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The Newburgh Conspiracy

OVERVIEW:

George Washington was twice in the unique position of being able to destroy the Revolution single-handedly. The second time was when he refused a third (and subsequent) term to insure he would not die in office and make it a life-time position by tradition. The first took place at Newburgh, New York, and confirmed Washington's image as a modern Cincinnatus, refusing to have fought just to give America another King George. Yet this is usually overlooked in the standard textbooks or in schools. If idle hands are the Devil's playground, the bored soldiers are his industrial base.

OBJECTIVES:

The student will be able to

- List the problems existing in the U.S. between Yorktown and the Treaty of Paris.
- Discuss the weaknesses and strengths of the Articles of Confederation.
- Examine aspects of George Washington as leader, citizen, general, and private person.

MATERIALS:

Col. Lewis Nicola's Letter to George Washington of 22 May 1782

George Washington's letter to Colonel Lewis Nicola of 22 May 1782

The Newburgh Letter

George Washington's address to his officers at Newburgh, New York, of 15 March 1783

RECOMMENDED TIME:

One class period

ACTIVITY OUTLINE:

I. Context (Have the students answer the following questions for all documents in this lesson)

- a. When was the document written?
- b. Where was the document written?
- c. Who wrote the document?
- d. What type of document is it?
- e. What is the purpose of the document?
- f. Who is the audience for the document?

II. Warm-up:

Yorktown has been won. The fighting is over but there is still no treaty of peace and the British army remains in America. Economic hard times have hit individuals, communities, states, the Continental army, and the nation as a whole. This is compounded with uncertainty over the future: Would there be peace or would hostilities break out again? Where will money come from, and at what cost? Who will come to rule the new nation in the post-war era?

III. Activity:

Distribute the Nicola letter and read the letter together. Ask the class for ideas as to what alarms General Washington so much and put on the board all the speculations. Then explain the background to the Newburgh letters, the plot(s) afoot, and the *persona dramatis*. Set the stage for the meeting and stress the inspired use of America's most portentous prop – Washington's spectacles. Then distribute and read aloud to the class (as Washington did to his officers) the address. Have the students analyze the speech in terms of the officers' point of view, Washington's point of view, possible outcomes, and why Washington made the decision he did. Note Washington's extremely rare use of the word "God."

IV. Extensions:

Examine Washington's Farewell Address to his troops at Fraunces Tavern, to compare and contrast with Newburgh.

Examine Washington's return of his commission to Congress.

Examine the fates of those involved with the plot(s) other than Washington – Alexander Hamilton; John Armstrong, Jr.; James Wilkinson; Horatio "Granny" Gates.

Examine America's responses to military success over time – Andrew Jackson, Richard Mentor Johnson, William Henry Harrison, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, Hiram Ulysses S Grant, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Theodore Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur, Colin Powell, Maxwell Taylor, Curtis LeMay, etc.

Col. Lewis Nicola's Letter to George Washington of May 22, 1782

The injuries the troops have received in their pecuniary rights have been, & still continue to be too obvious to require a particular detail, or to have escaped your Excellencies notice, tho your exalted station must have deprived you of opportunity of information relative to the severe distresses occasioned thereby. Tho doubtless the particular circumstances of the times have occasioned many of these injuries, yet we have great reason to believe they are not all owing to that cause, but often occasioned by schemes of economy in the legislatures of some States, & publick ministers, founded on unjust and iniquitous principles; and tho, as the prospect of publick affairs cleared up, the means of fulfilling engagements increased, yet the injuries, instead of being lessened, have kept pace with them. This gives us a dismal prospect for the time to come, & much reason

to fear the future provision promised to officers [by Congress], and the english & satisfying their & the men's just demands will be little attended to, when our services are no longer wanted, and that the recompence of all our toils, hardships, expence of private fortune, during several of the best years of our lives will be, to those who cannot earn a livelihood by manual labour, beggary, & that we who have born the heat & labour of the day will be forgot and neglected by such as reap the benefits without suffering any of the hardships.

