson became the third President of the United States in 1800. Under his tenure, Congress repealed the tax on whiskey.

This piece is adapted from:

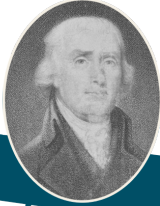
Kotowski, Peter. "Whiskey Rebellion." George Washington's Mount Vernon. Accessed July 31, 2020. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/whiskey-rebellion/>.

O'Keefe, Kieran J. "Alexander Hamilton." George Washington's Mount Vernon. Accessed July 31, 2020. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/alexander-hamilton/>.

Stockwell, Mary. "Thomas Jefferson." George Washington's Mount Vernon. Accessed July 31, 2020. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/thomas-jefferson/>.

³ Hamilton supported Thomas Jefferson in the Election of 1800 against Aaron Burr. His support ended the deadlock and elected Jefferson to the presidency. Burr went on to challenge Hamilton to a duel over allegations of slander. Hamilton died as a result of his injuries on July 12, 1804.

JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON COMPARISON CHART

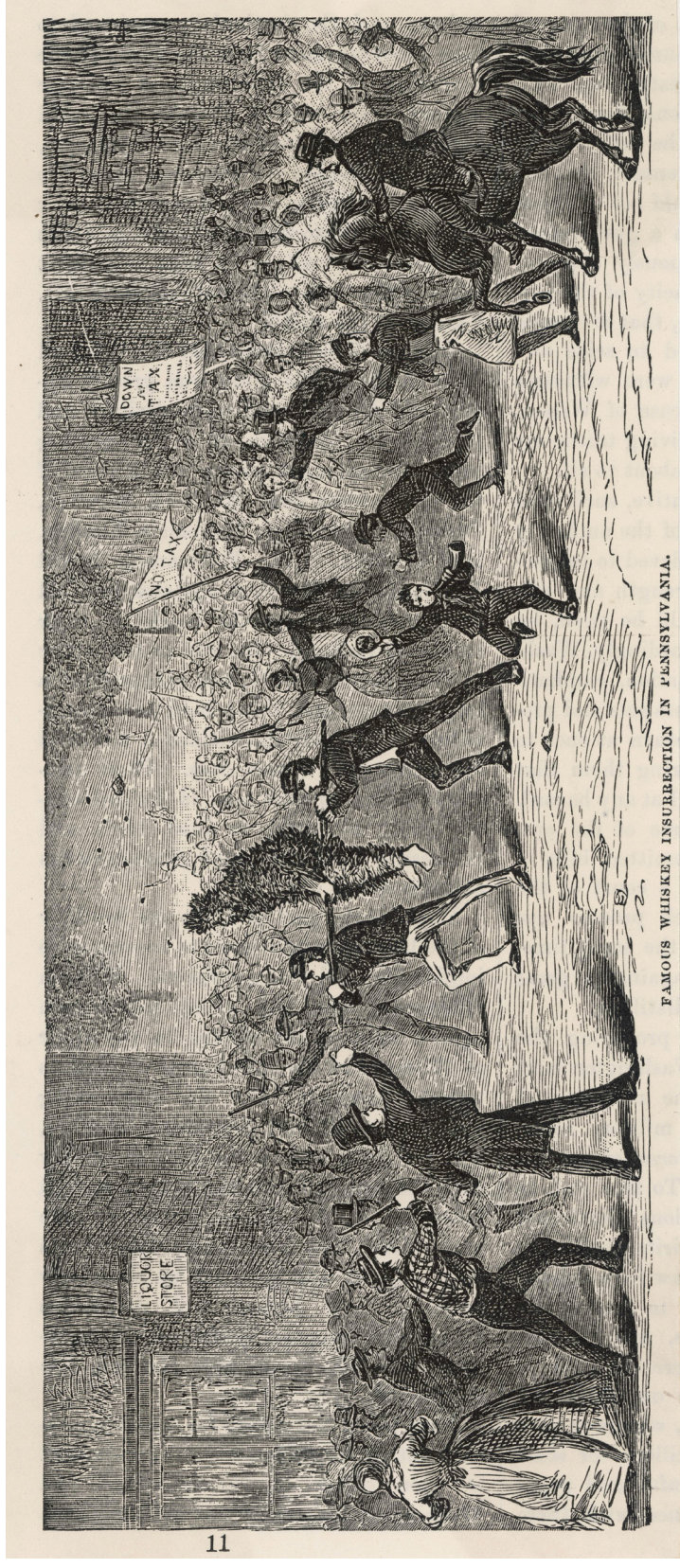
 JEFFERSON		VERSUS		 HAMILTON	
Democratic-Republicans (also known as the Jeffersonian Republicans)		Party		Federalists	
Secretary of State responsible for foreign affairs		Cabinet Position		Secretary of the Treasury responsible for collecting taxes and paying the nation's debts	
Tyranny a monarchy, where one person holds most or all of the power		Concerns		Anarchy and Mob Rule no respect for the laws of the land	
Strict Construction The U.S. Constitution set out the limits of what the government can do. If it is not written, you cannot do it.		Constitution		Loose Construction The U.S. Constitution is a guide for what to do, but is open to interpretation	
States' Rights The states joined the Union, but should still make decisions to benefit themselves.		Who should govern?		Strong Central Government The Articles of Confederation proved that a strong central government was necessary.	
Farmers		Supporters		Businessmen	
No. Laissez-faire economy—let the people do as they choose. Each state needs to pay its own war debt—there is no need to have other states pay for their actions.		Should the government interfere in the economy?		Yes. The young nation needs help to build industry. High tariffs, government subsidies, and infrastructure will build our industrial base. We should assume state war debt to establish credit and put us on the path to economic success.	
Absolutely Not! This goes against the idea of a laissez-faire economy.		Should there be a National Bank?		Yes! It will stabilize our credit and improve U.S. finances.	
Yes		Trusted by George Washington?		Yes	

