

Memo

To: George Washington, President of the United States

From: Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury

CC: General Henry Knox, Secretary of War

Date: 1791

Re: The Whiskey Rebellion

President Washington,

In regard to the current crisis in western Pennsylvania, I adamantly advise that you employ the use of military force to put down the rebellion against the excise tax. I advise this on the grounds that it is extremely important that the power of new government be demonstrated to citizens. It is also imperative the excise tax be enforced in order to raise much needed revenue in which to finance the national debt. Some of my colleagues may advise you to negotiate with these rebels or to lower or withdraw the excise tax. I believe this course of action would be catastrophic at this point in time as it would send the message to citizens that they can challenge the government directly any time they like. This will surely lead to chaos, instability, and the end to this new government we are creating. Alternatively, the use of military force will provide citizens with a sense of security and lead to increased support for our new government. Citizens will respond positively to a quick and decisive end to this rebellion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexander Hamilton

Secretary of the Treasury.