It may be said that depreciations have been made up, but how has this been done? By depreciated paper money & certificates of such a nature as to be of little benefit to the original possessors, whose necessities have compelled them to part with those obligations to speculators for a small part of their value, never more, as far as I can learn, than one tenth, but often less.

From several conversations I have had with officers, & some I have overheard among soldiers, I believe it is generally intended not to seperate after the peace 'till all grievances are redressed, engagements & promises fulfilled, but how this is to be done I am at a loss, as neither officers nor soldiers can have any confidence in promises. We have no doubt of Congresses intention to act uprightly, but greatly fear that, by the interested voices of others, their abilities will not be equal to the task.

God forbid we should ever think of involving that country we have, under your conduct & auspices, rescued from oppression, into a new scene of blood & confusion; but it cannot be expected we should forego claims on which our future subsistence & that of our families depend.

Another difference there is between our fellow citizens and us is, that we must live under governments in the forming of which we had no hand, nor were consulted either personally nor representatively, being engaged in preventing the enemy from disturbing those bodies which were entrusted with that business, the members of which would have found little mercy had they been captured.

Dangers foreseen may be removed, alleviated, or in some cases, turned to benefits, possibly what I appreciate may be susceptible, of even the latter, by means I beg leave to propose, but must request your Excellencies patience if I digress a little before I open my prospect.

I own I am not that violent admirer of a republican form of government as numbers in this country are; this is not owing to caprice, but reason & experience. Let us consider the fate of all the modern republics of any note without running into antiquity, which I think would also serve to establish my system.

The republics of later days, worth our notice, may be reduced to three, Venice, Genoa & Holland, tho the two former are rather aristocratical than republican governments, yet they resemble those more than monarchical.

These have, each in their turns, shone with great brightness, but their lustre has been of short duration, and as it were only a blaze. What figure has Holland, that, in his infancy, successfully opposed the most formidable powers of Europe, made for more than half of the present century, or actually makes at present? Mistress of nearly half the commerce of the earth, has she occasioned any considerable diversion of the naval power of Britain? Six or eight ships of the line have been able to oppose her, & unable to protect herself and her extensive commerce, has she not been obliged to apply for assistance to a neighbouring monarch? Does not the great similarity there is between her form of government & ours give us room to fear our fate will be like hers. Has it not evidently appeared that during the course of this war we have never been able to draw forth all the internal resources we are possessed of, and oppose or attack the enemy with our real vigour?

In contrast to this scene let us consider the principal monarchies of Europe, they have suffered great internal commotions, have worried each other, have had periods of vigour & weakness, yet they still subsist & shine with lustre. It must not be concluded from this that I am a partisan for absolute monarchy, very far from it, I am sensible of all its defects, the only conclusion I would draw from the comparison is, that the energy of the latter is more beneficial to the existence of a nation than the wisdom of the former. A monarch may often be governed by wise & moderate counsels, but it is hardly possible for large bodies to plan or execute vigorous ones.

The inference I would deduce from what I have premised is, that each form of government has its defective & valuable parts, therefore, that form which partakes of all, or most of the latter & is purged of the former, must be the most eligible.

In the British Government we have a sketch of this, far, it is true from perfect, but no despicable basis of a good one. The English constitution has been the result of repeated struggles between prince & people, but never received anything of a regular or stable form till the revolution, & yet is still short of perfection. The principal defects are pointed out by the experience of almost a century, & I believe may be reduced to two, one in the legislative the other in the executive authorities. Were elections annual, & confined to representatives for counties & few large trading cities only, & all contributing to the support of government privileged to elect, and had the king no command of money beyond what is requisite to the support of his family & court, suitable to the dignity of his station, I believe the constitution would approach much nearer to

that degree of perfection to which sublunary things are limited. In a well regulated legislative body I conceive a third branch necessary. Montesquieu observes that a hereditary nobility is requisite in a monarchy but incompatible with a republick, taking this for granted, some degree of nobility may be proper in a mixed government, but limited, suppose not hereditary.