Thomas Jefferson, c.1796. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (2004669139).

Alexander Hamilton, c.1896. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (2003667031).

FAMOUS WHISKEY INSURRECTION IN PENNSYLVANIA

Print, *Famous whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania*, 1794
Library of Congress (2002697745)
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697745/>



GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A ORGANIZER

Using the six sources that follow, complete this chart to analyze the various points of view about the Whiskey Rebellion.

Source:						
Author:						
Date:						
Audience:						
What is the main argument?						
What evidence supports this argument?						
What does this source help us understand about the Whiskey Rebellion?						

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A

Albert Gallatin, Petition Against Excise, 1792 (excerpt)
Henry James, Editor, *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, Volume 1
HathiTrust Digital Library
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t0bv79v03&view=1up&seq=22>

To the Honorable the Speaker and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

The Petition of the subscribers, inhabitants of the western counties of Pennsylvania, most respectfully sheweth:

That your Petitioners have been greatly alarmed by a law of Congress which imposes a duty on spirituous liquors distilled from produce of the United States. To us that act appears unequal in its operation and immoral in its effects. Unequal in its operation, as a duty laid on the common drink of a nation, instead of taxing the citizens in proportion to their property, falls as heavy on the poorest class as on the rich; immoral in its effect, because the amount of the duty chiefly resting on the oath of the payer, offers, at the expense of the honest part of the community, a premium to perjury and fraud.

Your Petitioners also consider this law as dangerous to liberty; because the powers necessarily vested in the officers for the collection of so odious a revenue are not only unusual, but incompatible with the free enjoyment of domestic peace and private property; because these powers, to prevent evasions of the duty, must pursue the endless subtleties of the human mind, and be almost infinitely increased; and because we are apprehensive that this excise will by degrees be extended to other articles of consumption, until everything we eat, drink, or wear be, as in England and other European countries, subjected to heavy duties and the obnoxious inspection of an host of officers.

Destitute of information of the real deficiencies of the revenues of the United States, of the proportion which the probable proceeds of the excise bear to them, and doubtful whether those deficiencies could not have been supplied by other resources sufficiently productive and less obnoxious and oppressive, we want those motives which alone can reconcile us to the collection of a duty so odious in its nature and dangerous in its tendency.

