THE CAMPAIGN OF 1777: EXAMINATION OF A TURNING POINT USING DIME

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by

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This historical assessment of the American Revolution evaluates the significance of the Campaign of 1777. More specifically, this thesis examines whether the Campaign of 1777 was a turning point in the American Revolution. Each of the four elements of National Power: Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME); are used in order to determine whether there was a perceptible increase or decrease in power. The European balance of power dictated the effectiveness of diplomacy. After the Seven Year's War, Britain became diplomatically isolated affecting force replacement during the Revolution. Furthermore, research indicates the French were interested in developing an alliance with the Americans as early as 1775, discounting the transformation effects of the Saratoga victory. Both the information and economic elements of power seem to create more impact in historical writing than existed during the campaign. Finally, evidence indicates a perceptible turning point effect in the military element of power. Overall, the research indicates there was a perceptible increase in the military element of power coupled with a possible increase in diplomatic power for the Americans. Simultaneously there appears to be indications of a decrease in the military element of power for the British.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1777: EXAMINATION OF A TURNING POINT USING DIME, by Jason W. Torgerson, 81 pages.

This historical assessment of the American Revolution evaluates the significance of the Campaign of 1777. More specifically, this thesis examines whether the Campaign of 1777 was a turning point in the American Revolution. Each of the four elements of National Power: Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME); are used in order to determine whether there was a perceptible increase or decrease in power. The European balance of power dictated the effectiveness of diplomacy. After the Seven Year's War, Britain became diplomatically isolated affecting force replacement during the Revolution. Furthermore, research indicates the French were interested in developing an alliance with the Americans as early as 1775, discounting the transformation effects of the Saratoga victory. Both the information and economic elements of power seem to create more impact in historical writing than existed during the campaign. Finally, evidence indicates a perceptible turning point effect in the military element of power. Overall, the research indicates there was a perceptible increase in the military element of power coupled with a possible increase in diplomatic power for the Americans. Simultaneously there appears to be indications of a decrease in the military element of power for the British.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Victory is the main object in war. If this is long delayed, weapons are blunted and morale depressed. When troops attack cities, their strength will be exhausted. When the army engages in protracted campaigns the resources of the state will not suffice.
>
> — Sun Tzu, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*

Introduction

During the campaign of 1777, the Americans apparently gained a series of strategic, operational, and political successes while the British suffered political and military setbacks with apparent long-term consequences. General Horatio Gates' victory at Saratoga, the most obvious strategic shift, overshadows the series of defeats suffered by General George Washington in the Philadelphia effort. However, Washington achieved his primary objectives: extend the war, attrite the enemy at places of his choosing, and draw the enemy into the interior to extend their supply lines. "Washington realized that his army was the sword and shield upon which the Revolution depended. As long as it existed, the British could not safely disperse their troops and occupy the vast territory necessary for them to reestablish their power throughout America."[1] Additionally, reinforced with foreign professional advisors and trainers, the Continental Army entered the encampment at Valley Forge with the largest winter force of the war--over 11,000 forces.[2] Meanwhile, in London, politicians and King George III faced the prospect of diplomatic isolation, and waning political support after the botched campaign.

The sum of the pyrrhic victory of General William Howe's Philadelphia campaign combined with General John Burgoyne's surrender cost the British nearly

7,500 troops in casualties, disease, desertions, and capture.[3] A loss difficult to recover considering Lord George Germaine was only able to raise 6,100 of the 7,800 replacement forces authorized by the British Cabinet in January 1777.[4] Compounding Britain's internal affairs was the constant threat of old enemies entering the conflict. Thus, France's open declaration of formal alliance with America in the opening months of 1778, followed by the declaration of war that summer, further diluted Britain's national power. Following the campaign of 1777, leaders in Whitehall took a yearlong operational pause in major combat operations while they assessed the situation, reset their forces, re-defined their strategy, and appointed new leadership.

The Campaign of 1777 was one of the more evident turning points during the American Revolution. For the purposes of this paper, a "turning point" is a point at which the elements of national power: Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME); change direction; increasing or decreasing in power. The problem statement applies to both the American and British efforts. There is evidence supporting the claim that the Northern Department's successful defeat of General Burgoyne's army at Saratoga strategically changed the global diplomatic and military landscape. However, was it the victory the key ingredient, which precipitated the diplomatic events, or was this simply an elemental change in a series of transitions in national power? Were there other synergistic events: informational or economic? One thing is certain, the events of 1777 created a shadow of interest for centuries of historians.

Background

The call for military action came after more than a decade of political maneuvering, radical uprisings, and increasing military presence. In the spring of 1775,

American and British soldiers squared off in their first engagements. The Americans were able to rally support and move much faster than the British who clung to a 3,000-mile sea line of communication. By December, the American forces had surrounded the British in Boston, and Brigadier General Montgomery and Colonel Benedict Arnold were preparing to seize Quebec. The fateful events of December 30 were a harbinger for the year to come. Upon the gates of Quebec, the high-water mark for the Northern Campaign, the siege ended with the tragic death of Montgomery and the incapacitation of Arnold. The following year brought a series of tactical defeats as the British eventually evacuated Boston in order to capture New York and vast parts of New Jersey. In Canada, the Americans surrendered almost all the territory gained in 1775. However, key political, diplomatic and military events transpired to brighten the morale of the fledgling nation.

In July 1776, America formally declared its independence from Great Britain. The resolve demonstrated the colonies were, at the very least, politically organized enough to gather a consensus among the thirteen individual colonies. Perhaps more dangerous for Britain, it demonstrated the possibility that the rebellion was widespread. On the diplomatic front, France began to warm to the plight of America, sending a secret envoy to America at the end of 1775, and accepting Silas Deane, and later Benjamin Franklin, to Paris in 1776. However, King Louis XVI was not willing to enter openly into the fray. The wounds from the Seven Years War were still too fresh, and the American experiment still considered an internal British affair. Yet, Deane secured support for covert shipments of arms, supplies, and specie, along with French and other foreign military observers and

officers. Finally, in the fall of 1776, General Washington was able to secure a key policy change to the organization of the Continental Army.

Ingrained in the military fabric of the colonial culture was an abhorrence of professional standing armies coupled with objections to enlistments longer than one year.[5] The Commander in Chief's correspondence with Congress persistently pled for arms, equipment, supplies, manpower, money, and changes to military policy. On September 24, 1776, Washington wrote the following to the President of Congress:

> We are now as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of our Army; the remembrance of the difficulties which happened upon that occasion last year, the consequences which might have followed the change, if proper advantages had been taken by the Enemy; added to a knowledge of the present temper and Situation of the Troops, reflect but a very gloomy prospect upon the appearance of things now, and satisfie *[sic]* me, beyond the possibility of doubt, that unless some speedy, and effectual measures are adopted by Congress, our cause will be lost.[6]

In the fall, the Board of War finally passed the Eighty-Eight Battalion Resolution, authorizing a standing army with terms of enlistment for three-years or the duration of the war.[7] Unfortunately, these terms did not apply to the Army of 1776. Thus, from the summer of 1776, to the winter months of 1777, General Washington's Army disintegrated from peak strength of 20,000 to a mere 4,000 soldiers.[8]

Desertions, disease, and the state of enlistments wreaked havoc on the readiness and effectiveness of the Continental Army. On March 2 1777, Washington wrote a private letter to Mr. Robert Morris in Congress, extolling the grim state of military affairs regarding the upcoming campaign season:

> General Howe cannot, by the best intelligence I have been able to get, have less than 10,000 Men in the Jerseys and on board of Transports at Amboy: Ours does not exceed 4,000: His are well disciplined, well Officered, and well appointed: Ours raw Militia, badly Officered, and under no Government. His numbers

> cannot, in any short time, be augmented: Ours must very considerably, and by such Troops as we can have some reliance on, or the Game is at an End.[9]

Thus, Washington again faced the prospect of raising a new army in the face of overwhelming odds.

Early in January 1777, Washington sent his officers to recruit the new army. By the end of August, the Continental Army reached its peak of approximately 22,000 men. The Commander in Chief assigned 7,000 of these men to the Northern Department under General Horatio Gates.[10] The remaining 11,000 men remained under his command for operations around Philadelphia. The majority of the new recruits were inexperienced, poorly trained, and not ready for battle. Fortunately, the British were slow to come out of winter quarters in the spring of 1777.

The major battles of this campaign are broken into two distinct areas of operation: those conducted along the Hudson-Richelieu-St Lawrence corridor along an axis of advance from Saint John's south through Lake Champlain to Fort Ticonderoga, to Saratoga, and Albany. With a secondary advance made by St. Leger's forces from St. Johns along the St Lawrence River through Lake Ontario and the Mohawk River. The focus of this northern operation is the battles around Saratoga. The second area of operation centers on the city of Philadelphia and an axis of advance from the Head of Elk north through Wilmington. The focus of this campaign is the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. To prevent confusion, this paper will use the following conventions with regard to the armies involved in the operations. The Continental forces consist of two armies: the Northern Department, initially under the command of General Philip Schuyler and later General Gates, and Washington's Army. The British forces also consist of two armies: Burgoyne's army and Howe's army. All the armies employed various forms of

non-conventional forces. This paper applies the following naming convention to these non-conventional forces: mercenary, militia, and native forces.

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Research Questions

The primary research question is to determine if the campaign of 1777 was a turning point in the American Revolution, or simply a natural shift in political and military strategies. Second, was it a decisive turning point? Additionally, did the diplomatic events affect the events of the campaign, and vice versa? Further, this paper must determine if the information operations conducted both in theater and abroad influenced other elements of national power. Did the British shift their strategy to the south due to the events in 1777, or was that strategy in progress? Finally, this work will determine if the events shifted the economic foundation of the war

Organization

Following this chapter is an examination on the historiography relating to the Campaign of 1777. Chapter Three provides an explanation of the elements of national power as a method for examining the campaign. In the fourth chapter, careful analysis of the individual elements of national power, in context with the events of the campaign of 1777, clarify the evidence for determining whether the campaign was truly a turning point. Finally, the concluding chapter seeks to synthesize the work into a coherent proof and conclusion, as well as provide recommendations for further research.

Limitations

The primary limitations on this work are academic. The time and resources available limit the breadth and depth of this project. As a result, this paper primarily

focuses on strategic level events, and occasionally enters into the operational level. Although the campaign offers multiple leadership lessons, case study opportunities in diplomacy and information operations, this paper will only examine leadership decisions as they relate to determining their effects on the elements of national power. Additionally, this paper avoids retelling the events of the campaign, recognizing the extensive body of work already in existence. This allows for an increased focus on the evidence surrounding the problem. Finally, economics, time, distance restrict access to primary source documents. When available, this work cites the primary source. Mindful of these restrictions, the journey to the past awaits.

