

GROWTH AND REFORM**Viewpoints**

In 1833, the state of South Carolina declared an act of Congress to be null, or void, and threatened to secede from the United States if Congress tried to enforce the act. Although the dispute was resolved peacefully, Congress did pass the Force Bill, authorizing President Andrew Jackson to use military force to make South Carolina abide by federal law. This conflict shows how tension between sectionalism and nationalism threatened to break apart the nation. Sectionalism refers to the rights and powers of regions or states over those of the national government. Nationalism refers to the powers of the national government over those of its various regions or states. ♦ *As you read the excerpts below, consider what each senator says about a state's sovereignty. Sovereignty means control over one's own affairs. State sovereignty refers to the idea that each state is an independent political unit responsible for protecting its own interests and regulating its own matters. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Sectionalism and Nationalism**Speech, January 26, 1830, by
Massachusetts Senator Daniel
Webster**

"It is, sir, the people's Constitution, the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people. The people of the United States have declared that this Constitution shall be the supreme law. We must either admit [the supremacy of the Constitution] or dispute [the people's] authority. The states are, unquestionably, sovereign, so far as their sovereignty is not affected by this supreme law. But the state legislatures, as political bodies, however sovereign, are yet not sovereign over the people."

Source: The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, Boston, 1903, Vol. VI, pp. 3-75, as published in The Annals of America, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Volume 5, 1968, pp. 347-355. Available online at <http://www.usa-patriotism.com/tribute/speeches/dwebster1.htm>.

**Speech, February 15, 1833, by
South Carolina Senator John
C. Calhoun**

"... [N]either the Senator from Delaware (Mr. Clayton), nor any other who has spoken on the same side, has directly and fairly met the great question at issue: Is this a federal union? [A] union of states, as distinct from that of individuals? Is the sovereignty in the several states, or in the American people [as a whole]? The very language which we are compelled to use when speaking of our political institutions affords proof conclusive as to its real character. The terms union, federal, united, all imply a combination of sovereignties, a confederation of states. They never apply to an association of individuals."

Source: Available online at <http://sciway3.net/2001/john-c-calhoun/SRemarks.htm>.

Questions to Think About

1. According to Webster, who or what is the final authority in the United States government? To whom is that authority and government answerable?
2. According to Calhoun, who or what is the final authority? From what does that authority get its power?
3. **Detect Point of View** Which speaker supports sectionalism? Which speaker supports nationalism? Explain your answer.

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In the 1830s, Senators John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts were the most prominent spokesmen for sectionalism and nationalism, respectively. Webster avidly defended the supremacy of the federal government and the U.S. Constitution, and Calhoun asserted the inviolable rights of the states. In 1833, Calhoun delivered a speech defending the southern way of life and criticizing the federal government for overreaching its powers. More than 40 members of Congress from 12 southern states signed his statement. In 1830, Webster debated the issue of state versus national sovereignty with South Carolina Senator Robert Hayne. ♦ *As you read the viewpoints below, consider the justifications and reasoning behind each senator's statements. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Calhoun and Webster**Speech, 1833, by South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun**

"Slavery is a domestic institution. It belongs to the States, each for itself to decide, whether it shall be established or not; and if it be established, whether it should be abolished or not. . . . [W]e hold that the Federal Government has no right to extend or restrict slavery, no more than to establish or abolish it; nor has it any right whatever to distinguish between the domestic institutions of one State, or section, and another, in order to favor one and discourage the other. . . . It is not for [the North] nor for the Federal Government to determine, whether our domestic institution is good or bad; or whether it should be repressed or preserved. It belongs to us, and us only, to decide such questions.

Source: Transcribed by Trina S. Rossman from John C. Calhoun, "The Southern Address," in Richard K. Crallé, ed., *The Works of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A.S. Johnston, 1851), vol. VI, pp. 290-313. Available online at sciway3.net/2001/john-c-calhoun/SAddress.htm.

Speech, January 26, 1830, by Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster

"This government, Sir, . . . is not the creature of State legislatures; nay, . . . the people brought it into existence, established it, and have hitherto supported it, for the very purpose, amongst others, of imposing certain salutary restraints on State sovereignties. . . . Sir, the very chief end, the main design, for which the whole Constitution was framed and adopted, was to establish a government that should not be obliged to act through State agency. . . . [The Constitution declares] that *"the Constitution, and the laws of the United States made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of the land. . . ."* . . . No State law is to be valid which comes in conflict with the Constitution, or any law of the United States passed in pursuance of it."

Source: Available online at www.constitution.org/hwdebate/webstr2d.htm.

Questions to Think About

1. According to Calhoun, who or what should determine whether slavery is good or bad?
2. According to Webster, what was one reason that the people established a federal government?
3. **Detect Point of View** How do the two senators' views on the political structure of the nation differ?