Our peculiar situation renders this duty still more unequal and oppressive to us. Distant from a permanent market, and separate from the eastern coast by mountains which render the communication difficult and almost impracticable, we have no means of bringing the produce of our lands to sale either in grain or in meal. We are therefore distillers through necessity, not choice, that we may comprehend the greatest value in the smallest size and weight.

The inhabitants of the eastern side of the mountains can dispose of their grain without the additional labor of distillation at a higher price than we can, after we have bestowed that labor upon it. Yet with this additional labor we must also pay a high duty from which they are exempted, because we have no means of selling our surplus produce but in a distilled state.

Another circumstance which renders this duty ruinous to us is our scarcity of cash. Our commerce is not, as on the eastern coast, carried on so much by absolute sale as by barter, and we believe it to be a fact that there is not among us a quantity of circulating cash sufficient for the payment of this duty alone.

We are not accustomed to complain without reason; we have punctually and cheerfully paid former taxes on our estates and possessions, because they were proportioned to our real wealth. We believe this to be founded on no such equitable principles, and are persuaded that your Honorable House will find on investigation that its amount, if duly collected, will be four times as large as any taxes which we have hitherto paid on the whole of our lands and other property.

Submitting these considerations to your honorable body, we respectfully apply for a total repeal of the law, or for such modifications thereof as would render its principles more congenial to the nature of a free government, and its operation upon us less unequal and oppressive. And as in duty bound shall forever pray, &c

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A (CON'T)

Letter, Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, September 1, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693: Reel 032)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw2.032/>

Transcription provided by *Founders Online*, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0030>

Treasury Departmt 1st Sepr 1792.

Sir,

I have the honor to inclose [*sic*] sundry papers which have been handed to me by the Commissioner of the Revenue, respecting the state of the Excise Law in the western survey of the District of Pennsylvania.

Such persevering and violent opposition to the Law gives the business a still more serious aspect than it has hitherto worn, and seems to call for vigorous & decisive measures on the part of the Government.

I have directed that the Supervisor of the District shall repair forthwith to the Survey in question, to ascertain in person the true state of the Survey; to collect evidence respecting the violences that have been committed in order to a prosecution of the Offenders; to ascertain particulars as to the Meeting which appears to have been holden at Pittsburgh; to encourage the perseverance of the officers; giving expectations as far as it can be done with propriety, of indemnification from the Government, for any losses which they may sustain in consequence of their Offices; to endeavour to prevail upon the Inhabitants of the County of Alleghany, who appear at present the least refractory, to come into an acquiescence with the Law; representing to discreet persons the impossibility of the Governments remaining longer a passive spectator of the contempt of it's Laws.

I shall also immediately submit to the Attorney General for his opinion, whether an indictable offence has not been committed by the persons who were assembled at Pittsburgh, and of what nature, the paper which contains their proceedings; with a view, if judged expedient by you, that it may be brought under the notice of the Circuit Court, which I understand is to be holden in October at York Town [*sic*].

My present clear conviction is, that it is indispensable, if competent evidence can be obtained, to exert the full force of the Law against the Offenders, with every circumstance that can manifest the determination of the Government to enforce it's execution; & if the processes of the Courts are resisted, as is rather to be expected, to employ those means, which in the last resort are put in the power of the Executive. If this is not done, the spirit of disobedience will naturally extend and the authority of the Government will be prostrate. Moderation enough has been shewn: 'tis time to assume a different tone. The well disposed part of the community will begin to think the Executive wanting in decision and vigour. I submit these impressions to your consideration previous to any step which will involve the necessity of ulterior proceedings; and shall hope as speedily as possible to receive your instructions.

The Secretary at War will be requested to direct Captain Faulkner's attendance at this place. With the highest respect and truest attachment I have the honor to be &c.

Alexander Hamilton

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A

Letter, George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, September 7, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693: Reel 032)
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw2.032/?sp=319>

Transcription provided by *Founders Online*, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0040>

Mount Vernon 7th Sept^r 1792.

