

Document: Washington Letter, Modified

From August 1786 to February 1787, Daniel Shays and his followers in Massachusetts were angry about taxes and attempted to overthrow the state government, but the federal government had no way to provide funding to support the state troops. Following Shays' Rebellion, George Washington wrote to James Madison

We are fast moving to rebellion and confusion! How sad that in such a short space of time, we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the prediction of the British: "Leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve."

What stronger evidence can be given of the want of power in our government than these disorders [Shays' Rebellion]? If there is not an authority to stop them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property?