

# A KING, A PRESIDENT OR TWO?



*A Pamphlet from Aletheia Group L.L.C*  
Copyright © 2011

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial  
use.

If you intend to reprint this e-pamphlet  
you must obtain permission prior to publication.

Aletheia Group L.L.C. pamphlets are a  
for profit publication and are for subscribers  
only.

Please tell all your family and friends about  
The Truth Watch and invite them to join us.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are  
taken from New King James' Version of the  
Bible.

Copyright © 2004 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

## **A King, A President, or Two?**

When taking a closer look at the executive branch, it is important to consider the constitutional framers' original intent. What were some of the protestations against giving one man so much power as President? What were the defenses against the arguments for empowering one man with such power? Did some want to split that power between two men, or were some comfortable with having a king? We will answer those questions in this pamphlet.

### **Why Not A King?**

Our Constitution was written as a result of the inadequacy of the Articles of Confederation to unite the 13 states as a cohesive nation. A federal form of representatives from each state was required to preserve the new and fledgling country. The framers of the Constitution knew that a separation of powers was required; so three branches of government were established. Among these branches was the executive branch.

The Constitution is vague as to how the President is to execute the powers enumerated to him, other than the charge given in the Preamble and specific powers outline in Article II.

Prior to the establishment of the Constitution, there were some, among them in the military, who called on General George Washington to be King of the United States. Because of the impotency of the states and Congress to collect the necessary revenues, Colonel Lewis Nicola encouraged General Washington to become King.

Washington was grieved by this proposal and rebuked the colonel admonishing him to “banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or anyone else, a sentiment of the like nature.”<sup>i</sup>

General Washington knew the dangers of the power vested in a king and “was an unbending believer in the democratic principles of the Declaration of Independence.”<sup>ii</sup>

Many Anti-Federalists, those opposed to a stronger federal government, were very sensitive to the possibilities of the presidency becoming a stepping stone to a monarchy. Some went as far as to exaggerate what this new president might become. Alexander Hamilton, writing in the Federalist Papers, described some of these caricatures:

He has been decorated with attributes superior in dignity and splendor to those of a king of Great Britain. He has been shown to us with the diadem sparkling on his brow and the imperial purple flowing in his train. He has been seated on a throne surrounded with minions and mistresses, giving audience to the envoys of foreign potentates, in all the supercilious pomp of majesty. The images of Asiatic despotism and voluptuousness have scarcely been wanting to crown the exaggerated scene. We have been taught to tremble at the terrific visages of murdering [janizaries](#), and to blush at the unveiled mysteries of a future [seraglio](#). (Federalist #67)<sup>iii</sup>

And we complain about a new tone in Washington?!

The battle for our Constitution was a fierce one and none more than with the idea of a presidency. It is only right to give some understanding to the anxieties of the Anti-Federalists. We as a new nation had just thrown off the tyrannical chains of the despot King George III.

It would be a good exercise to revisit the charges brought against King George III. Not familiar with those? You should be, they are right there in our [Declaration of Independence](#). This is a thirty-count indictment against the King of England

and Parliament. As you read these charges you can see much of the motivation for the Bill of Rights and the separation of powers designed into the Constitution with the three branches of government. Take a moment to reread our Declaration of Independence again for the first time with an eye out for the specific charges. The brilliance of this document will become brighter.

The separation of powers is a constitutional remedy to the tyranny of the British Crown, who overruled any and all representative forms of government in the colonies that were not agreeable and obedient to the king's whims. The king allowed for Parliament and colonial representation in so much as it supported his authoritarian policies.

King George III also "made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries."<sup>iv</sup>

Because of the king's abuses, our constitutional framers ensured that no single man or branch of government would be able to centralize power over the breadth of government.

Therefore, no one man would be able to become king; that is as long as the two other branches of government did not usurp their constitutional powers. If that happens then you end up with the soft tyranny we are struggling under

today. So if not a king, perhaps a split of executive responsibilities? We'll look at that next.