Sir,

The last Post brought me your letter of the first instant, with the enclosures respecting the disorderly conduct of the Inhabitants of the Western Survey of the District of Pennsylvania, in opposing the execution of what is called the Excise Law; & of the insults which have been offered by some of them to the Officers who have been appointed to collect the duties on distilled spirits agreeably thereto.

Such conduct in any of the Citizens of the United States, under any circumstances that can well be conceived, would be exceedingly reprehensible; but when it comes from a part of the community for whose protection the money arising from the Tax was principally designed, it is truly unaccountable, and the spirit of it much to be regretted.

The preliminary steps taken by you in ordering the Supervisor of the District to repair to the Survey where these disorders prevail, with a view to ascertain in person, “the true state of the Survey; to collect evidence respecting the violences that have been committed, in order to a prosecution of the Offenders; to ascertain the particulars as to the Meeting which appears to have been held at Pittsburg; to encourage the perseverance of the officers in their duty, & the well disposed inhabitants in discountenancing such violent proceedings &c. &c.”—are prudent & proper, and I earnestly wish they may have the desired effect. But if, notwithstanding, opposition is still given to the due execution of the Law, I have no hesitation in declaring, if the evidence of it is clear & unequivocal, that I shall, however reluctantly I exercise them, exert all the legal powers with which the Executive is invested, to check so daring & unwarrantable a spirit. It is my duty to see the Laws executed: to permit them to be trampled upon with impunity would be repugnant to it; nor can the Government longer remain a passive spectator of the contempt with which they are treated. Forbearance, under a hope that the Inhabitants of that Survey would recover from the delirium & folly into which they were plunged, seems to have had no other effect than to encrease [*sic*] the disorder.

If it shall be the Attorney General’s opinion, under a full consideration of the case (adverting, as I presume he will as well to the Laws & Constitution of Pennsylvania, as to those of the United States) that the Meeting which appears to have been held at Pittsburg was illegal, and the members of it indictable; and it shall further appear to you from such information as you may be able to obtain, from a comparative view of all circumstances that it would be proper to bring the matter before the Circuit Court to be holden at York town in October next, you have all the sanction and authority I can give to do it. I am Sir, &c.

G: Washington

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A (CON'T)

Letter, Thomas Jefferson to George Washinton, September 9, 1792 (excerpt)
Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (Reel: 016)
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib006451>

Transcription provided by *Founders Online*, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-24-02-0330>

Monticello Sep. 9. 1792.
DEAR SIR

I received on the 2d. inst the letter of Aug. 23. which you did me the honor to write me; but the immediate return of our post, contrary to his custom, prevented my answer by that occasion. The proceedings of Spain mentioned in your letter are really of a complexion to excite uneasiness, and a suspicion that their friendly overtures about the Missisipi [*sic*] have been merely to lull us while they should be strengthening their holds on that river. Mr. Carmichael's silence has been long my astonishment: and however it might have justified something very different from a new appointment, yet the public interest certainly called for his junction with Mr. Short as it is impossible but that his knolege [*sic*] of the ground of negotiation of persons and characters, must be useful and even necessary to the success of the mission. That Spain and Gr. Britain may understand one another on our frontiers is very possible; for however opposite their interests or dispositions may be in the affairs of Europe, yet while these do not call them into opposite action, they may concur as against us. I consider their keeping an agent in the Indian country as a circumstance which requires serious interference on our part: and I submit to your decision whether it does not furnish a proper occasion to us to send an additional instruction to Messrs. Carmichael and Short to insist on a mutual and formal stipulation to forbear employing agents or pensioning any persons within each others limits: and, if this be refused, to propose the contrary stipulation, to wit, that each party may freely keep agents within the Indian territories of the other, in which case we might soon sicken them of the license.

I now take the liberty of proceeding to that part of your letter wherein you notice the internal dissensions which have taken place within our government, and their disagreeable effect on it's movements. That such dissensions have taken place is certain, and even among those who are nearest to you in the administration. To no one have they given deeper concern than myself; to no one equal mortification at being myself a part of them. Tho' I take to myself no more than my share of the general observations of your letter, yet I am so desirous ever that you should know the whole truth, and believe no more than the truth, that I am glad to seize every occasion of developing to you whatever I do or think relative to the government; and shall therefore ask permission to be more lengthy now than the occasion particularly calls for, or would otherwise perhaps justify.