Delimitations

Due to the inexact science of when a campaign begins and ends, this paper defines the campaign of 1777 as January 6, 1777, through March 14, 1778. The basis for the start date rests upon the conclusion of General Washington's assaults on Trenton and Princeton, and entry into winter quarters around Morristown, New Jersey. The delineation of the end of the Campaign of 1777 is a little more difficult. Although Washington's army entered their winter quarters at Valley Forge on December 19, 1777, marking the conclusion of military events does not encompass the resolution of diplomatic efforts relating to the campaign. Thus, it is necessary to account for the transportation times across the Atlantic Ocean, and the immediate ramifications of those communiqués. Eighteenth century transoceanic travel varied widely. Primary determinants included the type of vessel, time of year, and prevailing winds; the average time was between two and three months.[11] Therefore, it is necessary to include the time required for news of the campaign to travel to Europe.

The news of Saratoga reached the delegates in France on December 9, 1777.[12] On December 19, the French Under–Secretary of State to the Comte de Vergennes, Joseph M. Gérard de Rayneval told Benjamin Franklin, that the King was "determined to acknowledge American independence and make a treaty."[13] However, Louis XVI wanted to correspond first with Charles III, ruler of Spain, prior to signing any accords. Negotiations continued over the next few weeks. Spain's tepid response finally came on February 4, 1778. France decided to go ahead with a bilateral agreement with America, leaving an option open for Spain to enter into the agreement later.[14] On March 14, 1778, news of the alliance reached London; marking the diplomatic climax related to the original communiqué received on December 9, 1777.

Elements of National Power

This thesis uses the four elements of national power to examine the interrelationship of the events of 1777. The common elements, also known as instruments, of national power are Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME). Often these elements interact closely, to the point where the line of demarcation between them is vague; however, this does not detract from the effectiveness of the elements. In fact, there is a synergistic effect when all the elements of national power work in concert. Current United States Joint Doctrine states, "The ability of the United States to achieve its national strategic objectives is dependent on the effectiveness of the US Government (USG) in employing the instruments of national power."[15] Diplomacy is the primary tool used to engage other nations.

In the course of this paper, diplomacy includes administrative actions or negotiations by one government designed to influence or produce favorable actions out of

another government or group. Actions include but are not limited to negotiations, resolutions, declarations, proclamations, and establishment or dispatch of consular agents. The key delimitation from the other elements of national power is that diplomatic actions typically remain within political channels. Often diplomatic actions produce second and third order effects, which manifest into other elements of national power. Typically, the first element to correlate closely with diplomatic actions is information.

The element of information, as it pertains to this thesis, includes both the control and distribution of information to a target audience in order to produce or enforce perception, opinion, or to state a position. In this case, the primary audience of concern includes the American, British, and French public. Information is either distributed or controlled. For the most part, even though some censorship existed, the information forum was open and free in both Britain and the United States. Naturally, there were more controls within the French government, but even these were arbitrary. Common forms of publication include, but are not limited to, newspapers, pamphlets, broadsides, books, and proclamations. The information forum is an important tool for the military element of power.

The military element of national power is the threat of or employment of lethal force, or conduct of war, by a governing body through an organized entity such as the army, navy, or militia. According to current United States joint doctrine, "the purpose of the Armed Forces is to fight and win the nation's wars."[16] To that end, examination of the military element of power in this paper will focus upon the employment of military forces as it applies to the primary research question. The final element of national power is economic.

The economic element of power is a nation's ability to alter or affect the income or access to resources in order to attain a specific objective. In the case of the American Revolution, the economic element of national power consists of, but is not limited to, raw materials, finished goods, stores, production facilities, ports, modes of transportation, specie, and access to trade routes (land and sea) and the corresponding markets.

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[1]Stephen R. Taffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777-1778* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 226.

[2]Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 418.

[3]Thomas J. McGuire, *Brandywine and the Fall of Philadelphia*, vol. 1 of *The Philadelphia Campaign* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006); W. J. Wood, *Battles of the Revolutionary War, 1775-1781* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003) Chap 4-6; Rupert Furneaux, *Saratoga: The Decisive Battle* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971), 273. Casualty and strength reports vary widely across sources. The figures stated come from analysis of McGuire and Wood. Piers Mackesy, *The war for America, 1775-1783* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 111, 118, 141--vary widely on the number of forces surrendered at Saratoga. However, research indicates that these were the British forces only, excluding the German and Tory forces.

[4]Piers Mackesy, *The war for America, 1775-1783* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 111.

[5]Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 36-43, 48-53.62-67.

[6]George Washington Letter to Continental Congress, Heights of Harlem, September 24, 1776, in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799,* ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 6:107.

[7]Robert K. Wright and Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U. S. Army, 1987), http://www.history.army.mil/books/revwar/ss/revdoc.htm#rev7 (accessed May 3, 2009).

[8]McGuire, Vol. 1, 10, 19.

[9]Washington Letter to Robert Morris, Morristown, March 2, 1777, *The Writings,* 7:222-223.

[10]McGuire, Vol. 1, 169.

[11]Mackesy, 73.

[12]Benjamin Franklin, *Franklin in France: From the Original Documents, Most of Which are now Published for the First Time*, eds. Edward Everett Hale and Edward Everett Hale Jr. (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1887), http://books.google.com (accessed October 29, 2009), 162.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 94.

[15]Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), I-8.

[16]Ibid., I-10.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Introduction

In order to determine whether the campaign of 1777 was a turning point in the American Revolution, one must examine the many sides of the event. First, the historiography of the American Revolution in its entirety is very robust. Additionally, the research specifically on the Campaign of 1777 is extensive. Perspectives across the whole of the body of work span both British and American perspectives; offering insight into the broader spectrum of political and military objectives. Therefore, the depth and breadth of the historiography offers ample evidence to determine whether the campaign was a turning point. This chapter briefly examines that body of work.

The chapter, organized subjectively, opens with a general overview of American Revolutionary history. The next section covers the available histories on the Campaign of 1777, which covers the military element of power. The third section covers works specifically focused on the diplomatic element. Finally, the closing section offers an overview of historical works regarding the information and economic elements of national power. During research, a concerted effort was made to find perspectives written by both American and British historians in order to discern and reduce bias.

The American Revolution

The historiography of the entirety of the American Revolution is nearly as broad as the 3,000 miles separating the colonies from the British Isles. Some offer patriotic renditions of the Revolution such as *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the*

American Revolution, by Benson Bobrick, and *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783,* by Charles Royster. Both histories offer chapter-length accounts of the 1777 campaign. Bobrick seeks to retell the story as a tribute to his heritage, both Tory and Whig. However, the author offers only a passing glance at the Tory side of the story. Similarly, Royster's history examines the character of the young Americans; including insight into the notion of providential destiny. Royster offers evidence of a turning point in the American character, from one driven by the *rage militaire* of 1775 and 1776, to that driven by courage, virtue, and hardship.[1] In contrast to this patriotic fervor stands Robert Middlekauff's attempt to present an objective history in, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789.* In this prize-winning account, Middlekauff examines the revolution almost from within the events themselves, attempting to place the reader as a character surrounded by the events of the time. However, the narrative chapter regarding the Campaign of 1777 mirrors other histories; painting General Burgoyne as the over-zealous, self-assured tactician ignorant of the situation, and General Howe as the almost absent-minded, objective driven elitist. Still the volume, combined with others, adds to the evidence supporting the claims of a turning point. Shifting to the opposite side of the Atlantic provides prospective on the events.

Winston Churchill, one of many to make the claim, once quipped that, "History is written by the victors."[2] However, there is a growing abundance of history regarding the British viewpoint of the American Revolution. Two of the most well known works are *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen Through British Eyes,* by Michael Pearson, and Christopher Hibbert's similarly titled *Redcoats and Rebels: The*

American Revolution Through British Eyes. Both Hibbert and Pearson present the events in the colonies as an uprising perpetrated by a few influential elites. However, the difference from the American account is eye opening. With respect to the Campaign of 1777, Hibbert relates that the focus in London was about methodology of military planning and execution rather than seen as a ubiquitous victory for the Americans.[3] Pearson's work, more directly tied to primary source documents than Hibbert's history, makes a rational argument in support of Howe's slow start out of New York, and decision to pursue the capture of Philadelphia. By remaining in New York, and pursuing Philadelphia, he prevented Washington's Army from interfering with Burgoyne's efforts.[4] Finally, a cornerstone work, *The War for America, 1775-1783*, by Piers Mackesy examines the political and military decisions and their consequences. This history recognizes the vast body of knowledge with regard to the tactical events, instead examining the changes in British strategy, logistics, leadership, and politics of the war. Mackesy takes a different perspective on Lord Germaine and his conduct of the war, allowing the reader to understand his management as a Cabinet member not as what we would understand today as a Secretary of War. Mackesy's understanding of Lord Germaine comes from extensive research presented in *The Coward of Minden: The Affair of Lord George Sackville.* Many other works are available for both perspectives. Similarly, the historiography of the Campaign of 1777 provides an equally broad body of work.

The Campaign of 1777

Histories on the events of 1777 typically focus on one of the two major combat operations: Saratoga and Philadelphia. Multi-volume works such as Thomas J. McGuire's

recent publication, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, and *The Turning Point of the Revolution: or Burgoyne in America,* by Hoffman Nickerson offer in depth perspective of the intricate details of the military campaigns. McGuire's piece offers superior insight into the leadership decisions faced by Washington and Howe, offering perspective on Howe's vision for the campaign, as well as highlighting Washington's lapse in intelligence collection at Brandywine. Nickerson's tomes provide balanced analysis of Burgoyne's plan and execution of the strategy to secure the Hudson River valley. Additionally, he is cautious not to overstate effects, such as those of the Jane McCrea murder in July 1777. General histories on the campaign such as John Pancake's *1777: The Year of the Hangman*, attempt to capture the broader picture of the year's efforts. However, *the Hangman* lacks the depth of insight provided in other histories. Various other histories such as Stephen R. Taaffe's *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777-1778*, David G. Martin's *The Philadelphia Campaign, June 1777 to July 1778*, Richard Ketchum's *Saratoga: Turning Point of America's Revolutionary War*, and Rupert Furneaux's *Saratoga: The Decisive Battle*, attempt to capture the essence of the specific operations of 1777. A majority of these books offered insight into more than just the military operations. Most provided perspective on the other elements of national power.

Diplomatic History

The body of work on diplomacy during the American Revolution is extensive. Compilations on diplomatic correspondence such as the multi-volume *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, edited by Francis Wharton, or the compilation of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by William Willcox offer primary source perspective on the thoughts of the Founding Fathers. Additionally, these

works allow the researcher to understand the time factor involved in the transportation of messages. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*, and Jonathan R. Dull's *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, discuss the broader global political situation. Dull's work is particularly useful for his insight into the importance of the European balance of power. Additionally, his previous work on Lord Germaine and study of the naval effort provide insight into the political leadership for the war and the reinforcement and supply efforts.

Information and Economic Elements of Power

A majority of the works already cited provide perspective on the information and economic elements of power. However, there are works available that are more specific. First, regarding the information element, two works evaluate British opinion during the revolution. Solomon Lutnick's *The American Revolution and the British Press, 1775-1783,* evaluates the myriad of articles available in the British press during the Revolution. Lutnick provides a niche historical perspective on the opposition press, libel laws, and distribution rates within England. Dr. Dora Mae Clark's *British Opinion and the American Revolution* focuses more on the opinion of the British mercantile class. Simultaneously it provides insight into the economic impact of the war. Specific American perspectives on the press and public opinion were a little more difficult to uncover; thus, a majority of the research came from the general histories already mentioned. Finally, *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*, edited by Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey offers a compilation of essays on the economic factors during the Revolution. Of particular note are the tables and graphs regarding exports, production, population, and consumption.

