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As depicted in Constantino Brumidi's painting *The Apotheosis of Washington* (1865), the first president of the United State holds an exalted position in the minds of the American people. Likewise, the Washington administration has long borne a particular radiance in political circles. Max M. Edling and Peter J. Kastor's edited collection, *Washington's Government: Charting the Origins of the Federal Administration*, explores whether that gleam aligns with the reality of the institution. Following in the footsteps of the likes of Brian Balogh and Richard John concerning the study of state-building, the authors of the collection conclude that George Washington's administration was more of an impromptu adventure in carrying out the nation's business than an intentional creation of a blueprint for all successive administrations to replicate. As with any experimental exercise, Washington's government proved successful in some instances and downright disastrous in others. Although the administration was nowhere near perfect, it was a great improvement over the government that had existed under the Articles of Confederation.

Washington's Government is a collection of eight essays, each with a focus on a particular as-

pect or agency of the federal administration. The first essay, by Lindsay M. Chervinsky, explores the development of the president's cabinet. As was the case with many of the institutions established during Washington's administration, the Constitution provided no guidance on the creation of an advisory body. The cabinet was wholly of Washington's own creation, brought forth by the need to deal with diplomatic crises more effectively. While the first official cabinet meeting convened on November 26, 1790, at Mount Vernon, it was the Neutrality Crisis of 1793 that served as the catalyst for regular gatherings of the cabinet. Between April and December of 1793, the cabinet met frequently, sometimes up to five times a week. The fruit of their labor was the Proclamation of Neutrality. With that question sorted out, Washington ceased gathering the cabinet on a regular basis. He instead reverted to his pre-1793 model of only calling them together when he deemed it necessary. According to Chervinsky, the two primary reasons why Washington consulted the cabinet less and less during the final years of his administration were his own increased comfort with dealing with diplomatic issues and his distrust of the cabinet secretaries who had replaced his original choices. Following the precedent set by Washington, each

president has the freedom to choose who constitutes his cabinet and how much or how little he wishes to consult with them.

Along with the members of his cabinet, the federal workforce that Washington had at his disposal was vast in its scale and geography. In his contribution to the work, co-editor Kastor attempts to account for all of the employees of the federal government during Washington's two-term administration. Kastor explains that despite the 1793 "List of civil officers of the United States" compiled by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, a true understanding of the federal workforce—especially the clerks—required a deeper dive into the archives. Using the *Senate Executive Journal*, the *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Post Office*, the *Territorial Papers of the United States*, and the *Executive Journal of the Northwest Territory*, Kastor concludes that the federal workforce consisted of a total 1,849 officials spread across the military, civil, and territorial departments. Perhaps the most interesting part of Kastor's essay is his explanation of their interconnectedness despite their geographical distribution. The Atlantic Seaboard was the home base of the revenue officials, and the territorial West was the headquarters of the territorial officials, but they were connected by the fact that the revenue raised by the officials on the coast was spent by the officials in the interior. Their combined efforts helped to further the goal of the federal government, which was to secure liberty for white citizens, but at the cost of the subordination of non-whites. It was the institutional capacity of these officials rather than that of the well-known figures like Hamilton or Thomas Jefferson, Kastor argues, that determined what Washington's government accomplished.

The finances on which the federal workforce ran were secured primarily by the imposition of taxes through the customs service. *Washington's Government's* third essay, by Gautham Rao, explores how the customs service was created by

Congress and the Treasury Secretary Hamilton via the implementation of economic practices drawn from both British and American history. Despite the newly independent Americans' disdain for taxes, the exceedingly large federal and state debt accrued during the Revolutionary War required the enactment of customs duties. Congress turned to the very same British navigation laws that had drawn the ire of the colonists as their inspiration for the 1789 tariff. Like its predecessor, it taxed imported goods in an effort to raise the revenue necessary for the government to pay off its debts. Many American merchants were none too keen to pay the duties if they could avoid them, also like its predecessor. With unpaid duties piling up, Secretary Hamilton sought a strict implementation of federal prosecution against the offenders. Such a policy, however, would prove impossible as many custom officials refused to carry it out. The solution was to allow customs officials to take part in the prerevolutionary American practice of negotiation and accommodation between the captains and merchants and the tax collectors. Contrary to accepted political economic theory, Rao argues that it was the loosening of the government's revenue policies that allowed the system to function.

Like the customs officials, the judges of the early federal district courts used their common sense to determine the best course of action for a smooth remitting process. Kate Elizabeth Brown uses her essay to argue that the lower federal courts' collaboration with the Treasury Department, far from serving as a "check" on the power of the executive branch, is a perfect example of the process of collaborative state-building by which the early republic should be defined. The Remitting Act, passed into law in 1790, was created to address the claims of individuals who, often unknowingly, broke federal revenue laws and sought the remittance or mitigation of the penalties placed on them. Although the act gave Secretary Hamilton the sole power to determine the merchants claims, it also required the federal district courts to report to and advise him before he

made his final decision. Brown explains that far from carrying out these duties begrudgingly, the judges engaged in a sort of dialogue with Hamilton by submitting and resubmitting reports of the facts of the cases and offering their opinions on each matter. This collaborative process, Brown claims, demonstrates that the framers of the Constitution intended the US government to be more flexible regarding the separation of powers than has previously been accepted by scholars.

