

ROOTS
OF
LIBERTY



UNLOCKING
THE
FEDERALIST PAPERS

Discussion Guide

- **Explore the Essay**
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- **Show What You Know**

2 The Constitution as a Defense Against Foreign Aggression

*A Bulwark
Against Foreign
Danger*

STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

VIEW THE VIDEO

Thoughtfully view the video which can be found at <http://www.RootsofLiberty.org/videos>.

ANALYZE THE SOURCE

Closely read the following excerpt from *Federalist No. 4* (written by John Jay) and be prepared to discuss the questions that follow:

...[I]t is easy to see that jealousies and uneasinesses may gradually slide into the minds and cabinets of other nations; and that we are not to expect they should regard our advancement in union, in power, and consequence by land and by sea, with an eye of indifference and composure.

The people of America are aware that inducements to war may arise out of these

circumstances, as well as from others not to so obvious at present . . . Wisely therefore do they consider union and a good national government as necessary to put and keep them in such a situation as instead of inviting war, will tend to repress and discourage it. That situation consists in the best possible state of defense, and necessarily depends on the government, the arms and the resources of the country.

1. Why might other countries have been “jealous” of the United States in the 1780’s? Why might other countries be “jealous” today?
2. Was Jay exaggerating when he spoke of America’s advancement in “Union, power, and consequence” by the 1780’s? Has America advanced in these areas in the past 240 years? Has America regressed?
3. What “inducements to war” that were “not so obvious” in 1787 have led Americans into combat in the past 240 years?
4. What two factors will tend to “repress and discourage” war? To what extent have these factors kept America out of war? To what extent will they continue to do so?

5. What three elements provide “the best possible defence” against foreign aggression? Is any one of these elements lacking in contemporary America? If so, what might be the potential consequences?

EXPLORE THE ESSAY

Thoughtfully read the essay, *A Bulwark Against Foreign Danger: The Constitution as a Defense Against Foreign Aggression*, and be prepared to discuss the following questions:

1. In the early 1780’s, why did the rest of the world see the United States as “downright shabby”?
2. Which specific foreign threats faced the United States in the 1780’s? Which internal threats faced the country then?
3. What were the potential consequences if individual states negotiated with foreign nations and tribes? What would be the consequence today if an individual state negotiated directly with a foreign country about issues of national concern (e.g., Arizona negotiating with Mexico about immigration reform)?
4. Hamilton cautioned Americans “not to be too sanguine” (complacent) about being free from external threats. Which external threats should contemporary Americans be concerned about? Can the Constitution help protect against those threats?
5. Which three of the constitutional protections against foreign aggression do you consider most essential? Why?
6. Have there been times in our nation’s history when the Constitution did not provide sufficient protection against foreign aggression? Why was the Constitution unable to provide that protection?

CONNECT TO CURRENT ISSUES

Research one of these current topics to determine to what extent the Constitution protects America from foreign aggression today.

- ▶ war on terror (both foreign and domestic)
- ▶ immigration reform
- ▶ international drug trafficking
- ▶ conflicts in Afghanistan and Syria
- ▶ potential conflict with North Korea



SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Write a thoughtful, analytical essay answering any one of the questions from **Analyze the Source** or **Explore the Essay**.

Using a copy of the Constitution, review Paragraph J (from the Essay) and find where in the Constitution each of these powers (or restrictions on power) is referenced. Did the Framers provide sufficient protections from foreign aggression through these constitutional provisions?



LEARN MORE

The *Federalist Papers* referenced in this article are also discussed by these other authors in *Roots of Liberty*:

No. 3 Miller

No. 14 Pilon

No. 15 Miller

On-Line Versions of the *Federalist Papers*

- ▶ The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy
<http://avalon.law.yale.edu>
- ▶ On Line Library of Liberty
<http://oll.libertyfund.org>

Teaching American History: The Federalist-Anti-Federalists Debates

- ▶ <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/fed-antifed>