I shall now proceed to my scheme.

Congress has promised all those that continue in the service certain tracts of land, agreeable to their grades. Some States have done the same, others have not, probably owing to their not having lands to give, but as all the military have equal merits so have they equal claims to such rewards, therefore, they ought all to be put on a footing by the united States.

Besides those who may actually be in service at the peace, I consider all those dismissed, or put to half pay, through schemes of economy, have equal rights, as their being out of the service was not voluntary.

These things premised, I think Congress should take on itself the discharging all such engagements, made, or that ought to be made, for lands & discharge them by procuring a sufficient tract in some of the best of those fruitful & extensive countries to the west of our frontiers, so that each individual should have his due, all unprofitable mountains & swamps, also lakes & rivers within the limits of this tract not be to reckoned as any part of the lots, but thrown in for the benefit of the whole community. This tract to be formed into a distinct State under such mode of government as those military who choose to remove to it may agree on.

Debts due to the army should be adjusted with dispatch & liquidated in the following manner. One third to be paid immediately, to enable the settlers to buy tools for trades & husbandry, & some stock, the other two thirds by four notes payable, with interest, in three months, & the others on the same terms at three months interval between each payment. In order to give such notes a due value, good funds should be appropriated for the discharge of principal & interest, but previous to such first payment & notes given, a sum should be deducted from each non commissioned & private mans debt, sufficient to victual him & family for one year from the first harvest succeeding the arrival of the colony to the granted lands; during the intermediate time those persons to be victualled at the expence of the continent, & also to receive pay & clothing to the time the accounts are all adjusted & the troops ready to march.

Officers being entitled to half pay, such as choose to emigrate, should have provisions be allowed them as above & quarterly notes with interest for three years full pay to commence & be computed from the time they begin their march, in full discharge of all such half pay.

As I have already observed that it may be objected that depreciations and other payments have been made good; but can a just debt be equitably discharged by certificates of very small comparative value or depreciated paper money? Certainly no, consequently the States are still bound to make good the deficiency. To this it will probably be answered that those certificates having generally passed into other hands, who have paid a consideration for them; but what consideration? A tenth or twentieth of the principal value expressed therein, independent of interest; and is it not generally understood in some States, if not in all, that when those

certificates are to be paid off they will be estimated at no more than what was given for them? I therefore conceive the following rules should be observed in discharge of these obligations.

Every person in whose favour a certificate has been or shall be given, and who will keep it to the conclusion of the war, to be paid its full value.

To every person paid in depreciated money the depreciation thereof to be made good.

To the original possessors of certificates sold two thirds of the value expressed, the other third to be considered as received when the certificate was sold. This is certainly much beyond what, on an average, has been received for all certificates sold, but as it will be difficult, if at all possible, to ascertain in a reasonable time the money paid, it is requisite to find some rule.

This war must have shown to all, but to military men in particular the weakness of republics, and the exertions of the army has been able to make by being under a proper head, therefore I little doubt, when the benefits of a mixed government are pointed out and duly considered, but such will be readily adopted; in this case it will, I believe, be uncontroverted that the same abilities which have lead us, through difficulties apparently insurmountable by human power, to victory and glory, those qualities that have merited and obtained the universal esteem and veneration of an army, would be most likely to conduct and direct us in the smoother paths of peace.

Some people have so connected the ideas of tyranny and monarchy as to find it very difficult to separate them, it may therefore be requisite to give the head of such a constitution as I propose, some title apparently more moderate, but if all other things were once adjusted I believe strong argument might be produced for admitting the title of king, which I conceive would be attended with some material advantages.