## **Why Not Two Presidents?**

Some Anti-Federalists were in favor of splitting the presidency up among two or even a council of presidents. The purpose of the presidency was to allow for “an energetic Executive” as described by Hamilton in Federalist #70. Hamilton strongly argued (as we saw in Ravaging the Republic) that, “A feeble Executive implies a feeble execution of the government. A feeble execution is but another phrase or a bad execution; and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government.”<sup>v</sup>

The other argument against more than one executive was the human factor. Would two executives have a unity of effort and conformity of minds? Perhaps if both were closely aligned, but even then the level of inspirational purity would exceed that of mortal man. The framers, particularly James Madison, were well-versed in Biblical principles relating to man's sinfulness and no doubt had this verse in mind when drafting the separation of powers:

**“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”  
(Jeremiah 17:9)**

Hamilton too was well steeped in Biblical teachings and understood that vanity laid deep in the heart of men:

Men often oppose a thing, merely because they have had no agency in planning it, or because it may have been planned by those whom they dislike. But if they have been consulted, and have happened to disapprove, opposition then becomes, in their estimation, an indispensable duty of self-love. They seem to think themselves bound in honor, and by all the motives of personal infallibility, to defeat the success of what has been resolved upon contrary to their sentiments. (Federalist #70)<sup>vi</sup>

Not only would two men with equal presidential powers be pitted against each other, but also, and more importantly, how would two men be held responsible for the feebleness and ineffectiveness of government if they could both point fingers at one another. The argument against this privation is Hamilton's greatest accomplishment as Publius:

But one of the weightiest objections to a plurality in the Executive, and which lies as much against the last as the first plan, is, that it tends to conceal



faults and destroy responsibility. Responsibility is of two kinds to censure and to punishment. The first is the more important of the two, especially in an elective office. Man, in public trust, will much oftener act in such a manner as to render him unworthy of being any longer trusted, than in such a manner as to make him obnoxious to legal punishment. But the multiplication of the Executive adds to the difficulty of detection in either case. It often becomes impossible, amidst mutual accusations, to determine on whom the blame or the punishment of a pernicious measure, or series of pernicious measures, ought really to fall. It is shifted from one to another with so much dexterity, and under such plausible appearances, that the public opinion is left in suspense about the real author. The circumstances which may have led to any national miscarriage or misfortune are sometimes so complicated that, where there are a number of actors who may have had different degrees and kinds of agency, though we may clearly see upon the whole that there has been mismanagement, yet it may be impracticable to pronounce to whose account the evil which may have been incurred is truly chargeable. (Federalist #70)<sup>vii</sup>

In other words, if we had two presidents, then whom would we hold accountable for the current state affairs? Case in point is the current

administration. Barack Obama and his administration, up until recently, have openly blamed George W. Bush for all that is going wrong in government. The recent tactic has changed to having “inherited” the current situation with the outcome still the same; it is not Obama’s fault.

And if anything appeared to be going right, then Obama quickly and unashamedly takes credit. In essence, Mr. Obama would have Americans believe that we indeed have two presidents. This makes Hamilton's argument above all the more prescient.

As the old saying goes, too many cooks spoil the broth. And too many presidents spoil our government. In the case of the executive branch, it takes one to lead.

## **The executive Power shall be vested...**

So starts Article II of the US Constitution and the executive power shall be vested “...in a President of the United States of America.”<sup>viii</sup>

The need for a strong and vigorous executive has been validated throughout our nation’s history. From our first president George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, to William McKinley and Theodore

Roosevelt, to the great Ronald Reagan, a strong presidency sets the tone for government. A case could be made for Franklin Roosevelt's strength, notwithstanding his statist policies; nevertheless his persona at the time was unparalleled.

A strong executive makes for a strong presidency, whether or not his policies.

The opposite of a strong presidency is a feeble executive. Today the United States of America has a feeble leader in the White House. From taking months to decide on how to fight the war in Afghanistan to the most recent complete absence of leadership in the budget battle. Barack Obama is rightly being described as Jimmy Carter II.

Consumer confidence in July 2011 dropped to 54.9, which is the lowest since May 1980 when Jimmy Carter was president. On July 15, 1979, President Carter gave his now infamous "malaise" [speech](#) where he aired his administration's dirty laundry and told the nation, "Often you see paralysis and stagnation and drift. You don't like it, and neither do I. What can we do?"<sup>ix</sup>

Barack Obama delivered his version of "Malaise II" in his weekly radio address on August 13, 2011, Obama told America that "we've still got a long way to go to get to where we need to be. We didn't get into this mess overnight, and it's going to

take time to get out of it. That's a hard truth – but it's no excuse for inaction.”<sup>x</sup>

This from the man who walked out of a meeting with congressional leaders negotiating over the debt crisis. This from the man whose party controlled Congress for two years failed to pass a budget and America is still waiting for its congressionally mandated budget. Instead all we get is old and tired class warfare and calls for more taxes.