[W]hen I embarked in the government, it was with a determination to intermeddle not at all with the legislature, and as little as possible with my co-departments. The first and only instance of variance from the former part of my resolution, I was duped into by the Secretary of the treasury, and made a tool for forwarding his schemes, not then sufficiently understood by me; and of all the errors of my political life, this has occasioned me the deepest regret. It has ever been my purpose to explain this to you, when, from being actors on the scene, we shall have become uninterested spectators only. The second part of my resolution has been religiously observed with the war department; and as to that of the Treasury, has never been farther swerved from, than by the mere enunciation of my sentiments in conversation, and chiefly among those who, expressing the same sentiments, drew mine from me. If it has been supposed that I have ever intrigued among the members of the legislature to defeat the plans of the Secretary of the Treasury, it is contrary to all truth. As I never had the desire to influence the members, so neither had I any other means than my friendships, which I valued too highly to risk by usurpations on their freedom of judgment, and the conscientious pursuit of their own sense of duty. That I have utterly, in my private conversations, disapproved of the system of the Secretary of the treasury, I acknolege [*sic*] and avow: and this was not merely a speculative difference. His system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the republic, by creating an influence of his department over the members of the legislature. I saw this influence actually produced, and it's first fruits to be the establishment of the great outlines of his project by the votes of the very persons who, having swallowed his bait were laying themselves out to profit by his plans: and that had these persons withdrawn, as those interested in a question ever should, the vote of the disinterested majority was clearly the reverse of what they made it. These were no longer the votes then of the representatives of the people, but of deserters from the rights and interests of the people: and it was impossible to consider their decisions, which had nothing in view but to enrich themselves, as the measures of the fair majority, which ought always to be respected...

Th: Jefferson

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A

George Washington, Proclamation, September 15, 1792
The Papers of George Washington, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0058>

By the President [*sic*] of the United States. A Proclamation.

Whereas certain violent and unwarrantable proceedings have lately taken place, tending to obstruct the operation of the laws of the United States for raising a revenue upon Spirits distilled within the same, enacted pursuant to express authority delegated in the Constitution of the United States; which proceedings are subversive of good order, contrary to the duty that every Citizen owes to his Country and to the laws, and of a nature dangerous to the very being of Government: And whereas such proceedings are the more unwarrantable, by reason of the moderation which has been heretofore shewn on the part of the Government, and of the disposition which has been manifested by the Legislature (who alone have authority to suspend the operation of laws) to obviate causes of objection, and to render the laws as acceptable as possible. and whereas it is the particular duty of the Executive “to take care that the laws be faithfully executed,” and not only that duty, but the permanent interests and happiness of the people require, that every legal and necessary step should be pursued as well to prevent such violent and unwarrantable proceedings, as to bring to justice the infractors of the laws and secure obedience thereto.

Now therefore I George Washington, President of the United States, do by these presents most earnestly admonish and exhort all persons whom it may concern, to refrain and desist from all unlawful combinations and proceedings whatsoever, having for object or tending to obstruct the operation of the laws aforesaid; inasmuch as all lawful ways and means will be strictly put in execution, for bringing to justice the infractors thereof and securing obedience thereto.

And I do moreover charge and require all Courts, Magistrates and Officers whom it may concern, according to the duties of their several Offices, to exert the powers in them respectively vested by law for the purposes aforesaid, hereby also enjoining and requiring all persons whomsoever, as they tender the welfare of their Country, the just and due authority of Government and the preservation of the public peace, to be aiding and assisting therein, according to law.

In Testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done this fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, and of the independence of the United States the seventeenth.