I have hinted that I believe the United States would be benefited by my scheme, this I conceive would be done by having a savage and cruel enemy separated from their borders by a body of veterans, that would be as an advanced guard, securing the main body from danger. There is no doubt but Canada will some time or other be a separate State, and from the genius & habits of the people, that its government will be monarchical. May not casualties produce enmity between this new State and our Union, & may not its force under the direction of an active prince prove too powerful for the efforts of republics? It may be answered that in a few years we shall acquire such vigour as to baffle all inimical attempts. I grant that our numbers & riches will increase, but will our governments have energy enough to draw them forth? Will those States remote from the danger be zealously anxious to assist those more exposed? Individuals in Holland abound in wealth, yet the government is poor & weak.

Republican bigots will certainly consider my opinions as heterodox, and the maintainer thereof as meriting fire and faggots, I have therefore hitherto kept them within my own breast. By freely communicating them to your Excellency I am persuaded I own no risk, & that, this disapproved of, I need not apprehend their ever being disclosed to my prejudice.

Letter to Lewis Nicola

George Washington

May 22, 1782

Newburgh

Sir:

With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence, and reprehend with severity. For the present, the communication of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter shall make a disclosure necessary.

I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischief that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable; at the same time in justice to my own feelings I must add, that no Man possesses a more sincere wish to see ample justice done to the Army than I do, and as far as my powers and influence, in a constitutional way extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you then, if you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from

The Newburgh Address

Text Version

The Anonymous Letter

To The Officers of the Army

Gentlemen,

A FELLOW-SOLDIER, whose interest and affections bind him strongly to you; whose past sufferings have been as great, and whose future fortune may be as desperate as yours — would beg leave to address you. Age has its claims, and rank is not without its pretensions to advise; but though unsupported by both, he flatters himself that the plain language of sincerity and experience, will neither be unheard nor unregarded. Like many of you, he loved private life, and left it with regret. He left it, determined to retire from the field with the necessity that called him to it, and not till then; not till the enemies of his country, the slaves of power, and the hirelings of injustice, were compelled to abandon their schemes, and acknowledge America as terrible in arms as she had been humble in remonstrance.

With this object in view, he has long shared in your toils, and mingled in your dangers; he has felt the cold hand of poverty without a murmur, and has seen the insolence of wealth without a sigh. But, too much under the direction of his wishes, and sometimes weak enough to mistake desire for opinion, he has, till lately, very lately, believed in the justice of his country. He hoped, that as the clouds of adversity scattered, and as the sun-shine of peace and better fortune broke in upon us, the coldness and severity of government would relax, and that, more than justice, that gratitude would blaze forth upon those hands which had upheld her in the darkest stages of her passage, from impending servitude to acknowledged independence.

But faith has its limits, as well as temper; and there are points beyond which neither can be stretched, without sinking into cowardice, or plunging into credulity. This, my friends, I conceive to be your situation. Hurried to the very verge of both, another step would ruin you forever. To be tame and unprovoked when injuries press hard upon you, is more than weakness; but to look up for kinder usage, without one manly effort of your own, would fix your character, and show the world how richly you deserve those chains you broke. To guard against this evil, let us take a review of the ground upon which we now stand, and from thence carry our thoughts forward for a moment, into the unexplored field of expedient.

After a pursuit of seven long years, the object for which we set out is at length brought within our reach! — Yes, my friends, that suffering courage of yours, was active once — it has conducted the United States of America through a doubtful and a bloody war! It has placed her in the chair of independency, and peace again returns to bless — whom? A country willing to redress your wrongs, cherish your worth, and reward your services; a country courting your return to private life, with tears of gratitude, and smiles of admiration; longing to divide with you that independency which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved? Is this the case? Or is it rather, a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries, and insults your distresses? Have you not, more than once, suggested your wishes, and made known your wants to Congress? Wants and wishes which gratitude and policy should have anticipated, rather than evaded. And have you not lately, in the meek language of entreating memorial, begged from their justice, what you would no longer expect from their favour? How have you been answered? Let the letter which you are called to consider to-morrow, make reply.

If this, then, be your treatment, while the swords you wear are necessary for the defence of America, what have you to expect from peace, when your voice shall sink, and your strength dissipate by division?