[1]Royster, 127-128.

[2]Ralph Keyes, *The Quote Verifier: Who Said What, Where, and When* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 90.

[3]Christopher Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution Through British Eyes* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), 201-211.

[4]Michael Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen Through British Eyes* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 260.

CHAPTER 3

DIPLOMATIC ELEMENT OF POWER

> Look into the matter of his alliances and cause them to be severed and dissolved. If an enemy has alliances, the problem is grave and the enemy's position strong; if he has no alliances the problem is minor and the enemy's position weak.
>
> — Sun Tzu, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*

Introduction

Eighteenth-century European diplomacy revolved around the concept of maintaining the balance of power, or "the desire of the states of Europe that no single state become too strong."[1] Wars and alliances revolved around maintaining or shifting this balance. England and France, two of the more polarizing powers during this century, often allied themselves with secondary and tertiary powers, such as Spain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and the Ottomans. The smaller states, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Portugal, and Poland, sought neutrality, or established protectorate agreements. The primary concern for this paper are the diplomatic actions by England, France, and America from the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, up to, and including, early events in 1778. All three employed the diplomatic element of national power with varying effectiveness.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether key diplomatic activities demonstrate an increase or decrease in diplomatic power. First, it is necessary to understand the balance of power in Europe; establishing a baseline with regard to England and France's diplomatic status in the region. Next, a sampling of the correspondence conducted by the American Continental Congress indicates whether the delegates effectively employed diplomacy, in what forms, and to what effect. Then, a

brief review of attempted peace negotiations and the growth of the Franco-American alliance provide indicators as to the diplomatic resolve of the three nations. Finally, an overview of the diplomatic events of 1777 provides evidence to determine whether there was a discernable diplomatic turning point during that year's campaign.

The evidence suggests that British diplomatic arrogance isolated the King from European support, which limited England's ability to recruit forces and prevented her from dissuading others from interfering. Furthermore, the majority of British peace offers proved hollow. American diplomacy was laudable, but immature, often hindered by a lack of authority. France's initiation of diplomatic relations in 1775 provides early indication of her determination to reset the European balance of power. However, the state of the French navy, and the lack of funds in the treasury, influenced the entry timeline. Thus, with regard to the diplomatic element of power, England remained moribund, while America gained momentum, and France took an investment risk based upon the promise of future returns.

The Scales of European Power 1763-1774

An important factor in any act of diplomacy is perception. Thus, the goal of eighteenth century European diplomacy was to ensure the maintenance, or re-establishment, of the perceived balance of power. During the age of kings, recognizably near its end, this perception of supremacy importuned war. "Kings went to war without consulting their subjects, and made arrangements with other monarchs in regard to the distribution, division and annexation of territory, . . . [and] gladly added to their realms any lands they could gain by conquest, negotiation, marriage, or inheritance."[2] Although the power of the English monarch declined drastically over the course of the previous two

centuries, some influence remained, especially when paired with a favorable government in Parliament. As the ink dried on the Treaty of Paris in 1763, King George III, along with those in his Privy Council, began to establish a favorable government as they felt the surge of authority that was British Imperialism. Meanwhile, other signatory nations remained biased, and immediately began plans for the restoration of balance.

The pride of victory influenced Britain's diplomacy during the intervening years from 1763 to 1774. During this time, King George III isolated England diplomatically with an air of "stubbornness, overconfidence, and reluctance to make compromises."[3] In fact, the Britons managed to shun all three major military powers within Eastern Europe: Prussia, Austria, and Russia. Actions, which later affected England's ability to secure forces during their American military campaigns. In 1762, King George III decided to default on alliance subsidies with Prussia, chilling relations with King Frederick. Prussia maintained a military of roughly 200,000 professional forces.[4] Additionally, from 1763 to 1765, England sought to restore relations with Austria in an effort to isolate France. However, Austrian distrust lingered after the British slight during the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756. Moreover, British envoys refused to entertain any of the Austrian requests for assistance in their struggles against Russia. The negotiations quickly soured and Austria, possessing an army similar in capability to Prussia, chose to remain allied with France.[5] Further efforts to secure traditional alliances met similar rejection as word spread that George III sought amity with Russia.

From 1765 to 1771, Britain's full diplomatic power turned towards obtaining a Russian alliance. Russia, economically inferior to the rest of Europe, maintained a population base of 19 million and an army of 280,000.[6] Once again, English arrogance

and unwillingness to compromise caused negotiations to collapse, "due to Britain's refusal to offer any substantive advantages to Empress Catherine II."[7] Then, all of Britain's advantages in the tentative agreement lost momentum when Russia reached an agreement with Austria and Prussia over the status of Poland, ending the dispute over Poland.[8] Finally, during 1773, as tensions in America ratcheted up, British diplomacy nearly stumbled upon an agreement with France, which might have changed the course of history.

France, possessing a military of nearly 200,000, maintained close alliances with the small states along her eastern border as well as Spain, Italy, and Austria. King Louis XV's main concern was to prevent the consolidation of power among the Germanic states and the expansion of Russia. Unfortunately, the Seven Years' War degraded the French influence in Europe to the extent they were unable to assist Austria in the aforementioned struggle over Poland. However, the temporary military impotence did not extinguish the desire for revenge. Shortly after the signing of peace accords in 1763, Spain and France established the Family Compact, seeking to rebuild their armed forces in order to challenge British hegemony.[9] The Compact was slow to gain momentum due to the state of the post-war economy, coupled with popular aversion to war. The Compact nearly collapsed in 1773, when Britain and France began secret negotiations.

In 1773, Catherine II sought to attack Sweden in an effort to expand her empire. London feared that Russia's advance would send Europe into large-scale warfare.[10] In the interest of maintaining the balance of power, the French foreign minister, d'Aiguillon, and British Northern Secretary of State, the Earl of Rochford, "had come to realize that the rise of Russia had made the Franco-British antagonism an anachronism."[11]

Negotiations began in earnest behind the veil of secrecy, but those anachronisms proved too fresh, and the dialogue deteriorated rapidly into disputes over past tribulations. Catherine II caught wind of the possible Franco-British alliance, and realized that five years of war made Russia too vulnerable; she called off the attack. The affair sealed England's isolation: Sweden, an English trade partner, was dissatisfied with British duplicity, the negotiations with France only awakened universal disgust, and George III's betrayal of what little faith remained between his kingdom and Catherine II's disintegrated. Fortunately, for France, the Germanic states remained fractured from the years of war. As hostilities began in America, the diplomatic environment made it difficult for Britain to secure fresh recruits and foreign forces to augment their army. The American colonial agents in London took note.

American colonial agents, such as Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee, served as representatives in London for their individual colonies. Of the two agents, Franklin lived in London from 1757 to 1775, with short returns to the colonies. Franklin became a widely admired scientist, author, and entertaining intellectual throughout London. He learned the art of British politics, established relationships with assorted academics, politicians, and printers. These networks later proved invaluable. Upon this precipice sat the European balance of power and the opening years of the American Revolution.

Diplomatic Paper War

Prior to the declaration of independence, America began its search for diplomatic relevance under the guise of reconciliation and the return to pre-1754 style governance. Shortly after the *Gaspee* Affair, the burning of a British customs ship, American colonies established Committees of Correspondence. Samuel Adams sought the development of a

routine system of correspondence, which could create a unified effort "whereby the colonies could take combined action in defence *[sic]* of their liberties."[12] These committees became pseudo-governing bodies prior to the formation of the First Continental Congress. Overall, the committees proved impotent in their ability to coordinate any type of combined action, evident by the uncoordinated efforts to seize Fort Ticonderoga in 1775. Furthermore, their diplomatic power was non-existent, holding little relevance in Parliament, let alone internationally. Genuine diplomacy did not begin until the formation of the Continental Congress.

The Continental Congress was the first body in American history capable of speaking with one representative voice. Prior to declaring independence, the Continental Congress sought reconciliation and recognition of English rights in order to return to pre-1754-style governance. Based upon their perception of the English Constitution and Bill of Rights, the delegates of Congress sent a series of letters, declarations, and petitions to King George III, Parliament, and the British press. This present work does not intend to discuss every act of correspondence; rather, the following examples demonstrate the progression in diplomatic resolve, themes, and political unity.

Meeting for the first time as a unified body, excepting Georgia, the delegates sought diplomatic avenues of resolution. On September 5, 1774, the Congress sent a letter for publication in British newspapers, "To the People of Great Britain, from the Delegates," outlining the American grievances. Shortly thereafter, on October 14, 1774, the delegates drafted the "Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress," in response to the Intolerable Acts. In addition, the delegates sent a "Petition of the Continental Congress" directly to King George III, stating, "We ask but for peace,

liberty, and safety. . . .Your royal authority over us and our connexion *[sic]* with Great-Britain, we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain."[13] While awaiting a response from London, the colonies implemented "peaceable measures" to boycott all importation, consumption, and exportation of British goods under the adoption of the "Continental Association."[14] The Association sought to force, economically, Parliament to abdicate its position, and demonstrate the unity of effort among the colonies. Next, the delegates drafted the "Letter to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec," promoting the American cause, and to assess the probability of alliance. The basis of all these documents centered on their rights as Englishmen, guaranteed by the English Constitution, and included a list of violations of those rights; however, they all expressed a desire for reconciliation and restoration.[15] On October 22, 1774, the delegates agreed to reconvene the delegates on May 10, 1775, "unless the redress of grievances, which we have desired, be obtained before that time."[16]

The response from Canada was timid, but positive. Although not nearly as conclusive as desired, it was enough for the delegates to order a two-pronged campaign to capture Montreal and Quebec late in 1775. Perhaps the most resounding success came in the unity of effort with regard to the boycott of British trade. According to one scholar's research, the Continental Association caused a decline in trade of nearly 97 percent within the first year of implementation.[17] On December 24, 1774, and again in February 1775, the London agents Benjamin Franklin, William Bollan, and Arthur Lee, reported the reaction to the Congressional correspondence. The initial receipt of the documents proved positive; the King promised to have them reviewed by both Houses of Parliament immediately after Christmas. However, the February message indicates that

by the time the documents went to Parliament, they "came down among a great heap of Letters of Intelligence from Governors and Officers in America, Newspapers, Pamphlets, Handbills . . . undistinguished by any particular Recommendation . . .and I do not find that it has had any farther Notice taken of it as yet."[18] Essentially, due to natural bureaucratic inefficiencies, or by blatant design, the correspondence had little diplomatic effect on Britain's blueprint for smothering the American rebellion. Similar exchanges took place the following year with equally disappointing results.

