

Populist #5 The Subject of National Security, continued

Thomas Jefferson, in writings and speeches throughout his life, made some important observations on the importance of **democracy** and its inevitable development in our nation. I shall present the public with a few of his most profound statements:

"I have no doubt that the result of our experiment will be **that men are capable of governing themselves without a master.**"

-- to T.B. Hollis, 1787

"The government which can wield the arm of the people must be the **strongest possible.**"

-- to Issac Weaver Jr., 1807

"If we are faithful to our country, if we acquiesce, with good will, in the decisions of the majority, and the nation moves in mass in the same direction, although it may not be that which every individual thinks best, **we have nothing to fear from any quarter.**"

-- to Virginia Baptists, 1808

"The only point on which he and I ever differed was that I had more confidence than he had in the natural integrity and discretion of the people, and in the **safety** and extent to which they might trust themselves with a control over their government."

-- to John Melish, 1813

"I know no **safe** depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the **people themselves**; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."

-- to William C. Jarvis, 1820

"Man is capable of living in society, **governing itself** by laws **self-imposed**, and **securing** to its members the enjoyment of life, liberty, property, and peace."

-- Declaration and Protest of Virginia, 1825

It was shown in previous papers that concentrated power in government only leads to a greater likelihood for dangers from abroad, and that nothing would be more apt to secure us from them than a new system of government; Constitutional Democracy, with the Bill of Rights serving to protect the rights of every citizen. This topic is extensive and cannot be easily exhausted.

The history of our own nation is one in which we should be familiar, and also provides us with the most valuable lessons for framing our future. We have the ability to learn and profit from the experiences of the people of our own country; many have paid a high price for our liberty, and we owe it to them and our descendents to take these lessons and better our future.

Although it seems obvious to common sense that a truly free people ought to rule themselves, we find that those who have spilled their blood throughout our history have often fought for odious causes, or simply for an expansion of power amongst those who rule over us. We find, through elementary study, that our nation has been almost constantly encumbered with altercations and wars with other nations. The true interest of the people has always been known to the people themselves; liberty, security, and prosperity, yet due to the policies and practices of those leaders of our nation, foreign disagreements have been interminably agitated, and for many years they have been much more detrimental and dangerous than they have been favorable to advancing our true interests.

Should the people of America continue on this same path and with this same system of government, would the same things not continue? Would similar politicians not rise to power, and act in the same manner? Instead of our having "nothing to fear from any quarter" and freedom from "abuses of constitutional power," quarrels and wars will continue, and respect and honor for our nation will soon be extinguished throughout the world, with the further expansion of American power and the protection of our corporate "interests" continuing to be the policy of our federal government. Accordingly, like all empires in history, we will always be either involved in disputes and war, or live in the constant fear of them.

The most confident supporters of continuing the republican federal structure that stands today cannot reasonably suppose that politicians compromised by temptations for conquest, glory and personal gain, who have been in the majority for considerable time, will not continue to be in power; as the system itself, along with the known ease that one can capitalize on these enticements when in power, promotes their ascension to prominence. Independent of these enticements for individuals and groups, which tend to lead to an increased centralization of power and also impede the advancement of liberty and security, we must take notice of the effects of superior policy and good management which would most likely characterize a government of the people above all others, and by which the strength and prominence of such enticements and their associated politicians would be destroyed. For in our current system of government, it cannot be presumed, as history has proven to us, that the federal government will ever have a likelihood to be filled with politicians that would govern our nation with this level of superior policy and good management, or if our legislature and executive would ever contain a majority that would rule in this manner, that it would last in such a way for a long number of years.

Whenever, and from whatever situation that may cause it to happen, and it has and will happen again, that our political "masters" should lead us into policies and actions that reduce our security; such as by engaging in unprovoked war, enticing foreign powers or groups to attack us, or other actions that would reduce our overall level of security, a level of distrust in the government is created and when already present, it is enhanced. A great deal of time has not been necessary for the people to realize these destructive actions, and we have not only lost confidence in our politicians, but have also lost a great deal of faith in the system that allows them the power to betray our trust. Distrust naturally creates a potential for further distrust, and nothing destroys faith faster than conduct that ensures a greater potential of danger for all of us.

There was a time when we were told to believe that breaches by the federal government of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were not to be expected; that a sense of love for country, of common interest, or fear of losing power would advise the conduct of politicians, and would ensure full compliance with all the constitutional requirements of the nation. Today, this concept would appear to be wholly fatuous, as we have learned that this is rarely the case from our greatest source of wisdom - *experience*.

Those that closely study the history of similar situations will find abundant reason to believe that those in power would in no other sense be masters; that they would lead for power's sake, as well as the potential for personal enticements; both of which have been discussed in detail in previous papers, and that continued abuses of constitutional power, as well as a lack of self-government will only lead the nation to a state that is not best able to secure itself from danger. What cure can there be for this situation, but in a change of the system which has produced it!

Since it is essential to Liberty that the government be derived from the people and not from a small portion or favored class of it, let the citizens of America then, instead of the politicians who have ruled over us in the past and present or those who will rule in the future, judge whether the modification of our nation's system of government to that of self-rule in a Constitutional Democracy would tend to secure us most against the hostilities and interferences of foreign organizations and nations.

I will be advancing to my next topic, of how a Constitutional Democracy will secure us best against internal dangers, in my next paper on June 30, 2005.

In the spirit of liberty and prosperity,

Franklin