Geo. Washington

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET A

Proclamation, George Washington, September 25, 1794
The Avalon Project, Yale University
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/gwproc10.asp

[From Annals of Congress, Third Congress, 1413.]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas from a hope that the combinations against the Constitution and laws of the United States in certain of the western counties of Pennsylvania would yield to time and reflection I thought it sufficient in the first instance rather to take measures for calling forth the militia than immediately to embody them, but the moment is now come when the overtures of forgiveness, with no other condition than a submission to law, have been only partially accepted; when every form of conciliation not inconsistent with the being of Government has been adopted without effect; when the well-disposed in those counties are unable by their influence and example to reclaim the wicked from their fury, and are compelled to associate in their own defense; when the proffered lenity has been perversely misinterpreted into an apprehension that the citizens will march with reluctance; when the opportunity of examining the serious consequences of a treasonable opposition has been employed in propagating principles of anarchy, endeavoring through emissaries to alienate the friends of order from its support, and inviting its enemies to perpetrate similar acts of insurrection; when it is manifest that violence would continue to be exercised upon every attempt to enforce the laws; when, therefore, Government is set at defiance, the contest being whether a small portion of the United States shall dictate to the whole Union, and, at the expense of those who desire peace, indulge a desperate ambition:

Now, therefore, I, George Washington, President of the United States, in obedience to that high and irresistible duty consigned to me by the Constitution “ to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, ” deploring that the American name should be sullied by the outrages of citizens on their own Government, commiserating such as remain obstinate from delusion, but resolved, in perfect reliance on that gracious Providence which so signally displays its goodness towards this country, to reduce the refractory to a due subordination to the law, do hereby declare and make known that, with a satisfaction which can be equaled only by the merits of the militia summoned into service from the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, I have received intelligence of their patriotic alacrity in obeying the call of the present, though painful, yet commanding necessity; that a force which, according to every reasonable expectation, is adequate to the exigency is already in motion to the scene of disaffection; that those who have confided or shall confide in the protection of Government shall meet full succor under the standard and from the arms of the United States; that those who, having offended against the laws, have since entitled themselves to indemnity will be treated with the most liberal good faith if they shall not have forfeited their claim by any subsequent conduct, and that instructions are given accordingly.

And I do moreover exhort all individuals, officers, and bodies of men to contemplate with abhorrence the measures leading directly or indirectly to those crimes which produce this resort to military coercion; to check in their respective spheres the efforts of misguided or designing men to substitute their misrepresentation in the place of truth and their discontents in the place of stable government, and to call to mind that, as the people of the United States have been permitted, under the Divine favor, in perfect freedom, after solemn deliberation, and in an enlightened age, to elect their own government, so will their gratitude for this inestimable blessing be best distinguished by firm exertions to maintain the Constitution and the laws.

And, lastly, I again warn all persons whomsoever and wheresoever not to abet, aid, or comfort the insurgents aforesaid, as they will answer the contrary at their peril; and I do also require all officers and other citizens, according to their several duties, as far as may be in their power, to bring under the cognizance of the laws all offenders in the premises. In testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done at the city of Philadelphia, the 25th day of September, 1794, and of the Independence of the United States of America the nineteenth.

G° WASHINGTON.

By the President:
EDM: RANDOLPH.

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B ORGANIZER

Using the six sources that follow, complete this chart to analyze the various points of view about the Whiskey Rebellion.

Source:						
Author:						
Date:						
Audience:						
What is the main argument?						
What evidence supports this argument?						
What does this source help us understand about the Whiskey Rebellion?						

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B

Second Congress, "An Act for raising a farther sum of money for the protection of the frontiers, and for other purposes therein mentioned," Session 1, Chapter 27, May 2, 1792

Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/2nd-congress/session-1/c2s1ch27.pdf>

Chap. XXVII.—An Act fur raising a farther sum of money for the protection of the frontiers, and for other purposes therein mentioned.

Section 1. Be it enacted, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the last day of June next, the duties now in force upon the articles herein after enumerated and described, at their importation into the United States, shall cease, and that in lieu thereof, there shall be thenceforth laid, levied and collected upon the said articles, at their said importation, the several and respective rates or duties following, viz:

Spirits, distilled wholly or chiefly from grain : of the first class of proof, per gallon, twenty-eight cents; of the second class of proof, per gallon, twenty-nine cents; of the third class of proof, per gallon, thirtyone cents; of the fourth class of proof, per gallon, thirty-four cents; of the fifth class of proof, per gallon, forty cents; of the sixth class of proof, per gallon, fifty cents.