When these very swords, the instruments and companions of your glory, shall be taken from your sides, and no remaining mark of military distinction left, but your wants, infirmities, and scars! can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution, and retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness, and contempt? Can you

consent to wade through the vile mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honour? — if you can, go — and carry with you the jest of tories, and the scorn of whigs — the ridicule, and what is worse, the pity of the world! Go, starve, and be forgotten!

But if your spirit should revolt at this; if you have sense enough to discover, and spirit enough to oppose tyranny, under whatever garb it may assume; whether it be the plain coat of republicanism, or the splendid robe of royalty; if you have yet learned to discriminate between a people and a cause, between men and principles — awake! — attend to your situation, and redress yourselves. If the present moment be lost, every future effort is in vain; and your threats then will be as empty as your entreaties now.

I would advise you, therefore, to come to some final opinion, upon what you can bear, and what you will suffer. If your determination be in any proportion to your wrongs, carry your appeal from the justice to the fears of government — change the milk and water style of your last memorial; assume a bolder tone, decent, but lively, spirited and determined; and suspect the man who would advise to more moderation and longer forbearance. Let two or three men, who can feel as well as write, be appointed to draw up your last remonstrance; for I would no longer give it the suing, soft, unsuccessful epithet of memorial. Let it be represented (in language that will neither dishonour you by its rudeness, nor betray you by its fears) what has been promised by Congress, and what has been performed; how long and how patiently you have suffered; how little you have asked, and how much of that little has been denied. Tell them that though you were the first, and would wish to be the last, to encounter danger; though despair itself can never drive you into dishonour, it may drive you from the field; that the wound often irritated, and never healed, may at length become incurable; and that the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now, must operate like the grave, and part you for ever; that in any political event, the army has its alternative. If peace, that nothing shall separate you from your arms but death; if war, that courting the auspices and inviting the directions of your illustrious leader, you will retire to some unsettled country, smile in your turn, and mock when their fear cometh on.'

But let it represent also, that should they comply with the request of your late memorial, it would make you more happy, and them more respectable: that while the war should continue, you would follow their standard into the field — and when it came to an end, you would withdraw into the shade of private life, and give the world another subject of wonder and applause — an army victorious over its enemies — victorious over itself."

[Anonymous]

Source: The Life of George Washington, by David Ramsay, New York, 1807.

Washington's Reply

"Gentlemen,

"By an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together? how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! — how unmilitary! — and how subversive of all order and discipline, let the good sense of the army decide.

"In the moment of this summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation; addressed more to the feelings of passions, than to the reason & judgment of the army. The author of the piece, is entitled to much credit for the goodness of his pen: — and I could wish he had as much credit for the rectitude of his heart for, as men we see thro' different optics, and are induced by the reflecting faculties of the mind, to use different means to attain the same end: — the author of the address, should have had more charity, than to mark for suspicion, the man who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance or, in others words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises. But he had another plan in view, in which candor and liberality of sentiment, regard to justice, and love of country, have no part, and he was right, to insinuate the darkest suspicion, to effect the blackest designs.

"That the address is drawn with great art, and is designed to answer the most insidious purposes. That it is calculated to impress the mind, with an idea of premeditated injustice in the sovereign power of the United States, and rouse all those resentments which must unavoidably flow from such a belief. That the secret mover of this scheme (whoever he may be) intended to take advantage of the passions, while they were warmed by the recollection of mind which is so necessary to give dignity & stability to measures, is rendered too obvious, by the mode of conducting the business to need other proof than a reference to the proceeding.

"Thus much, gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me to observe to you, to shew upon what principles I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting which was proposed to have been held on Tuesday last: — and not because I wanted a disposition to give you every opportunity, consistent with your own honor, and the dignity of the army, to make known your grievances. If my conduct heretofore, has not evinced to you, that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing & improper. But as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common country As I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you, on public duty As I have been the constant companion & witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel, & acknowledge your merits As I have ever considered my own military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army As my Heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it it can scarcely be supposed, at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests.