In the early part of 1775, Parliament continued to pursue its hard-line position with the passage of the "Restraining Acts." These laws further restricted trade and maximized discomfort among the populace--especially in the most rebellious colonies. The New England Restraining Act went into effect July 1, 1775, and the amendment, covering the remaining colonies, commenced twenty days later. The rebellion reached a flashpoint in April 1775, with the battles at Lexington and Concord, causing the restraining acts to take on a much more sinister appearance. The colonies reacted, independent of Congressional direction, by seizing military equipment and supplies at Fort Ticonderoga. All but the Battle of Bunker Hill occurred before the Second Continental Congress convened in May. The outbreak of hostilities complicated the next round of diplomacy.

Now faced with a cacophony of rebellion, the Second Continental Congress attempted to prepare for war while posturing for peace. The delegates maintained their theme of reconciliation and restoration of colonial governance, but now they added harsher tones of rhetoric centered on words such as tyranny, slavery, and self-defense. The Congress widened their message distribution with letters to the inhabitants of

Canada, Ireland, Great Britain and Jamaica. The correspondence with Canada and Great Britain reinforce the previous letters of 1774. The messages to Ireland and Jamaica attempted to create an association of mutual identity among fellow subjects of the same Crown. The delegates, fearing the atrocities associated with Indian warfare, sent emissaries to entice the Six Nations to remain neutral. Then, returning their focus on Parliament and the King, the delegates sent the "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms," arguing that the actions at Lexington, Concorde, Fort Ticonderoga, and Boston were in self-defense. In addition, the declaration, written with a much harsher tone, implied a possible shift in diplomatic power: "Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable."[19] The Congress pronounced their internal capability and fortitude to continue the resistance, and implied negotiations with foreign powers. The call for independence grew louder; however, cooler heads prevailed, and the majority decided to send the "Olive Branch Petition." This latest petition served two purposes: repeated the desire for reconciliation, and appeasing those delegates who feared talk of independence. In fact, when the delegates took up debate over the proposed Articles of Confederation, they ultimately proved that their colonial identities outweighed unification efforts. Thus, the majority of correspondence repeated the previous year's message with an increase in the diversity of the target audience. Britain's response to the correspondence came swiftly.

With the shedding of blood, and the obvious indications of widespread rebellion, the King issued his "Proclamation of Rebellion," on August 23, 1775, sending a clear message to the delegates in Congress. The delegates responded, "We condemn, and with

arms in our hands,–a resource with Freemen will never part with,–we oppose the claim and exercise of unconstitutional powers, to which neither the Crown nor Parliament were ever entitled."[20] This paper-war between Parliament and the Continental Congress continued and no amount of paper and ink would break the resolve for either side.

The Congress of 1776 now faced the inevitable fact of a long war. The opening months of 1776 were bittersweet: first, the tragic loss at Quebec, then, the satisfaction of forcing the British to depart Boston. The demands of war caused the delegates to split their attention between foreign policy, a bleak economy, and the management of military activities.[21] The need for unity became paramount, and Congress overcame their previous year's inhibitions; declaring independence in July. The Declaration of Independence was both a defining moment for the young nation, as well as a symbolic foreign policy statement. The immediate effect of the declaration was the final weeding out of those delegates opposed to independence. However, the delegates were still unable to pass a revised version of the Articles of Confederation. Finally, the delegates drafted the "Plan of Treaties," designed as a baseline document from which to develop future agreements. All three of these documents "distinguished the legislation of this year."[22] As the ink dried on the final documents of 1776, the inertia behind Franco-American negotiations gained momentum.

Commissioners and Negotiations

As the rebellion spread, the British made multiple hollow attempts to reach a diplomatic resolution. From the opening of the war, Lord North and Secretary Germaine appointed General William Howe, and his brother Admiral Richard Howe, as both commanders and peace commissioners. However, London's stipulations for negotiations

remained non-negotiable. Parliament would not accept anything short of colonial recognition of Parliament's power over colonial government, and the capture of the instigators.[23] Thus, in the winter of 1774-75, and again in 1776, the Howe brothers both attempted to coerce the rebels into submission. Two of the more serious attempts to negotiate peace came after the announcement of independence, and rumors of the French alliance surfaced. The first, on September 11, 1776, authorized a commission to negotiate conciliatory peace based upon the Congress's old demands of reconciliation. The commissioners appointed by Congress denied the terms outright, demanding recognition of their independence. Then, in 1777, based upon intelligence reports, Lord North rapidly pressed a repeal of the Declaratory Acts through Parliament, in an effort to support the King's efforts of preventing France from entering the war.[24] The British failed to isolate the Americans, and France threatened to change the balance of power.

In December 1775, the Comte de Vergennes sent Julien-Alexandre Achard de Bonvouloir as "a secret messenger to the American Continental Congress," with the power to negotiate a covert support agreement.[25] King Louis XVI was not yet prepared to enter into open alliance with America, as the French navy was still too weak to challenge the British. In return, the Americans dispatched Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin to France as the Congressional agents in Paris. Some historians indicate that the French were not willing to enter the war until the Americans proved their resiliency and commitment to the cause.[26] However, evidence suggests that France could not afford to enter into an open agreement due to the dilapidated state of their naval forces. At the outset of the war, France possessed a skeleton fleet, averaging 50 ships of the line, all constructed with traditional hulls; whereas, Britain possessed 60 ships of the line with

copper lined hulls and a robust shipyard capable of rapid production.[27] Regardless of the varied interpretations, by the conclusion of 1776, diplomatic negotiations reached peak momentum, only awaiting full maturity.

Campaign of 1777

Diplomatic actions for all three powers appear to have peaked in 1776. During the Campaign of 1777, the British focused more on their execution of the military operations than on diplomacy. In fact, the major focus of their diplomacy was attempting to secure more foreign forces to fill out their requirements for the campaign. Additionally, Lord North became obsessed at uncovering the condition of the Franco-American relationship; embedding spies in France keep a close watch on the situation. This served, as mentioned previously, as the catalyst for Lord North's rapid repeal of the Coercive Acts, and doomed peace commission. The next diplomatic action for Britain came with the receipt of the terms of surrender after the Battle of Saratoga. The Americans were similarly inactive during the year.

The American Congress focused a majority of their effort on perfecting the Articles of Confederation. The debate continued until November 15, 1777, when the delegates passed the resolution; forwarding copies to the states for ratification. However, the status of the Articles continued to plague the Congress; full ratification did not occur until 1781.[28] In all practical terms, the Americans had to wait for France to make the next move. Arthur Lee, Silas Deane, and Benjamin Franklin continued to maintain a cordial relationship, meeting with Comte d' Vergennes and his delegates. In addition, the tracked the shipment of arms and supplies to America, and early in the year, Arthur Lee traveled to Spain to secure promises of support.[29] Corruption in the supply system caused the

American agents headaches over multiple violations of trust, and evidence of unauthorized use of French ports to conduct combat naval operations. In fact, Congress eventually recalled Silas Deane due to suspected questionable bookkeeping. Yet, in spite of these irritations, the overall effects appear negligible on the French relationship. The drive for alliance appears the driving force behind France's patience.

The finalization of the Franco-American alliance, often correlated with the coincidental victory at Saratoga, appears to be more synergistic than fait accompli. Evidence suggests that the French intended to enter into the war in March 1778. "In the spring of 1777, Joseph-Mathias Gerard drew up a policy analysis, proposing that France plan as if hostilities were going to commence in March 1778 and that she send a squadron to attack Admiral Howe in North America."[30] In addition, there is evidence that the French feared an Anglo-American reconciliation; thus, Vergennes proposed that Louis XVI move forward with the alliance as a defensive move.[31] The dormant desire for revenge was awake, and the opportunity to strike Britain appeared ripe. This partially clarifies the rapidity of announcing the alliance after the victory at Saratoga.

The news of the victory reached Paris on December 4, 1777, and the American commissioners immediately dispatched a memorandum to Vergennes.[32] Then, on December 8, the Commissioners sent a more formal letter to Vergennes, requesting a meeting to readdress the issue of alliance, stating, "it is near a year since they had the Honour *[sic]* of putting into your Hands the Propositions of the Congress."[33] By the end of December, King Louis XVI, agreed to the alliance, but wanted to correspond with Spain prior to finalizing the accords. Vergennes dispatched agents to Spain, who debated the alliance throughout January, finally deciding against entering--desiring a clause in the

treaty allowing Spain to enter later. Upon the Spanish decision, France and America entered into formal alliance on February 6, 1778. Thus, based upon the broader perspective of France's prior planning coupled with the rapidity of finalizing the alliance, the victory at Saratoga seems more aptly described as an additional catalyst towards the alliance than a singularly distinctive turning point.

Conclusion

Eighteenth-century European diplomacy revolved around the concept of maintaining the balance of power, and evidence suggests that there was an evident imbalance after the Seven Years' War. British diplomatic arrogance throughout the period examined isolated King George III from possible supporting nations. This limited England's ability to recruit forces, and prevented her from dissuading others from interfering. Furthermore, the peace offerings proposed by England proved hollow. American diplomacy was laudable. A lack of authority hindered early attempts at foreign policy; however, diplomatic relations developed as Congress matured. France's initiation of diplomatic relations in 1775 provides early indication of her determination to reset the European balance of power. However, the state of the French navy, and the lack of funds in the treasury, influenced their decision to wait until the opening months of 1778. Therefore, the disposition of the diplomatic element of power for England remained moribund, while America could only gain momentum, and France took opened an investment based upon the promise of future returns.

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[1]Dull, 5.

[2]James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard, *Outlines of European History: From the Opening of the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (New York: Ginn and Company, 1919), 323.

[3]Dull, 26.

[4]Ibid., 17.

[5]Ibid., 18.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., 31.

[8]Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company Ind., 1935), 9. This concept of partitioning becomes a central objection for Loyalists during the debates over independence in 1774-76.

[9]Ibid., 16-19.

[10]Michael Roberts, *British Diplomacy and Swedish Politics, 1758-1773,* vol. 1 of *The Nordic Series* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 409.

[11]Dull, 37.

[12]John Fiske, *The American Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1896), 77.

[13]Continental Congress, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789,* ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 1:119.

[14]Continental Congress, "The Association Read and Signed," in the *American Archives: Documents of the American Revolution, 1774-1776* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2001), http://colet.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/amarch/getdoc.pl?/projects/artflb/databases/efts/AmArch/IMAGE/.1072 (accessed November 2, 2009).

[15]Continental Congress, "Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, October 14, 1774," in *Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States*, ed. Charles C. Tansill (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1927), http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/resolves.asp (accessed November 5, 2009).

[16]Ibid., 102.

[17]Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 535-536.

[18]William Bollan, Benjamin Franklin, and Arthur Lee Circular Letter to the Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, London, December 24, 1774, and Letter to Charles Thompson, London, February 5, 1775, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. William B. Wilcox (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 21:399 and 21:476.

[19]Second Continental Congress, "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms," in *Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States*, ed. Charles C. Tansill (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1927), 16.

[20]W. C. Ford, *Journals*, 3:410.

[21]Ibid., 4:3-4.

[22]Ibid., 4:6.

[23]Dull, 47.

[24]Ibid., 99.

[25]Ibid., 49-51.

[26]Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 143; Mackesy, 104.

[27]Dull, 107-113.

[28]W. C. Ford, *Journals*, 7:5.