Sec. 15. *And be it further enacted*, That the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, out of the surplus of the duties, which accrued to the end of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, and a farther sum of five hundred and twenty-three thousand five hundred dollars, out of the surplus of the duties hereby established as the same shall accrue, making together the sum of six hundred and seventy-three thousand five hundred dollars, shall be, and are hereby appropriated and applied, in addition to any former appropriation for the military establishment of the United States, towards carrying into execution the act, intituled "An act for making farther and more effectual provision for the protection of the frontiers of the United States.

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B (CON'T)

Letter, Alexander Hamilton to George Washinton, September 11, 1792
George Washington Papers, Library of Congress (MSS 44693: Reel 102)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw437655/>

Transcription provided by *Founders Online*, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-12-02-0275>

Philadelphia Sepr. 11. 1792

Sir

Herewith is an official letter submitting the draft of a Proclamation. I reserve some observations as most proper for a private letter.

In the case of a former proclamation I observe it was under the seal of the UStates and countersigned by the Secretary of State. If the precedent was now to be formed I should express a doubt whether it was such an instrument as ought to be under the seal of the UStates; and I believe usage as well in this Country under the state Governments as in Great Britain would be found against it; but the practice having been begun, there are many reasons which in this instance recommend an adherence to it and the form of the attestation is adapted to this idea.

But still if the Secretary of State should be at so great a distance or if an uncertainty of his being in the way should involve the probability of considerable delay it will be well to consider if the precedent [*sic*] ought not to be departed from. In this case the Attestation would require to be varied so as to omit from the words "In testimony" to the words "my hand" inclusively and to substitute the word "*Given*" to "*Done*" and it may be adviseable [*sic*] to direct the Atty General to countersign it.

Every day's delay will render the Act less impressive & defeat a part of its object.

The propriety of issuing the proclamation depends of course upon a resolution to act in conformity to it and put in force all the *powers* and *means* with which the Executive is possessed as occasion shall require. My own mind is made up fully to this issue and on this my suggestion of the measure is founded. Your letter by the last Post, confirming former intimations, assures me that you view the matter in the same light.

The words in the Proclamation "dictated by weighty reasons of public exigency and policy" are not essential to the general scope of it. They amount to an *additional commitment* of the President on the question of the merits of the law and will require to be well considered.

That the Proclamation both as to *manner* and *matter* will be criticised cannot be matter of surprise, if it should happen, to any one who is aware of the lengths to which a certain party is prepared to go. It ought to be anticipated as probable.

In a step so delicate & so full of responsibility, I thought it my duty to make these observations; though I was sure they would of themselves occur.

It is satisfactory to know that a Jury in Chester County in this state convicted a person who was guilty of assaulting an Officer of Inspection. On being interrogated they answered that they had found him guilty upon the Count in the Indictment which charged him with assaulting the Officer in the execution of his duty—that the law was a constitutional act of Government and was not to be resisted by violence. I have directed Mr. Cox to collect & publish the particulars. The symptom is a good one.

With the most faithful & affectionate attachment. I have the honor to remain Sir Yr. Obed & hum serv

A Hamilton

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B (CON'T)

Letter, George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, September 15, 1792
Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0055>

Mount Vernon Sept. 15th. 1792

Dear Sir

This letter goes Express, to obtain the signature of the Secretary of State to the enclosed Proclamation. The reasons for sending it in this manner, are, to avoid the circuitous rout by Richmond, and the delay it might meet with by the Post, not having reached my hands until this morning, too late for the Mail of this day—nor in time for any other before Tuesday next—and because it is unknown to me, when one will set out from Richmond for Charlottesville.

If good is to result from the Proclamation, no time is to be lost in issueing [*sic*] of it; as the opposition, to what is called the Excise Law, in the Western Survey of the District of Pennsylvania, is become too open, violent and serious to be longer winked at by Government, with out prostrating it's [*sic*] authority, and involving the Executive in censurable inattention to the outrages which are threatened.