The funds raised through the collection of customs duties and revenue law penalties supported the federal government's efforts to establish *de facto* control of the western territories. While the trans-Appalachian West legally belonged to the US government, Native Americans really controlled the region in the early 1790s. Stephen J. Rockwell's essay examines the policies of the Washington administration in regard to Indian affairs in this region in an effort to show that the first president took actions often associated with the "modern" presidency and that the federal government had already begun to develop into our concept of the "modern" state. According to Rockwell, President Washington's push for a legislative agenda in Indian affairs, the autonomy of the executive branch's administrators in the treaty process, the fighting of undeclared and unpopular wars with Native American nations, and the president's direct communication with the public regarding Indian policy all point to the development of a "modern" presidency even as far back as the 1790s. Similarly, the government's ability to pay for the soldiers and military equipment necessary for the wars with the Natives, the overlapping of Indian affairs with military, land, and public debt policy, the demands of westerners on the federal government, and the sense of respect which the administration garnered from the American people are indicative of what Rockwell calls "the relentless American state" (p. 134).

Central to the Washington administration's ability to wrestle control of the western territories

from Native Americans was the acquisition of weapons for its soldiers. In his essay, Andrew J. B. Fagal argues that the administration's switch from a reliance on private contractors to the creation of a national armory system with government-run manufactures was a significant contributing factor to the autonomous power of the early United States. He explains that although they rarely agreed on anything, Hamilton and Jefferson saw eye to eye on the necessity of a national armament policy. Where the two men diverged, however, was on how to go about the production of those arms. Jefferson believed that it was the government's job to ensure that private enterprise was given the opportunity to manufacture small arms and munitions, while Hamilton thought that the security of the country was too precious to leave the armament of the military up to private contractors and that government-owned armories were necessary for national defense. When the resounding defeat of General Arthur St. Clair at the hands of the Miami, Shawnee, and Delaware Natives in 1791 brought to light the poor quality of the arms produced by private vendors, Congress passed laws that led to the creation of national armories in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia. These actions brought the United States in line with the European system of state-owned arms acquisition and, according to Fagal, demonstrate that Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans, despite their differences, understood that domestic arms production was essential to American progress.

The success of American state-building depended just as much on the country's ability to arm itself as it did on the international recognition of the United States as an independent nation. Daniel J. Hulsebosch explains that the key to this recognition was the law of nations: that is, America's ability to comply with international norms in its relations with other nations. The federal government both aligned with and reacted against these norms in several ways, including the declaration of the United States as a neutral power dur-

ing the French Revolutionary Wars, the request for the recall of French minister Edmond-Charles Genet, Jefferson's call for the neutral rights of American commerce, and the United States' supervisory power over the Native American nations located within its borders. Hulsebosch concludes that the Washington administration followed some of the rules of the law of nations in an effort to achieve international recognition but reformed other rules as a way to maintain their revolutionary legacy.

The anthology's final essay, written by co-editor Edling, shifts the focus of American state-building from the executive and judicial branches to the legislative branch. Instead of centering his analysis of Congress on the ideological clashes between its members, he analyzes the legislation that those members enacted. Edling categorizes the legislation as serving either the "fiscal-military state" (i.e., the laws provided for the security of the nation and the regulation of international trade) or the "reactive state" (i.e., the laws dealt with domestic regulations concerning local economies and societies). For a point of comparison, he turns to the British Parliament. While Congress passed less than 400 pieces of legislation during the entirety of the Washington administration, Parliament averaged 275 acts per year in the 1790s. The large gap between the output of the two legislative bodies, however, was not due to the time-consuming nature of the Americans' setting up of a new government. Instead, Edling ex-

plains, it was because much of the legislation that Parliament passed was reactive in nature and therefore not on the agenda of Congress. In the United States, such legislation was relegated to the domain of the individual state legislatures, thereby allowing Congress to concern itself primarily with fiscal-military legislation. Early American state-building, therefore, should not be viewed as a process occurring solely on the national level but in conjunction with the individual states.

Washington's Government is a welcome addition to the scholarship of both the early republic and American state-building. It demonstrates that the Washington presidency is largely worthy of its "golden halo" because it created a relatively efficient federal government despite the ambiguity of the US Constitution in regard to the day-to-day functionality of its agencies and their officeholders. A combination of improvisation and playing the long game enabled the members of the Washington administration to make mistakes yet learn from them quick enough to achieve long-term success. The contributors to this volume have deftly mined the sources of their respective fields to create essays that are scholarly enough to interest historians and political scientists while still being accessible to undergraduates and history buffs. The only caveat to the latter recommendation would be the reading of the entirety of the book, as such an endeavor might be a significant challenge for those unfamiliar with the period.

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