[29]Dull, 77-79.

[30]Ibid., 90.

[31]Ibid., 91.

[32]Franklin, *The Papers 25:*234-236.

[33]Ibid., 25:260-261.

CHAPTER 4

INFORMATION ELEMENT OF POWER

> In War, on the other hand, the Commander of an immense whole finds himself in a constant whirlpool of false and true information, of mistakes committed through fear, through negligence, through precipitation, of contraventions of his authority, either from mistaken or correct motives, from ill will, true or false sense of duty, indolence or exhaustion, of accidents which no mortal could have foreseen. In short, he is the victim of a hundred thousand impressions, of which the most have an intimidating, the fewest an encouraging tendency.
>
> — Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Introduction

Both the Americans and Britons effectively employed the information element of national power. However, the focus of this chapter is on determining whether the use of information produced a turning point effect during the Campaign of 1777. Prior to examining information used during the campaign, it is important to examine briefly the literacy rates in the two nations. Without a semi-literate society, and an effective means of mass distribution, this element of national power is ineffective. Next, a brief examination of the effective distribution of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense,* provides insight into an effective information campaign. Finally, examination of the impact of the Jane McCrea murder demonstrates that the information element often proves more influential in the writing of history than in reality.

American and British Literacy

Life for most American colonists was inherently English. "Although great diversity prevailed among the colonies, most colonists shared a common English heritage and clung to it tenaciously."[1] This heritage included strong beliefs regarding the opinions

of government, liberty, property,--and information. Americans, as well as the British, enjoyed discussing politics, life, and the weather perhaps as much as today. However, the widespread distribution of information is difficult, if not impossible, in an illiterate society. Literacy rates are difficult to establish in a historical context, and are extremely subjective based upon the rigor of the research.

In an effort to define literacy rates in America, researchers examined wills, deeds, signatures, and various other sorts of legal documents. "These historians discovered a nearly universal literacy among New England men and varying levels of literacy among New England women in the latter part of the eighteenth century."[2] The rates vary from a low of 21.7 percent among transient females, to over 90 percent among educated males.[3] The British literacy rate was similar to the colonial rate, with French literacy lagging slightly.[4] Hence, evidence supports the fact that all three nations had literate societies. Distribution of the information is another key ingredient in the information element of power.

Newspaper Distribution

One of the more popular forms of information distribution in the eighteenth century was the newspaper. Perhaps the only benefit of the Stamp Tax of 1765 is that it created records of those items sold under the guidelines of the tax. Hence, today, historians can study the production and subscription rates of newspapers during the period of the tax. Other records, mainly kept by the individual printers, add to the body of data. According to one scholar, "the total number of papers sold throughout the kingdom increased steadily from 1775 to 1782, while failures became less frequent. The Stamp Tax figures demonstrate that the average daily sale of all seventeen London papers in

1775 was 41,615."[5] Only one year later, the distribution in London climbed nearly 4,000 more papers per day.[6] The distribution in America differed from city to city, and daily papers were not as popular as in London.

The difference in methods of distribution, as well as the comparable size of the colonies, makes it difficult to produce an equal comparison with Britain. Historian Richard Merritt attempts to correlate the distribution rates, estimating that "on the eve of the Revolution approximately one issue of a newspaper appeared weekly for every sixty-five colonists."[7] France's distribution rate was far less than either England or America. Thus, the medium of print information was widely available, and the populace was capable of reading the information. The final contributor to distribution of information comes in the form of oral transmission.

The public meetinghouses of the day were taverns, inns, coffee houses, and other such establishments. "The inevitable talk was of politics, religion, and trade."[8] Furthermore, these establishments would subscribe to the local papers as a service to their patrons. People would either read the papers themselves or out loud to friends and fellow travelers, thus increasing the distribution of the information. Solomon Lutnick indicates that one paper reached 20 to 150 people, depending upon location and method of research. Edmund Burke, an English politician of the Whig party during the American Revolution, describes newspapers as "a more important instrument than is generally imagined; they are a part of the reading of all; they are the whole of the reading of the far greater number."[9] Hence, it is evident that information was capable of reaching a wide audience within a rather short time span. A quick review of the publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* demonstrates the effectiveness of this distribution system.

Thomas Paine *Common Sense*

At present, it seems there are new books published at increasingly rapid rates, and in volumes nearly unimaginable in the eighteenth century. However, even today, it is only that rare book, which catches the interest of the broader public, causing it to skyrocket up the best-seller list. Obvious examples exist, such as religious texts like the Bible and the Koran. Recently, a fictional book series reached a unique level of widespread impact: J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. According to a recent article published by the BBC, the book reached a sales mark of over 400 million copies sold worldwide.[10] Publications of this class become centerpieces of discussion, are read and re-read, and exchanged among friends. Similarly, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* seems to explode upon the scene to reach the masses starting January 1776. Examination and comparison of publication data, combined with a brief study of social, military, and governmental spheres, reveals how popular Paine's concepts became in very short period. Comparing the distribution of the popular fiction series, *Harry Potter*, by J. K. Rowling with *Common Sense* helps place the impact in perspective.

Rowling's series of seven fiction novels reached the 400 million-copy mark, making the publication of *Common Sense* appear miniscule. According to Benson Bobrick, "many thousands of copies were printed--120,000 by the end of the year *(1776)*: in proportion to the population, still the greatest best-seller in American history".[11] In the 1993 reprint of *Common Sense*, the editor states that printers produced 500,000 copies by the end of the year.[12] In order to comprehend these sales numbers it is important to compare population size. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the thirteen colonies in 1776 was approximately 2.4 million.[13] The same source estimates the

current world population at around 6.7 billion.[14] With these figures in mind, the initial publication of 120,000 copies equates to approximately one pamphlet for every 20.8 people. This lags behind the ten-year total sales of the *Harry Potter* series of one copy for every 16.8 people. However, by year-end, *Common Sense* publishers placed a copy of the pamphlet in one out of every five people's hands. In comparison to today's market, that would equate to the sale of over 1.3 billion copies, well beyond the sales mark of J. K. Rowling's creation. Extraordinary publication volume provides an outstanding correlation; however, it does not prove a high-level of social impact.

Examining how a society reacts to a particular viewpoint or story provides a plausible scale on which to judge overall social impact. Did the publication create widespread controversy, change political or social perspectives, and did it cross cultural boundaries? A brief investigation reveals that *Common Sense*, written in a direct language even the common person could understand, quickly became the "water-cooler" topic of the year.[15] Further, even visitors to the colonies knew of the pamphlet. Nicholas Cresswell, a British immigrant traveling through Virginia records the following in his journal on Friday, January 19, 1776:

> A pamphlet called 'Commonsense' makes a great noise. One of the vilest things that ever was published to the world. Full of false representations, lies, calumny, and treason, whose principles are to subvert all Kingly Governments and erect an Independent Republic. I believe the writer to be some Yankey [*sic*] Presbyterian, Member of the Congress. The sentiments are adopted by a great number of people who are indebted to Great Britain.[16]

This journal entry, written the same month as the initial publication of the pamphlet, demonstrates how quickly the concepts contained in the pages spread through the colonies. Even George Washington commented on the impact the pamphlet had on the morale of the soldiers, and ordered the document read to the whole army.[17] The final

variable left to examine is the impact of Paine's ideas on the political bodies throughout the colonies, particularly the Continental Congress.

The Continental Congress had difficulty presenting a united effort for independence. At the time of Paine's publication, several delegates still wished to reconcile with the Crown of England. Paine confronted the "on-the fence" attitude of the delegates stating "'TIS TIME TO PART."[18] The pamphlet instantly won favor in congress; delegates even sent copies back to their constituents.[19] However, the concept of government that Paine presents in *Common Sense,* created discord among some of the congressmen, particularly John Adams. In fact, Adams later wrote, "*Common Sense* presented no argument that had not already been made repeatedly in Congress.[20] Regardless of the ego battle amongst Adams, Jefferson, and Paine, the pamphlet fulfilled its purpose by forcing congress and the population to confront their fears of separation from Britain.

From diary entries to the talk at local taverns, from the military to the pulpit, and into the halls of government, Thomas Paine's pamphlet became the popular topic of discussion. It created controversy, changed political and social perceptions of independence and self-government, and even created a shockwave across the colonies and in London. In fact, publication of *Common Sense* in London's newspapers had to be censored so as not to offend the King, and was originally attributed to Benjamin Franklin.[21] Based upon this brief examination, it is evident that information, especially information relevant to the larger population, had the potential of spreading rapidly. Examination of the information element in 1777, allows us to address the primary research question.

Information in the Campaign of 1777

One the more attributable propaganda campaigns of 1777 was the murder of loyalist Jane McCrea. As the story goes, Indians loyal to Burgoyne captured and killed McCrea during the seizure of Fort Edward. The rebel forces, employing the element of fear surrounding Indian-style warfare, purportedly embellished the story to recruit rebels and discourage loyalists. Examination of the incident reveals that the event had some influence upon the target population, but not nearly as much as the operational environment.

On the return to Burgoyne's camp, the Indians began arguing over their captive, ending in Jane McCrea's death and scalping.[22] Furthermore, adding to the lure of the story, McCrea was reportedly dressed for her wedding to a Loyalist militia officer serving under Burgoyne. According to some historians, the story served as a rally cry to assist General Gates. Benson Bobrick and Rupert Furneaux report that militia and farmers flocked to aid Gates.[23] Other scholars are more conservative, indicating that the effect was gradual.[24] Some, such as Robert Middlekauff's *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789,* and two manuscripts on British public opinion do not even mention the incident.[25] This review suggests historical distortion of the impact of this event. Examination of available forces for the British and American armies provides more insight into the events surrounding the McCrea incident.

The Jane McCrae murder took place around July 27, 1777, and the opening engagements between Burgoyne and Gates did not begin until late September. At the opening of the campaign, Burgoyne commanded nearly 8,000 British, Hessian, Canadian, Loyalists, and Indians. As the British forces secured terrain in the march to Albany,

Burgoyne had to place garrison and security units at various locations to protect his extended line of communication to Canada. At Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga, the English commander garrisoned 400 and 1000 soldiers respectively. Then, after receiving 600 Loyalist militiamen, and 100 Indian warriors, Burgoyne departed Fort Ticonderoga on July 24 with an effective force of 7,200 men.[26] Next, Burgoyne secured Fort Edward on July 29, two days after the McRae incident. Evidence appears to support the historical notion that Indian warriors, and some of the militia forces, left the British camp after the murder; however, the exact numbers and times of departure are vague. The key to effective information operations is reaching and affecting the target audience.

Evidence supports the fact that the story of Jane McCrae reached a broad audience. In fact, Edmund Burke spent three hours in February 1778, detailing the "habitual savagery of the Indians, expatiating on scalping, massacres, and other atrocities."[27] Using the widespread distribution and affect of *Common Sense* as a baseline, the Jane McCrae story proves inconclusive as to the affect on the target audience. A majority of the historians claim that forces flocked to support General Gates, and loyalists abandoned Burgoyne's camp. However, examination of available strength information does not support these claims.