Juxtapose Carter I and II with Ronald Reagan addressing the nation on the economy just 2 ½ weeks after becoming president:

It's time to recognize that we've come to a turning point. We're threatened with an economic calamity of tremendous proportions, and the old business-as-usual treatment can't save us. Together, we must chart a different course.

We must increase productivity. That means making it possible for industry to modernize and make use of the technology which we ourselves invented. That means putting Americans back to work. And that means above all bringing government spending back within government revenues, which is the only way, together with increased productivity, that we can reduce and, yes, eliminate inflation.

In the past we've tried to fight inflation one year and then, with unemployment increased, turn the next year to fighting unemployment with more deficit spending as a pump primer. So, again, up goes inflation. It hasn't worked. We don't have to choose between inflation and unemployment -- they go hand in hand. It's time to try something different, and that's what we're going to do.<sup>xi</sup>

President Reagan did not wait months or even years to take the reins of the powers of the presidency, he took 2 ½ weeks and that because he was awaiting a comprehensive audit of the government. While he told the American people that they would not like the findings and that he did not, he was not frustrated. He took charge. And once he took the oath of office, he did not blame his predecessor nor try to share his presidency. He led our nation to the greatest economic recovery in modern history.

When we have a feeble executive we have a feeble government. If the President lacks the energy required to lead and inspire America to be great, then we get Jimmy Carter I and II.

And leadership cannot come just on the economic front. First and foremost our nation must be one of morality and virtue. John Adams rightly said:

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.<sup>xii</sup>

We have become a nation of “human passions unbridled by morality and religion.” We have lost our national virtue and only a return to the first principles found in our Charters of Freedom, honed through a classical liberal arts education that is grounded in acknowledgment of nature’s laws and God’s laws, will our nation be rescued.

We can no longer suffer spiritually and morally bankrupt men who compromise first principles for the sake of some bogus bipartisanship that is nothing more than an excuse to not make difficult choices. Our elected officials need to stop running for re-election and it needs to start in the White House.

That is what the America voter needs to look for in a president and that means seeking the aletheia truth about each candidate, regardless where that leads. And we can be confident that it will lead to a strong executive branch.

## NOTES

---

<sup>i</sup> “Letter to Lewis Nicola” [Copyright 2002 The Claremont Institute] in *Rediscovering George Washington*, Public Broadcasting System (PBS online, accessed 29 July 2011) available from [http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/milestones/lewis\\_nicola\\_about.html](http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/milestones/lewis_nicola_about.html); Internet.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> “Federalist No. 67”, *Founding Fathers.info*, (accessed 29 July 2011), available from <http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fed67.htm>; Internet.

<sup>iv</sup> “Declaration of Independence: A Transcription,” NARA—The Charters of Freedom—“A New World Is At Hand.” [Online version, [www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript), National Archives and Records Administration, August 9, 2011.]

<sup>v</sup> “Federalist No. 70”, *Founding Fathers.info*, (accessed 9 August 2011), available from <http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fed70.htm>; Internet.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> “The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription,” NARA—The Charters of Freedom—“A New World Is At Hand.” [Online version, [www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript), National Archives and Records Administration, August 13, 2011.]

---

<sup>ix</sup> “Jimmy Carter: Crisis of Confidence”, Public Broadcasting Service’s *American Experience* (PBS online, accessed 13 August 2011) available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/>; Internet.

<sup>x</sup> U.S. President. Weekly Address. “Putting the American People First.” The White House—Office of the Press Secretary (accessed online 13 August 2011) available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/13/weekly-address-putting-american-people-first>; Internet.

<sup>xi</sup> “Address to the Nation on the Economy – February 5, 1981.” Ronald Reagan Archives (accessed online 13 August 2011) available from <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1981/20581c.htm>; Internet.

<sup>xii</sup> “John Adams. Letter to the military, October 11, 1798, in a letter to the officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts. Charles Frances Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams – Second President of the United States: with a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustration* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1854), Vol. IX, pp. 228-229; quoted in William J. Federer, *America’s God and Country: Encyclopedia Of Quotations* (St. Louis, MO: AmeriSearch, Inc, 2000), 10-11.