"But how are they to be promoted? The way is plain, says the anonymous addresser. If war continues, remove into the unsettled country, there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful country to defend itself. But who are they to defend? — Our wives, our children, our farms, and other property which we leave behind us. Or in this state of hostile separation, are we to take the two first (the latter cannot be removed) — to perish in a wilderness, with hunger cold & nakedness? — If peace takes place, never sheath your sword says he until you have obtained full and ample justice. This dreadful alternative, of either deserting our country in the extremest hour of her distress, or turning our arms against it, (which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance) has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea.

"My God! What can this writer have in view, by recommending such measures? ? Can he be a friend to the army? — Can he be a friend to this country? — Rather is he not an insidious foe? — Some emissary, perhaps, from New York, plotting the ruin of both, by sowing the seeds of discord & separation between the civil & military powers of the continent? — And what compliment does he pay to our understandings, when he recommends measures in either alternative, impracticable in their nature?

"But here, gentlemen, I will drop the curtain; — and because it would be as imprudent in me to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception, to suppose you stood in need of them. A moment's reflection will convince every dispassionate mind of the physical impossibility of carrying either proposal into execution.

"There might, gentlemen, be an impropriety in my taking notice, in this address to you, of an anonymous production but the manner in which that performance has been introduced to the army, the effect it was intended to have, together with some other circumstances, will amply justify my observations on the tendency of that writing. With respect to the advice given by the author to suspect the man, who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance. I spurn it as every man, who regards that liberty, & reveres that justice for which we contend, undoubtedly must — for if men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind; reason is of no use to us, the freedom of speech may be taken away, and, dumb & silent we may be led, like sheep, to the slaughter.

"I cannot, in justice to my own belief, & what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this address, without giving it as my decided opinion; that that honourable body, entertain exalted sentiments of the services of the army; — and, from a full conviction of its merits & sufferings, will do it complete justice: — That their endeavors, to discover & establish funds for this purpose, have been unwearied, and will not cease, till they have succeeded, I have succeeded, I have not a doubt. But, like all other large bodies, where there is a variety of different interests to reconcile, their deliberations are slow. ? Why then should we distrust them? — and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures, which may cast a shade over that glory which, has been so justly acquired; and tarnish the reputation of an army which is celebrated thro' all Europe, for its fortitude and patriotism? — and for what is this done? — to bring the object we seek for nearer? — No! — most certainly, in my opinion, it will cast it at a greater distance.

"For myself (and I take no merit in giving the assurance, being induced to it from principles of gratitude, veracity & Justice) — a grateful sense of the confidence you have ever placed in me a recollection of the cheerful assistance, & prompt obedience I have experienced from you, under every vicissitude of fortune, — and the sincere I feel for an army I have so long had the honor to command, will oblige me to declare, in this public & solemn manner, that, in the attainment of compleat justice for all your toils & dangers, and in the gratification of every wish, so far as may be done consistently with the great duty I owe my country, and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my services to the utmost of my abilities.

"While I give you these assurances, and pledge my self in the most unequivocal manner, to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor let me entreat you, gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, & sully the glory you have hitherto maintained let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress; that, previous to your dissolution as an Army they will cause all your accounts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in their resolutions, which were published to you two days ago and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power, to render ample justice to you, for your faithful and meritorious Services. And let me conjure you, in the name of our common country as you value your own sacred honor as you respect the rights of humanity; as you regard the military & national character of America, to express your utmost horror & detestation of the man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, & who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord, & deluge our rising empire in blood.

"By thus determining — & thus acting, you will pursue the plain & direct road to the attainment of your wishes. You will defeat the insidious designs of our enemies, who are compelled to resort from open force to secret artifice. You will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism & patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; — And you will, by the dignity of your conduct, afford occasion for posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, had this day been wanting, the world has never seen the last stage of perfection to which human nature is capable of attaining."

Source: The Life of George Washington, by David Ramsay, New York, 1807.