After the capture of Fort Edward, Burgoyne paused operationally to stabilize his supply line. On August 11, Burgoyne sent a foraging force of 800 men, under the command of Hessian Lieutenant Colonel Baum, to capture military provisions and horses reportedly stored at the rebel stronghold of Bennington. Four days later, Burgoyne reinforced Baum, dispatching a 500-man force after receiving enemy strength reports. The rebel forces, numbering nearly 2,000, repulsed Lieutenant Colonel Baum's forces

over the course of the next few days; casualties numbered around 1,300 men.[28] Additionally, Burgoyne lost the support of St Leger's flanking force of over 1,200 men in the Mohawk valley.

St. Leger, conducting siege operations against the rebel garrison force at Fort Stanwix, received intelligence of approaching reinforcements. The first reinforcing unit met disaster at the Battle of Oriskany, but suffered heavy losses to the British forces. Then, rumors of General Arnold's approach with 950 Continental forces, coupled with dissension among his Indian forces, St. Leger decided to retreat to Canada on August 23. The loss of 2,500 men in a matter of two weeks did not deter Burgoyne. After garrisoning Fort Edward and securing his lines of communication, Burgoyne crossed the Hudson River on September 13 and 14 with 4,500 soldiers. [29] Immediately after crossing, the rebel forces attacked Burgoyne's supply chain. Therefore, even if all 600 Tory militiamen and 100 Indians departed after the McRae incident, the losses at Bennington and Fort Stanwix, coupled with the weight of security and garrison requirements, proved far more damaging to Burgoyne's effort than the McCrea murder. Examination of American force strength further supports this deduction.

Just before the McCrae incident, General Schuyler, facing an extreme drop in morale and desertions, agreed to allow some of his militia units to rotate home for the harvest.[30] After the murder, the American's should have seen a change in the morale and desertions. However, during the first week of August, 700 Massachusetts militiamen deserted the Northern army. On August 5, Schuyler writes to Washington, "Our Continental force is daily decreasing by desertion, sickness and loss in encounters with the enemy, and not a man in the Militia now with me will remain above one week longer,

and, while our force is diminishing, the enemy is augmented by a constant acquisition of Tories."[31] Complicating matters was mounting political dissatisfaction with General Schuyler's methods, influenced by goading from General Gates.

Congress relieved Schuyler, and appointed Gates to command the Northern Department on August 19, 1777. When Gates took command, he had between 6,000 to 7,000 forces in his army.[32] Available information indicates that Gates' strength did not increase until after the first Battle of Freeman's Farm. In fact, it was not until after the victory at Freeman's Farm that Gates' army surged to 11,000 men.[33] This surge is in line with the well-documented tendency for militia forces to report to the battlefield as required. This demonstrates that the American forces did increase until nearly two months after the McCrea incident. Therefore, the murder appears to have influenced historians more than the inhabitants of the New York backcountry.

Conclusion

The information element of national power is a powerful tool when the majority of the target population responds. Relatively high literacy rates, coupled with effective information distribution, supported the use of this element of power by both nations. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* demonstrates how information could spread rapidly; reaching across the Atlantic within three months of publication--the average time it took for transatlantic travel. Furthermore, *Common Sense* appears to elicit a response in both the Continental Congress and the general populace of America. Similarly, the Jane McCrea murder, reportedly a turning point propaganda effort, reached a broad audience. However, analysis of the affect of that information campaign is inconclusive. It appears the story influenced historians and post-war novelists more than reality. The story does

not appear to affect Burgoyne's strength; in fact, the loss of St. Leger's forces and his over-extended supply line appears more detrimental. Furthermore, Burgoyne dismissed the charges on the suspected perpetrators, and did not appear concerned over the impact of the incident. Thus, although the McCrae incident reached its target audience, the affect proves minimal. Hence, although both sides used the information element of national power, neither gained a turning point effect in the Campaign of 1777. In fact, the loss of British strength appears highly correlated to the military element of power; casualties lost through costly operational engagements and security requirements rather than a direct result of the McCrea incident.

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[26]Lutnick, 95.

[27]F. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke: 1730-1784* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1:423.

[28]Furneaux, 119-131.

[29]Ibid., 131.

[30]Ibid., 94.

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CHAPTER 5

MILITARY ELEMENT OF POWER

> Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it. . . . It is not a field of a few acres of ground, but a cause, that we are defending, and whether we defeat the enemy in one battle, or by degrees, the consequences will be the same. Look back at the events of last winter and the present year, there you will find that the enemy's successes always contributed to reduce them. What they have gained in ground, they paid so dearly for in numbers, that their victories have in the end amounted to defeats. . . . He has everybody to fight, we have only his one army to cope with, and which wastes away at every engagement: we can not only reinforce, but can redouble our numbers; he is cut off from all supplies, and must sooner or later inevitably fall into our hands.
>
> — Thomas Paine,
> *The Crisis: Philadelphia, September 12, 1777*

Introduction

The body of work concerning the Campaign of 1777 is immense, and the introductory chapter of this present work outlines the basic events of that campaign. Thus, this chapter focuses on distinct areas military power in order to discern a turning point. First, examination of British recruitment and replacement processes demonstrates how the loss of Burgoyne's forces affected English ability to conduct future operations. Second, the continued growth towards professionalism within the American Continental Army progressed as the cause for independence transformed after the Siege at Boston. Finally, errors in judgment and command threatened to undo the leadership structure of the American Army during the Campaign of 1777. Overall, the evidence suggests a discernable change in the military element of power for the British, and continued growth in power for the American forces.

British Army Recruitment and Replacement

The Secretary of State of the American Department was responsible for the management of military affairs in America. In November 1775, Lord George Germaine relieved the Earl of Dartmouth as the American Secretary, accepting the challenge of directing the reinforcement efforts. From the outset of the war, recruiting was difficult. In the fall of 1775, the Cabinet decided a force of 20,000 men was necessary for the campaign in 1776. The challenge was, only 9,500 infantry forces were available to both defend England and reinforce the American effort.[87] Complicating matters, several of the more capable British officers refused to serve in America, forcing the King to seek less qualified generals. "On April 13, 1776, the *St James's Chronicle* declared that 'no less than nine general officers of superior rank refused the command of the troops in America, before General Howe accepted it.'"[88] Hence, from the outset, inferior leadership, and the need for external assistance to reinforce his American forces hobbled the King. The King hoped to secure 20,000 men from Catherine II in Russia, and sought additional negotiations with the German states. Unfortunately, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, Anglo-Russo relations were cold, and Catherine refused assistance. Lord Germaine finally secured 18,000 German forces from Hesse-Cassel and Brunswick in January 1776. The forces fell slightly short of the 20,000 authorized, but the British counted on their assumption that loyalists in Canada and America would fill in the remainder of the requirements. This assumption became the Achilles Heel to planning for the duration of the war. The challenge immediately facing Germaine became shipping them to America in time for the campaign.

The bureaucratic divisions within the British Cabinet hindered movement of supplies, equipment and forces. The Lord of Admiralty was an equal member to the Secretaries within the Cabinet. Therefore, he did answer directly to Lord Germaine. In fact, the Secretary of State had to barter with the Admiralty over the limited shipping. "By July 1776 the Royal Navy controlled 127,000 tons of transports, but it was not yet responsible for the army's provisions, and by 1782 the army's needs absorbed 120,000 tons of shipping. The army transports were mostly small ships of between 250 and 400 tons burthen, and three or four troopships were needed to move a battalion."[89] This forced Germaine and the Secretary of Treasury to secure expensive foreign shipping contracts, further complicated by chilly diplomatic relations. The shipping difficulties delayed the movement of forces.

The first embarkation of forces for 1776 did not depart until April. The first contingent of 6,000 forces departed for Quebec early in the month, while Howe's 11,700 replacements departed on April 29. The second wave of reinforcements departed piecemeal from May through July. This meant that forces to support Howe and Carleton did not arrive in America until very late in the campaign season, and the various arrival times limited their ability to mass combat power. Thus, the operational impact of the British strategy to isolate the rebellion was restricted. Germaine immediately began preparing for the next year's requirements.

Germaine began the search for forces as soon as the last reinforcements departed for America in July 1776. However, the demand for forces from the commanders in the field was insurmountable. Carleton, unaware of Burgoyne's designs in London, demanded 4,000 reinforcements. Howe, known for his inability to communicate clearly,

sent a confusing request for forces demanding a total force of 35,000 men for the upcoming campaign. However, depending upon the interpretation of the campaign plan detailed in the letter, he required either 7,000 or 15,000 reinforcements.[90] Furthermore, Burgoyne requested 8,000 men for the Northern Campaign. Germaine had difficulty securing the 20,000 forces requested for 1776, and "not many Germans could be got; and those sure recruiting grounds, the Highlands of Scotland, were said to have been exhausted in the previous winter."[91] Political roadblocks further hindered Lord Germaine's efforts; Parliament only authorized pay for 7,800 reinforcements.

Over the next few months, Germaine diligently sought the reinforcements his commanders requested, simultaneously attempting to organize the provisions and equipment required to keep the current campaign on track. By the time the forces set sail for the Campaign of 1777, Burgoyne received only 7,000 men, 3,000 of which were German; the remainder came from the dwindling regular forces within England. As for Howe's request, Germaine had to assume that he required only 7,000 men. The Secretary was not even able to meet that number, sending only 5,500 men.[92] Finally, Burgoyne assumed he could reinforce his strength with 2,000 Canadian and 1,000 Indian forces; he did not even recruit half of that.[93] Despite Germaine's efforts, this would be the largest force assembled in America for the remainder of the war.

The losses at the end of 1776, and the surrender of Saratoga drastically reduced Britain's ability to conduct operations in America. The loss of nearly 2,000 men in December 1776, nearly 1,000 of which were Hessian forces, limited Howe's combat power. Furthermore, Howe's decision to pursue the capture of Philadelphia instead of reinforcing Burgoyne's campaign eliminated any ability to mass effects on Washington's

Army. Finally, Burgoyne's campaign as a whole cost the British nearly 6,000 men. These losses would be difficult to replace, "and more serious still was the proof of what the perceptive had long suspected: that the American country with its armed population might be beyond the power of Britain to reconquer [*sic*] with any force which she could raise and sustain in America."[94] In fact, Whitehall did not dispatch reinforcements in 1778, and Parliament refused to pass the Budget for raising more forces until after an investigation into the management of the war was complete. Furthermore, in 1779, Parliament only authorized 3,000 reinforcements sent to Clinton in New York. Thus, it appears the results of the campaign of 1777 created a turning point in the British military element of national power. The American army sat on a similar precipice.

The Transformation of the Continental Army

No standing American Army existed during the opening shots of the American Revolution. Colonial defense relied upon the mustering of various militia forces; furthermore, the militia fought mainly for local defense. The forces were capable of offering support to neighboring towns and the colony as a whole, but rarely were they sent outside the colonial borders. Additionally, employment of the militia was usually for a specified time, mission, or event; once complete, the soldiers returned home. Even during the build up to Lexington and Concord, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts met at Cambridge on February 14, 1775 to coordinate the defense efforts for Massachusetts Bay.