I have no doubt but that the measure I am about to take, will be severely criticised; but I shall disregard any animadversions upon my conduct when I am called upon by the nature of my office, to discharge what I conceive to be a duty—and none, in my opinion, is more important, than to carry the Laws of the United States into effect.

The Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of War and the Attorney General, concur in the expediency of the Proclamation; as forbearance seems to have produced no other effect than to spread the evil.

I have *scored* a few words, which possibly may as well be omitted; and if, upon an attentive perusal of the draught, others should appear which you think might as well be expunged or altered; mark them in *like* manner with a pencil, and I will give due consideration thereto.

Your note of the 27th. ulto. with the enclosures to Mr. Tayler, were forwarded in the manner you desired, by the first Post after they came to my hands. With sincere & affectionate regard, I am Dear Sir, Your very hble Servt.

Go: Washington

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B (CON'T)

Proclamation, George Washington, September 15, 1792
The Papers of George Washington, National Archives and Records Administration
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0058>

[15 September 1792]

By the President of the United States. A Proclamation.

Whereas certain violent and unwarrantable proceedings have lately taken place, tending to obstruct the operation of the laws of the United States for raising a revenue upon Spirits distilled within the same, enacted pursuant to express authority delegated in the Constitution of the United States; which proceedings are subversive of good order, contrary to the duty that every Citizen owes to his Country and to the laws, and of a nature dangerous to the very being of Government: And whereas such proceedings are the more unwarrantable, by reason of the moderation which has been heretofore shewn on the part of the Government, and of the disposition which has been manifested by the Legislature (who alone have authority to suspend the operation of laws) to obviate causes of objection, and to render the laws as acceptable as possible. and whereas it is the particular duty of the Executive “to take care that the laws be faithfully executed,” and not only that duty, but the permanent interests and happiness of the people require, that every legal and necessary step should be pursued as well to prevent such violent and unwarrantable proceedings, as to bring to justice the infractors of the laws and secure obedience thereto.

Now therefore I George Washington, President of the United States, do by these presents most earnestly admonish and exhort all persons whom it may concern, to refrain and desist from all unlawful combinations and proceedings whatsoever, having for object or tending to obstruct the operation of the laws aforesaid; inasmuch as all lawful ways and means will be strictly put in execution, for bringing to justice the infractors thereof and securing obedience thereto.

And I do moreover charge and require all Courts, Magistrates and Officers whom it may concern, according to the duties of their several Offices, to exert the powers in them respectively vested by law for the purposes aforesaid, hereby also enjoining and requiring all persons whomsoever, as they tender the welfare of their Country, the just and due authority of Government and the preservation of the public peace, to be aiding and assisting therein, according to law.

In Testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done this fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, and of the independence of the United States the seventeenth.

Geo. Washington
By the President

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B (CON'T)

Letter, Thomas Jefferson to George Washintgon, September 18, 1792

Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress (Reel: 016)

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib006465>

Transcription provided by *Founders Online*, National Archives and Records Administration

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0058>

Monticello Sep. 18. 1792. 2. oclock P.M.

Dear Sir

Your express is this moment arrived with the Proclamation on the proceedings against the laws for raising a revenue on distilled spirits, and I return it herein inclosed [*sic*] with my signature. I think if instead of the words 'to render laws dictated by weighty reasons of public exigency and policy as acceptable as possible' it stood 'to render the laws as acceptable as possible' it would be better. I see no other particular expressions which need alteration. I am sincerely sorry to learn that such proceedings have taken place: and I hope the proclamation will lead the persons concerned into a regular line of application which may end either in an amendment of the law, if it needs it, or in their conviction that it is right. If the situation of my daughter (who is in the straw) admits it, I purpose to set out about a week hence, and shall have the honour of taking your commands for Philadelphia. I have now that of being with great & sincere respect & attachment, Dr. Sir Your most obedt. & most humble servt.

Th: Jefferson

P.S. The express is detained but about twenty minutes.

GOVERNMENT ACTION PACKET B (CON'T)

Proclamation, George Washington, September 25, 1794
The Avalon Project, Yale University
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/gwproc10.asp

[From Annals of Congress, Third Congress, 1413.]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

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By the President:
EDM: RANDOLPH.



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