> Whereas, it appears necessary for the defence [*sic*] of the lives, liberties, and properties of the inhabitants of this province, that this Congress, on the first day of their next session, should be made fully acquainted with the number and military equipments of the militia and minute men in this province, as also the town stock of ammunition in each town and district . . .[95]

It is evident, though the Continental Congress began meeting to coordinate broader, unified efforts within the thirteen colonies, the individual identity of the colonies remained powerful. Hence, when the Continental Congress appointed George Washington as Commander in Chief in June 1775, the Continental Army was nothing more than a conglomeration of loosely affiliated militia forces comprised largely of New England stock.[96] Furthermore, the training and equipment varied between units, and soldiers elected their leaders. Essentially, Washington was an outsider, faced with an uphill battle of organizing, training, equipping, disciplining, and leading the Continental Army from its infancy.

On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress passed a resolution authorizing the formation what would become the Continental Army. The resolution allowed for the recruitment of ten "companies of expert riflemen," from among Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. This amounts to approximately 800 men, later increased to 960 with the commitment of two more Pennsylvania companies. Finally, early in November 1775, the Congress conceded to raising the authorization to 20,372 men with terms of enlistment expiring at the end of December 1776.[97] By the end of November, Washington recruited 2,540 men, and by January, increased that number to 12,649.[98] However, these men mainly came from amongst the militia forces already gathered around Boston, thus, the recruiting numbers rang hollow. This forced Washington to request an additional 7,000 militia forces to strengthen his lines. Furthermore, camp conditions and lack of hygienic discipline among the soldiers caused disease to wreak havoc on the effectiveness of the army. While Congress believed Washington had the forces he requested, in actuality he

had less than 10,000 effective soldiers. In a letter to Joseph Reed on February 10, 1776, Washington writes:

> So far from my having an army of twenty thousand men well armed etc., I have been here with less than one-half of it, including sick, furloughed, and on command, and those neither armed nor clothed, as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers. . . . Our regiments are little more than half-complete, and recruiting nearly at a stand. I have been convinced, by General Howe's conduct, that he has either been very ignorant of our situation (which I do not believe) or that he has received positive orders (which, I think, is natural to conclude) not to put anything to the hazard till his reinforcements arrive; otherwise there has [not] been a time since the first of December, that we must have fought like men to have maintained these Lines, so great in their extent.[99]

Therefore, during the Siege of Boston, the forces available to Washington never really exceeded 17,000 effective fighting men against an 11,000-man British Army. After Howe evacuated Boston in March 1776, and Washington maneuvered forces to protect the expected target of New York.

During the Campaign of 1776, Washington's strength never reached the full authorization of 20,000. It is difficult to pinpoint Washington's exact strength for any one battle due to the unpredictability of the militia forces. In fact, the Commander in Chief chastises Congress regarding their preference for militia forces in December 1776:

> We find Sir, that the Enemy are daily gathering strength from the disaffected; this Strength like a Snow ball by rolling, will Increase, unless some means can be devised to check, effectually, the progress of the Enemy's Arms; Militia may, possibly, do it for a little while; but in a little while also, the Militia of those States which have been frequently called upon will not turn out at all or with so much reluctance and sloth as to amount to the same thing. Instance New Jersey! Witness Pennsylvania! Could anything but the River Delaware have sav'd [sic] Philadelphia? Can anything (the exigency of the case indeed may justify it), be more destructive to the recruiting Service than giving 10 Dollars Bounty for Six Weeks Service of the Militia; who come in you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when; and act, you cannot tell where; consume your Provisions, exhaust your Stores, and leave you at last in a critical moment.[100]

Washington desired the predictability and resolve of a professional army. After the devastating losses in Canada and New York, the General convinced Congress of the need for action. At the end of September 1776, the delegates agreed to an authorization of 88 battalions, and revised terms of enlistment for three years or the duration of the war. Thus, as of October 1776, Washington's authorized strength was 75,760 men; however, by January 1777, only 3,000 effectives remained at the winter camp. The recruiting officers faced a mountainous task for the Campaign of 1777.

Raised with extended terms of enlistment, the Army of 1777 held promise for the future of the American effort. Fortunately, for the American forces, Burgoyne's army slowly moved through the American backcountry, and was unable to threaten Albany until July. Furthermore, Howe did not make his opening move out of New York until July 1777. By October, "the combined strength of Continentals present and fit for duty under both Washington and Gates was reported as 21,437. Their total strength on paper, not counting militia, was 29,608."[101] Furthermore, despite the losses during the Philadelphia Campaign, the Continental Army entered winter camp at Valley Forge with 11,000 men. The Campaign of 1777 was bittersweet for the Commander of the Continental Army.

Leadership and Command

The events surrounding Washington's performance in defense of Philadelphia brought into question his ability to command the American forces. The losses at Brandywine, Germantown, and multitude other engagements associated with the Philadelphia Campaign, cost the Continental Army nearly 3,000 men. Furthermore, Washington committed serious errors of command at Brandywine, failing to properly

survey and secure his flank. A thorough review of General Washington's correspondence and General Orders, as well as surviving journals from other soldiers, suggest that Washington failed to send scouting parties to examine the geography of the Brandywine valley. The Birmingham Meeting House, the sight of heavy fighting during the Battle at Brandywine, became the location for the Continental Army's hospital based upon Washington's assumption that Howe would engage the Continental Army along Red Clay Creek.[102] At around two a.m. on September 9, Washington issued unexpected orders to move the army north to Chad's Ford. In a letter to John Hancock, Washington writes:

> The Enemy advanced Yesterday with a seeming intention of attacking us upon our post near Newport. We waited for them the whole day, but they halted in the Evening at a place called Mill Town about two Miles from us. Upon reconnoitering their Situation, it appeared probable that they only meant to amuse us in front, while their real intent was to march by our Right and by suddenly passing the Brandywine and gaining the heights upon the North side of that River, get between us and Philadelphia and cut us off from that City.[103]

The General Orders issued on the ninth further confirms the assumption of engagement at Wilmington. "Intelligence having been received, that the enemy, instead of advancing towards Newport, are turned another course, and appeared to have a design of marching northward--this rendered it expedient for the army to quit Newport and march northward also; which occasioned it's sudden movement this morning."[104] Washington moved his Headquarters to Benjamin Ring's house, one mile east of Chad's Ford. In the afternoon, a council of war met with a few loyal citizens from the area. Washington inquired about useable fords north of Chad's Ford. One of the men, whose name is lost to history, reported no other fords were within twelve miles of Buffington's Ford.[105] The man failed to mention Jefferies Ford, only two miles above Buffington. "Washington, Sullivan, and the rest of the staff would have a whole day preceding the battle to verify this

information. They didn't do so."[106] There is no record of Washington ordering scouts to reconnoiter Brandywine, or monitor the movements of Howe's army as they departed Kennett Square.[107] Washington proceeded with building defensive positions and aligning the army for battle. Howe's plan did not align with Washington's perceptions.

Howe envisioned a repeat of Long Island, splitting his army into two columns and encircling the Rebels. General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, the commanding general of the Hessian forces, assisted in reinforcing Washington's perception by leading his column directly towards Chad's Ford. Meanwhile, General Cornwallis led the main column north on a 17-mile flanking maneuver. By 11 a.m., Cornwallis was across the west fork of the Brandywine at Trimble's Ford, marching towards Jeffries Ford. The first piece of intelligence arrived at Washington's Headquarters as Cornwallis completed the crossing.

Washington received several conflicting intelligence reports over the next three hours. According to W. J. Wood's research, after the first two reports from Hazen and Ross, Washington realized Howe was attempting to maneuver around his right flank.[108] Based on the information gained from the previous council of war, Washington believed Howe was unable to cross the river north Buffington's Ford. Therefore, he quickly ordered Sullivan, Greene, and Armstrong, to cross the Brandywine and attack Knyphausen. However, the order was quickly recalled when Major Spear, a local militiaman, reported he had just come from the north and did not see any enemy activity.[109] For an unknown reason, Spear's report garnered more weight than those of Washington's own officers. The General dispatched Colonel Theodorick Bland to verify the information. While waiting for Bland to report back, Edward Cheney, a well-known Whig, spotted Howe's maneuver and rode as fast as possible to tell Washington. In this

instance, Washington discounted the intelligence, and by the time Bland's confirmation arrived at 2 p.m., it was too late. The leaders of the Continental Army needed to react quickly in order to prevent annihilation. In contrast, in the Northern Department, General Gates had success at both Fort Stanwix and Saratoga.

As previously detailed, Arnold forced St. Leger to retreat before he could link up with Burgoyne at Albany. Furthermore, Arnold scattered the Indian reinforcements. Then, over the course of a month, Gates combined efforts with Arnold and Daniel Morgan to force Burgoyne to surrender his army at Saratoga. By all accounts, the commanders in the Northern Department appeared far more capable. However, politics and fame proved too strong a mix for Gates.

Rumors spread throughout the year that Gates sought Washington's position, even refusing to communicate directly with the Commander in Chief. Towards the end of 1777, the Conway Cabal nearly unraveled the command structure of the American Army. The details of the event are not as important as the aftermath. Gates, slightly tarnished, became the Secretary of the Board of War. Greene eventually became the Quartermaster General, while Arnold took charge of security in the Northern Department. In essence, the Conway Cabal diluted Washington's command structure and authority. However, the strength of the American cause remained the existence of the Continental Army, and Washington resolved to make that force stronger.

That strength came to the shores of America as the Campaign of 1777 ended. First, Benjamin Franklin discovered and dispatched a gentleman from Prussia named Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. In the winter of 1778, von Steuben transformed the Continental Army through both training and standardization. Steuben's background is

debated among historians; however, his impact upon the professionalism of the American Army is definitive. Further enhancing the military power of America was the declaration of an open French alliance, announced early in the Spring of 1778. The alliance brought the prospect of French forces and much needed naval support.

Conclusion

The military events of the Campaign of 1777 appear to create a clear turning point in the military element of national power. For the British, their ability to recruit and reinforce the military in America reaches a pinnacle. Additionally, Parliamentary dissatisfaction with the management of the war gains momentum, evidenced by the first budget failure in 1778. As for the American Army, the Congress finally agrees to increase the authorized strength, as well as the terms of enlistment for the Continental Army. This vital change in policy allowed the Continental Army of 1777 to gain valuable experience on the battlefield, and build upon that foundation over the years to come. Essentially, the campaign of 1777 is the root of the American professional army. On the negative side, the policy changes do not appear to solve supply and recruitment issues, which will continue to plague the Continental Army for the remainder of the war. Furthermore, it is evident that command leadership issues remain volatile, perhaps forcing Washington to take risks where he normally would not. Additionally, Congress demonstrates their first lack of confidence in Washington by appointing Gates as the Secretary of the Board of War, and later as the commander of the Southern Army. However, the important factor remains that the American Army continued to build inertia towards professionalism, while the British ability to project power diminished. Therefore,

the military element of power appears to increase for the Americans, while there is a perceptible decline for the British.

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[87]Mackesy, 39.

[88]Lutnick, 83.

[89]Mackesy, 66.

[90]Ibid., 110.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid., 117.

[93]Ibid., 130.

[94]Ibid., 141.

[95]Massachusetts Provincial Congress, *The Journals of each Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775 and the Committee of Safety*, ed. William Lincoln (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, Printers of the State, 1838), 99.

[96]Richard Frothingham, *History of the Siege of Boston, and of the Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873), 209.

[97]W. C. Ford, *Journals*, 3:320-327.

[98]Bobrick, 160-161.

[99]George Washington Letter to Joseph Reed, Cambridge, February 10, 1776, in *The Writings*, 4:319-320.

[100]George Washington Letter to the President of Congress, Camp Above Trenton Falls, December 20, 1776, in *The Writings*, 6:402-403.

[101]Royster, 132.

[102]Bruce E. Mowday, *September 11, 1777: Washington's Defeat at Brandywine Dooms Philadelphia* (Shippensburg, PA: White Maine Books, 2002), 59.

[103]George Washington to John Hancock, September 9, 1777, *The Papers* (accessed May 8, 2008).

[104]George Washington General Orders, HeadquartersSeptember 9, 1777, *The Papers* (accessed May 8, 2008).

[105]Mowday, 68.

[106]Ibid.

[107]George Washington to John Hancock, September 10, 1777, *The* Papers (accessed April 27, 2008).

[108]Wood, 102-105.

[109]Mowday, 168.

CHAPTER 6

ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF POWER

> When the army engages in protracted campaigns the resources of the state will not suffice. . . . When your weapons are dulled and ardor damped, your strength exhausted and treasure spent, neighboring rulers will take advantage of your distress to act. And even though you have wise counselors, none will be able to lay good plans for the future.
>
> — Sun Tzu, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*

Introduction

The economic element of power favored the British during the American Revolution. This brief chapter merely provides evidence of the fact that the British economy was capable of enduring the losses of 1777, and that the American economy did not increase in power because of the Franco-American alliance. The conclusion is that neither America nor England increased or decreased in their economic element of power. Therefore, there is no evidence of a turning point within this element of power. Of the two economies, the British proved more resilient to war.

British Economy

War historically creates an economic effect; and evidence suggests the English economy did suffer during the course of the American Revolution; however, the overall impact appears minor. It is important to maintain a broad perspective on the British economy while studying the impact of the American Revolution. The British economy was on the verge of the Industrial Revolution; transforming from a purely landed aristocracy to a mercantile driven power base. This later affects the political composition of Parliament. Analysis of the Revolution reveals that the industrial output, exports and consumption rates from 1765 to 1785, shows a steady decline in all indicators. In 1770,

the estimated Industrial output was 36.9 million Pounds Sterling; by 1780, the output dropped nearly one million Pounds. By 1785, two years after the Treaty of Paris, the output increased to 42.4 million Pounds. Examination of exports shows a drop from 30.8 percent in 1765, to 27.6 percent by 1780. Once again, these indicators increased after the resolution of the conflict. Finally, analysis of consumption per capita demonstrates a similar trend. Consumption declined from a high of 3.69 Pounds in 1770 to a low of 3.45 Pounds in 1780; by 1785, the per capita consumption recovered to 3.89 Pounds. [1] These indicators support the fact that the war affected the British economy; however, the figures do not demonstrate the effects of any particular campaign. Furthermore, the data indicates how the British economy rebounded with the restoration of trade after the war. Additional examination of trade between Britain and America demonstrates that the trade embargo on America only increased prices of goods, and had little effect on distribution.

In a study of the British press, Solomon Lutnick demonstrates that "the colonists were receiving their produce from the Dutch, who, in turn, were purchasing much of it in England."[2] The Dutch, and other neutral traders, were working both sides of the fence, shipping goods to sell in America, and contracting with Lord Germaine to transport victuals to the British army. Thus, it is evident that, although the war had an impact on the British economy, it did not cause an insurmountable downturn. Furthermore, the American economy demonstrates a continued desire for British goods, and a willingness to pay inflated prices through neutral traders. However, the fluency of the economy appears less affected by any particular campaign than the natural supply and demand of mercantile-based economics. The American economy is a slightly different entity than that of Britain.

American Economy

The American economy relied on the export of raw materials in exchange for finished goods from England. Some scholars estimate that the American colonists enjoyed the highest standard of living in the world prior to the outbreak of the Revolution.[3] Additionally, The Association, as mentioned earlier, suggests a decline in trade of nearly 97 percent. However, as demonstrated above, this decline appears to have hurt the Americans more than the British. In fact, it appears the merchant class in America prospered more during the war due to the increase in smuggling and opening of trade markets in Europe. Hence, trade does not appear to be the key issue for America. Instead, the key difference between the American economy and that of Britain is manufacturing.

America produced very few finished goods until after the Seven Years War. A majority of the finished goods, such as cloth, clothing, furniture, dishes, and more came from the factories of Britain. However, after the end of the Seven Years War, "skilled tradesmen, . . . known collectively as mechanics and artisans, were ascending the economic ladder to prosperity and financial security in a manner undreamed of by their equals in Britain before the Revolution."[4] In fact, particularly in the northern colonies, the American Revolution appears to create a catalyst, increasing the momentum towards a production-based society. Furthermore, starting in the First Continental Congress, the delegates facilitated the founding of manufacturing capabilities supportive of the war effort.[5] Similar to today, those industries also produced goods for the public. However, the key issue for the military and the war effort became the power limits of Congress.

The Continental Congress did not have any power to tax, suffered from a lack of specie, and the money it printed was near worthless.[6] Thus, although some in America prospered from the wartime economy, a majority suffered under heavy debt and a weak economy. Furthermore, the announcement of the Franco-American commercial alliance did not really transform the American trade. Since 1775, the Americans used the ports in France to transfer and sell goods to markets throughout Europe. The declaration of the trade alliance simply declared openly what existed previously. In essence, the American economy, from 1763 through the early 1800s, was in transformation from one dependent upon the British Empire to one of self-sufficiency. Hence, the Campaign of 1777 does not appear to transform the American economic element of power; rather, it appears the economy continued to move along a steady curve of development.

Conclusion

Economics is a game of perception. Although some in the British press claimed the economy was doomed, the facts prove otherwise. It is evident that the war caused degradation in trade and consumption; however, the post-war recovery appears rapid. In fact, the British rapidly moved into the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, the Dutch trade factor skews any true analysis of the economic impact since they continued to trade with the Americans. The American economy, in the northern colonies, was transforming after the Seven Years War. The merchant class, similar to England, continued to gain prominence in society. The issue for the Americans appears to be the affect of designing a new nation. The fledgling government could not afford to print the money it distributed. Furthermore, Congress lacked the universal authority to levy specie. The events of 1777 could not transform this economic picture. The development of the American economy,

separate from the British Empire, needed another few decades. Therefore, it appears that neither the British nor the American economy experienced a turning point in the economic element of national power.

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[1]Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, eds., *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700,* vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 40.

[2]Lutnick, 85.

[3]Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 182.

[4]Dorothy Denneen Volo and James M. Volo, *Daily Life During the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 19-20.

[5]W. C. Ford, *Journals*, 1:145, 4:170, 4:169, and 7:139.

[6]Curtis P. Nettels, *The Emergence of a National Economy, 1775-1815* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 23.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONCLUSION

> There is a mystery in the countenance of some causes, which we have not always present judgment enough to explain. It is distressing to see an enemy advancing into a country, but it is the only place in which we can beat them, and in which we have always beaten them, whenever they made the attempt. The nearer any disease approaches to a crisis, the nearer it is to a cure. Danger and deliverance make their advances together, and it is only the last push, in which one or the other takes the lead
>
> — Thomas Paine, *The Crisis: Philadelphia, September 12, 1777*

The Campaign of 1777 is a fascinating point in the American Revolution. It was the first major victory for the Americans in a European-style battle. As a result, historians have latched onto the claim that this marked a turning point in the Revolution. This paper sought to determine if the campaign of 1777 truly was a turning point in the American Revolution, or simply a natural shift in the political and military management of the war. In order to discern a change, this work defined a "turning point," as a point at which the elements of national power: Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME); change direction; increasing or decreasing in power. Thus, the conclusion is upon an analysis of each of the elements of national power. Eighteenth-century European diplomacy revolved around the concept of maintaining the balance of power

The diplomatic element of national power provides the largest perspective presented in this present work as it provides the broadest global perspective of the American Revolution. First, the European balance of power after the Seven Year's War was unstable, causing some nations to seek vengeance at the next opportunity. British diplomatic arrogance not only isolated the King from external support, it also inflated these desires for restoring the balance. On the other side of the Atlantic, American

diplomacy suffered from a lack of authority. However, France initiated negations with the Americans as early as 1775, thus supporting the fact that France sought to adjust England's position in Europe. Furthermore, the evidence presented suggests that time and naval preparedness was more of a determinant for the alliance than the victory at Saratoga. Likewise, the evidence presented demonstrated the available power within the information element.

The key to determining the effect of the information element of national power is examination of the effects on the target population. Substantial research indicates that the American and British societies were relatively literate and possessed a mature means of distributing information. The example of the widespread impact of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* provides a benchmark from which to determine the impact of the Jane McCrea story. The evidence presented appears to indicate that the Jane McCrea murder, reportedly a turning point for the Saratoga campaign, proved more influential in history books than reality. In fact, the operational mismanagement by Burgoyne appears more influential on the loss of military strength than the propaganda. Furthermore, the overall impact of the incident appears localized. Research does not reveal mention of the incident in newspapers outside the New England area.

Examination of the military element of power revealed how diplomatic power impacts operational capability. The British ability to recruit and reinforce their military reached a pinnacle during the Campaign of 1777. Furthermore, the loss at Saratoga, and Howe's failure to reinforce Burgoyne, caused Parliament to question the management of the war, and the subsequent disapproval of the budget in 1778. Meanwhile, the Americans survived the Campaign, and demonstrated their ability to face a professional

force on a European-style battlefield. Additionally, the Franc-American alliance provided hope for the development of a fully professional army. Finally, the economic power favored the British.

Research presented demonstrates that although the British economy sagged during the war, it was by no means detrimental. The British press attempted to argue that the economy was doomed. However, the rapid recovery after the war counters that perception. If anything, the war appears to have caused economic discomfort in London. Unfortunately, the war appeared to affect the American economy more due to the lack of governmental authority in Congress. Thus, although the merchant class seemed to prosper, those fighting for the cause were left without pay.

Therefore, it appears the Campaign of 1777 created a clear military turning point in favor of the Americans with indications of a diplomatic shift as well. The campaign of 1777, did not transform English diplomacy. However, the continued loss of forces, particularly the foreign fighters, stretched the King's replacement capabilities. Although there were no large diplomatic endeavors during the campaign, American diplomacy appears to gain momentum after 1777; suggesting a positive shift in this element of power. Finally, the information and economic elements of power appear unchanged. Although the evidence does not support a decisive turning point, it does support the traditional historical perspective of a shift in the conduct of the war. Perception of the facts from 232 years distant makes it easy to make such a definitive statement; however, perspective is often lost when you are closest to the emotions and activities of the event.

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